A PROPOSAL FOR INSTRUCTION OF POETRY AT

EL CENTRO COLLEGE

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

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The problem of this study was to develop a proposal for the teaching of poetry for the purposes of contributing to the student's understanding and enjoyment. Surveys and summaries were made of scholarly writings on the junior college student, existential theories of education, and theories of poetry. A bibliography was constructed for each subject from resources of the North Texas State University library. Conclusions from each survey were derived from the selected resources and used to prepare the proposal for instruction of poetry.

Current research seems to indicate that the junior college student has fewer advantages and talents when compared to the four-year college student. Generally, his academic ability is somewhat lower than that of the senior college student. He comes from a lower socioeconomic background. He elects to attend a junior college because the school is usually near his home, and the cost is lower. The goals and vocational aspirations of the junior college student are not always clearly defined which may be a factor as to
why he is in a junior college. His interests are not the same as those of his senior college peers. He attends college for practical reasons, for he wishes to prepare himself to earn a living.

The individual encounters many problems in our technological age today. Existential educators believe that many persons are in danger of losing their identity in our technological society; therefore, individuals need to learn to be autonomous. Too many constraining influences are upon people to conform to the rules of society. People need to rebel against conformity for conformity's sake. They need to realize their fullest potential. Man has the need to control his life now and in the future. The best kind of life would be one in which each person would develop his potential, and each person would be unique and adaptable to change.

Ten theories of poetry were examined in order to discover a wide range of ideas on what poetry could do for people living in a technological age. From these ten theories, five theories which contribute most to the development of student awareness were selected.

himself with men's motives and ideals. Robert Frost sought to find man's place in the universe. Percy B. Shelley suggested that men need to shake off the chains of the past, of custom, of selfishness, and to press onward to the vital task of constructing a world characterized by kindness, generosity, and love. Robert Browning celebrated the glory of human aspiration and courage. Such were the attitudes of these five very different kinds of poets.

This proposal for teaching poetry was directed toward correlating the needs of junior college students with certain objectives in a course of poetry. As a result of the foregoing, the method may proceed by involving the student in analysis of his own experiences and attitudes through the thoughts and expressions of romantic and modern poets.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Role of Poetry

The popularity of poetry seems to have diminished among a great percentage of college youth. Poetry should be preserved, for in poetry the elements of truth, thought, idea, and meaning are emphasized. But poetry must have significance for the student; it must somehow contribute to his store of knowledge or experience. This is what Matthew Arnold meant when he wrote of it as a "criticism of Life"; what Watts-Dunton meant when he called it an "artistic expression of the mind"; what Carlyle meant by "musical thought." This insistence on the presence of meaning was probably in E.A. Robinson's mind when he said that poetry tries to tell us "something that cannot be said." In the words of Leigh Hunt, poetry is a "passion for truth, beauty, and power." To Wordsworth poetry meant "strong feelings," to Ruskin "noble grounds for noble emotions." Emily Dickinson's test was that real poetry left her whole body so cold no fire could ever warm her. All these characteristics indicate the need for honesty of emotion, for depth of passion and feeling.
Many instructors of poetry often destroy that which they attempt to teach and preserve. Some instructors in junior college enter the classroom with intentions of imparting all their knowledge to eager students. Rarely do the students accept the gift, for poetry to most of them is another undesirable obstacle placed before them by curriculum designers. However, some instructors still persist in walking into the classroom with standard anthologies, and many of these instructors insist that students master the essentials of prosody.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to develop a method for the teaching of poetry for the purposes of contributing to the student's understanding and enjoyment.

Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study were to

A. Delineate some characteristics of the junior college student as factors in the teaching of poetry for personal meaning,

B. Establish an existential theory of education as a basis for perfecting one's individuality in a technological society,

C. Survey certain theories of poetry in order to identify some theories of poetry which would be helpful in developing a proposal for the teaching of poetry,
D. Develop a method for the teaching of poetry based on A, B, and C above,

E. Explicate certain poems to illustrate this method of teaching poetry.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to English and American theories of poetry and poems published in England and the United States of America during the modern period only.

This study was also limited to the parts of theories, and to poems that related to content only. These types of theories can be identified according to whether they fundamentally embrace classical, romantic, or modern precepts in poetry.

Procedures for Collection of Information and Development of Concepts

1. The delineation of some characteristics of the junior college student was made through a study of the works of authorities on the junior college student.

2. An existential theory of education was established through a study of the works of authorities on existentialism and existential theories of education.
3. The identification of certain theories of poetry was made through a study of theories held by authorities on poetry.

4. A method for instruction of poetry was developed, based on one, two, and three above.

5. Certain poems were explicated in order to identify meanings that students might appropriate.

The classification and organization of information and concepts found in one, two, three, and four above is dependent upon the specifications and purposes indicated in the problem. In Chapter II the characteristics of junior college students are discussed. In Chapter III an Existential theory of education is established. In Chapter IV theories of poetry are discussed. In Chapter V objectives and learning modes are formulated, and certain poems are explicated in order to bring out meanings which may be "appropriated" by the student. In Chapter VI a brief summary, recommendations, and conclusions conclude the dissertation.
CHAPTER II

CHARACTERISTICS OF JUNIOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

Introduction

Much research on the characteristics of the junior college student has recently been done. This research enables the investigators to make some important generalizations about the junior college student. These generalizations can assist educators in meeting the needs of these students. In this chapter an attempt will be made to point out what is known of the characteristics of junior college students. The characteristics of the junior college students to be considered are academic ability, socioeconomic background, goals and vocational aspirations, intellectual interests and personality types, and reasons for attending and withdrawing from college.

Academic Ability

First of all, junior college students as a group score low on most academic performance tests. For example, studies completed in 1952 by the Center for the Study of Higher Education at Berkeley on the ability levels of students entering all types of American
colleges and universities showed the junior college student mean on the ACT test to be lower than that of the senior college student.\(^1\)

In these studies the *American College Testing* scores were obtained on entering freshmen in 200 American colleges drawn from a stratified random sample of 1,800 institutions of higher education.\(^2\)

The data from the different sources agreed remarkably. Three of the studies showed the mean score of junior college entering freshmen to be 94; the other two showed 93. The mean score on the tests administered to college freshmen in both two-year and four-year institutions were between 10 and 14 points higher than the means for junior college freshmen. The mean score of freshmen entering four-year colleges only, as discovered by the Berkeley study, was 107, or 13 points higher than for students entering two-year colleges.\(^3\)

Cross found that on all academic performance tests the scores for students who enroll in a four-year college are higher than the mean score for students who enroll in a junior college.\(^4\) In the longitudinal studies of Project Talent, a sample of 400,000 students


\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Ibid.

who attended college revealed that there were significant differences between junior college students and four-year college students. On every one of 14 measures of ability—ranging from reading comprehension, mathematics ability, and biology to vocabulary information, creativity, and abstract reasoning—the junior college group fell between four-year college and noncollege groups.

Cooley and Becker concluded that junior college students were more similar to non-college students than to senior college students.

A comparison of ACT scores of El Centro College students with ACT averages of students at other colleges in Texas indicated that the junior college students tend to score lower on the ACT. The mean ACT Composite Score for El Centro students was 14.7, with a standard deviation of 5.0; the mean ACT Composite Score for the public junior colleges in Texas was 16.7, with a standard deviation of

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5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 American College Testing Program Research Services, ACT Class Profile Report, El Centro College, Dallas, Texas (Iowa City, Iowa, 1970), p. 5.
however, the mean ACT Composite Score for the public senior colleges in Texas was 18.2, with a standard deviation of 4.8. \textsuperscript{10}

Socioeconomic Background

Nearly all research studies have found that parents of junior college students tend to have lower socioeconomic status than parents of students who attend senior college. \textsuperscript{11} This evidence appears to indicate that junior colleges are making available higher education to some students who would not otherwise have the opportunity to attend school after graduation from high school. In \textit{A Study of the Need for Additional Centers of Public Higher Education in California}, \textsuperscript{12} published in 1957, records were obtained on freshmen entrants for four-year colleges from the City of San Jose. Students who enrolled at San Jose State College, The University of California at Berkeley, and


\textsuperscript{10}American College Testing Program Research Services, \textit{ACT Class Profile Report, Texas Public Senior College Composite Report} (Iowa City, Iowa, 1970), p. 5.


\textsuperscript{12}Ibid.
Stanford University were selected in order to find the socioeconomic levels of their parents. ¹³

Two indicators of socioeconomic background were used: the occupation of the student's father, and the economic level of the section of the city in which the student's family resided. ¹⁴

The findings of the study, while based on San Jose students alone, approximated those of the entire student body at Stanford University:

For Stanford, nearly nine out of ten students from San Jose came from families of professional men, business owners, and business officials, with about 13 per cent from lower-white-collar or blue-collar homes. The distribution from the state university shows a greater spread, approximately 31 per cent of the students from San Jose coming from lower-white-collar or blue-collar homes. The state college and junior college, in turn, had about 62 and 77 per cent, respectively, from other than professional or business background. The largest difference in the percentage of students from the top occupational category was between the state university and the state college (31 per cent), the second largest difference was between the state university and Stanford (18 per cent), and the smallest difference was between the state college and the junior college (15 per cent). ¹⁵

From these findings one may conclude that the junior college is an institution of higher learning for students who come from the

¹³Ibid., p. 53.
¹⁴Ibid., p. 52.
¹⁵Ibid., pp. 53-54.
working class environment. Moreover, an extensive democratization of higher education is involved, with access to some form of higher education relatively unhindered by income level. Another factor to be considered is how much influence parents have upon where the student goes to college. Not enough information is available about the student's home environment, especially about what activities are encouraged in the home.

Many families in the United States do not have enough money to pay for a college education. "Various calculations place the proportion of families in the United States that can afford to put one student through college somewhere between one in three and one in four." \(^{16}\) Tuition and room and board costs have risen considerably over the past years, which increase the strain on family budgets. As a result of these rising costs, more and more students with limited funds who desire a college education are enrolled in junior colleges. \(^{17}\) Koos sent out a questionnaire to parents of junior college students asking why the son or daughter was attending the local junior college rather than a college or university elsewhere. Out of a total of 199


\(^{17}\) Leonard V. Koos, *The Junior College* (Minneapolis, 1924), p. 147.
responses received from parents of students in Minnesota, Michigan, Texas, and California, Koos found the most frequent reason given was that junior college was less expensive. Koos concluded that many parents of junior college students simply cannot afford to pay for a more expensive education at a senior college. 18

The opportunity to earn money while in school also gives the junior college student much of the financial assistance he needs:

Earlier investigators (Knoell and Medsker, 1964; Medsker and Trent, 1965a; Tillery, 1963) reported that more than half the junior college students were working at least part time while attending college. 19

Most of the working students live at home. They do not have to pay the added costs of room and board away from home the first two years of college. Moreover, they have the opportunity of contributing to their own financial support by earning money while attending junior college. 20

The communities with junior colleges report a larger percent of students going to college than those communities without junior colleges. Medsker and Trent reported:

18 Ibid.

19 Cross, p. 20.

20 Ibid.
Fifty-three percent of the high school seniors from communities with a junior college entered college. For communities with other, or no, facilities for higher education the figures were: state colleges, 47 per cent; multiple colleges, 44 per cent; extension centers, 34 per cent; and no college, 33 per cent.\textsuperscript{21}

Students in higher socioeconomic levels who are considered to be intellectually superior have no financial worries over selecting a college. The location and cost of attending college do not appear to deter their aspirations. However, intellectually superior students from lower socioeconomic levels do not react the same way:\textsuperscript{22}

The impact of local opportunities for college was most vivid for students of high academic ability from lower socioeconomic levels. While 80 percent of the bright youth from high socioeconomic backgrounds went to college even if there were none in the local community, only 22 percent of the lower socioeconomic group of the same level of ability entered college when there were no local colleges. The presence of a junior college more than doubled the opportunity for bright students whose fathers were employed at the lower occupational levels. In junior college communities, 53 percent of the bright students from lower socioeconomic levels entered college, but in communities with no public college facilities, only 22 percent of the group entered college.\textsuperscript{23}

In a similar report, Bashow found the results to be approximately the same. He discovered that the presence of new junior

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{23}Ibid., p. 21.
colleges in Florida counties resulted in a statistically significant increase in the proportion of the total population going to college. The median increase was 63 per cent two years after the founding and 99 per cent four years after the establishment of the junior college. 24

At El Centro College in 1970-71, a sample of 609 students included 125 students who chose El Centro College because of its low cost. In addition to the low cost factor, a number of the students enrolled in school because of the opportunity to receive financial aid. Many of these students would not otherwise be able to attend college at all. 25 Table I indicates the students' stated needs for financial aid at El Centro College in 1971.

Goals and Vocational Aspirations

The goals and vocational aspirations of junior college students are not nearly so high as those of senior college students. The junior college student tends to be more pragmatic in his thinking. The junior college student desires a low-cost education, and he wishes to attend college near his home. Also, the junior college


### TABLE I

#### STATED NEEDS FOR FINANCIAL AID\textsuperscript{26}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men Freq</th>
<th>Women Freq</th>
<th>Total Freq</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pc</td>
<td>Pc</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### A. Do you expect to apply for financial aid to help meet college expenses?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes, all through college</th>
<th>Yes, but not first year</th>
<th>Probably never</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>121 30</td>
<td>91 27</td>
<td>212 29</td>
<td>401 Men</td>
<td>19 Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47 12</td>
<td>57 17</td>
<td>104 14</td>
<td>339 Women</td>
<td>14 Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>233 58</td>
<td>191 56</td>
<td>424 57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>740 Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>33 Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### B. I need help in finding employment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes, applies to me</th>
<th>No, does not apply to me</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>68 20</td>
<td>275 80</td>
<td>343 Men</td>
<td>77 Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>81 26</td>
<td>235 74</td>
<td>316 Women</td>
<td>37 Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>149 23</td>
<td>510 77</td>
<td>659 Total</td>
<td>114 Total</td>
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</table>

\textsuperscript{26}ACT El Centro, p. 15.
student does not see himself as a scholar; consequently, he prefers to attend a school that emphasizes practicality rather than one that emphasizes intellectual atmosphere. \(^{27}\) Most junior college freshmen see themselves as less competent when compared with freshmen at a senior college. \(^{28}\) Astin found that junior college students rate themselves inferior in academic ability, drive to achieve, leadership ability, mathematical ability, intellectual self-confidence, and writing ability. In the same study, Astin reported that junior college students rated themselves as superior in athletic ability, defensive-ness, and mechanical ability. \(^{29}\)

Junior college students, as a group, are not always certain about their goals and vocational aspirations. Many of the junior college students plan no education beyond the two years that they will receive in the junior college. However, they often report that they have intentions of going to a senior college. \(^{30}\)

\(^{27}\) Cross, p. 56.


\(^{29}\) Ibid.

\(^{30}\) Medsker, p. 97.
In most two-year colleges at least two-thirds of the entering students say they will transfer, yet the study of those who entered in 1952 revealed that only one-third of them did transfer. This fact poses some interesting questions. It could be asked whether this discrepancy is good or bad. It may be that the junior college plays an important role in causing students to become realistic about their goals and in screening those who should not continue in college beyond two years. On the other hand, it may be that the junior college fails to encourage many able students to continue with a baccalaureate program and thus is derelict in this responsibility. 31

In a study conducted by the American College Testing Program, the reported results were similar. The data were obtained from a comprehensive follow-up survey administered to second-year students at 29 two-year colleges. Seventy-three per cent of the students stated that they still planned to transfer to four-year institutions. However, of the 73 per cent who stated that they planned to transfer to a senior college, only 32 per cent had been accepted by four-year colleges. Thirty-three per cent had applied for admission to senior colleges but had received no reply, and 34 per cent had not sent in applications for admission to senior college. 32

31 Ibid.

Many of the junior college students think that the colleges help them to achieve their goals and vocational aspirations:

Most students who planned to obtain a full-time job the following year felt that their college had prepared them for the work they would do either "fairly well" or "very well." However, 10.5% felt that their preparation was either somewhat poor or very poor. They gave a similar rating to the help their college training would be in obtaining a job.

Similarly, most students who planned to transfer to a four-year college felt their college had prepared them moderately well to very well for the academic problems they would face.\(^3\)

The research on vocational choices of junior college students presents some unusual information. Many of the students change their minds about their vocational choices; moreover, many of the students do not commit themselves to a vocational choice while they are in junior college.\(^3\) A summary of proposed vocational choices of El Centro College freshmen is expressed in Table II. However, no follow-up studies have been done by El Centro College to determine how many of these students actually achieve their vocational goals.

Cross believes that junior colleges do not know enough about the vocational aspirations of their students. She states:

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 16.

\(^4\)Cross, p. 38.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Fields</th>
<th>Men Freq</th>
<th>Men Pc</th>
<th>Women Freq</th>
<th>Women Pc</th>
<th>All Students (N = 745) Freq</th>
<th>All Students Pc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Science and Religious Fields</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business, Political, and Persuasive Fields</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific Fields</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Forestry Fields</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Fields</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
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<td>Arts and Humanities Fields</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering Fields</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trade, Industrial, and Technical Fields</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Fields</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of Students
- Men: 405
- Women: 340
- Total: 745

No Response
- Men: 15
- Women: 13
- Total: 28

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35ACT El Centro, p. 8.
Although the door of the junior college is open, it is also frequently a revolving one, and we know little about those who go in, only to get out again soon after. What are the characteristics of the sizeable number of students who take the first step toward higher education only to withdraw within six months or a year? Are they disillusioned at what they find in junior colleges? Or does the brief exposure to junior college give them the entree they need to the labor market? We don't really know. 36

Intellectual Interests and Personality Characteristics

Intellectual interests of those who go to college and those who do not go to college are quite different. The Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, Berkeley, developed a scale to measure interests and personality characteristics of college students. The intellectual-predisposition scale developed for this use clearly differentiates between students not going to college and those attending junior or senior college:

Clearly, those entering four-year colleges tended to score in the top third, whereas those not entering college tended to make the lowest scores. Junior college students were more evenly distributed across the score groups. But as a group they showed less interest in the intellectual attitudes sampled by the scale than senior college students, and more interest than is evident among those who did not attend college. 37

36 Cross, p. 52.

37 Ibid., p. 29.
Differences in interests among junior college students do exist just as marked differences in interests may be obtained among four-year college students. Students in the two-year colleges do have varied interests and are of different personality types. Blocker and others stated:

The population of each college is unique. This is not a matter of chance, but the result of a process of natural selection. The college has a public image that appeals to one kind of student rather than to another.\[38\]

In a study of personality types on a college campus, Peck placed college students in three categories on the basis of their mental health. Those students with the poorest mental health had self-centered desires, emotional problems, poor forethought, and destructive interpersonal behavior. Those students in the middle category were dependent social conformists. They had little desire to think for themselves; moreover, they did not seem to suffer much from distorted development of their personalities. Most of them showed a pervasive anxiety, and much of the anxiety was caused by a quite accurate perception that their lives lacked shape and purpose. They had the desire and courage to keep trying, however, and they

had a hope that the future would be better. In the highest category the students were strongly motivated to build self-realizing lives. They had diversified personalities, well-developed on many sides. They had developed over a long period of years their physical responsiveness to life, their intellectual inquiry into its meaning, their emotional relationships with other people, and their exploration of their own spirits. They thought clearly and far-sightedly, and they were ethical, gregarious people. They had their problems, but they were able to cope effectively with each day's new problems. 39

The junior college has personality types in all three of the aforementioned categories. The junior college student often struggles to develop his self concept and to meet the academic requirements of the college. This struggle often creates maladjustments for the student, which is an impediment to learning. 40

Reasons for Attending and Withdrawing from College

Medsker maintains that additional insight into the characteristics of junior college students can be obtained by examining the reasons given by them for entering the junior college and for


40 Blocker and others, pp. 119-123.
withdrawing before the attainment of their educational objective. He received responses from 3,000 students in four different junior colleges to questions on their primary reason for attending. "Two-thirds of those students listed either (1) persuasion by parents, counselors, and friends, (2) location of college (proximity), or (3) lower cost." 41

Medsker made another study of 10,000 drop-outs in twenty colleges between 1949 and 1957. He found that 28 per cent of the students listed full-time employment as the reason for withdrawal, and 16 per cent gave health as the reason for withdrawal. Numerous other reasons were also listed; however, only one per cent stated that their educational goals had been completed. 42

Blocker and others believe that junior college students attend college for practical reasons:

By their behavior, they demonstrate that they have practical occupational goals in mind. Their choices of occupations may be unrealistic, but this condition is also characteristic of students in four-year colleges. Their primary concerns are with achieving academic success and acquiring the necessary preparation for entry into an occupation. 43

41 Medsker, p. 47.
42 Ibid., p. 48.
43 Blocker and others, p. 131.
The main reason, then, that most junior college students cite as their purpose in going to college is to prepare for a job that pays well. Cook found a variety of reasons for attending junior college besides potential increases in earnings. From a small sample at a large junior college, the replies were

Dan: Because I was confused. I didn't know where I was going, how I would get to wherever I was going, or even when I would get there.

Sharyn: One reason is to please my parents.

Bob: I am married, and my wife wants to help me get through school. Someday, if I make the grade, I want to be a doctor.

Chuck: Because I did not want to go into any one of the armed services without knowing what I wanted to be.

Bill: I'm trying to acquire a better status in life, and we all know that education is one of the main factors necessary for the acquiring of such status.

Susan: There's a better chance of getting a husband by going to college.

George: I came to college because I was deeply disturbed by the very life around me. I was a stranger in a society which has a greater emphasis on material values than people. I experienced moral chaos at the hypocrisy of people towards various forms of injustice. I came to college in order to prepare myself to do something about this condition.\(^44\)

\(^{44}\)Cook, pp. 2-3.
Apparently, much more research is needed in order to discover the needs of the junior college student. Current research seems to indicate that the junior college student has fewer advantages and talents when compared to the four-year college student. Generally, his academic ability is somewhat lower than that of the senior college student. He comes from a lower socioeconomic background, which often causes him to have money problems while attending school. He elects to attend a junior college because the school is usually near his home, and the cost is lower. His goals and vocational aspirations are not always clearly defined, which may be a contributing factor as to why he is in a junior college. His interests are not the same as his senior college peers. He attends college for practical reasons, for he wishes to prepare himself to earn a good living. However, some junior college students have not decided upon a vocational choice when they enter school, and may not make a vocational choice while in junior college. It appears that much more information is needed in order to discover and to supply the needs of the junior college student.

To determine the aesthetic needs of junior college students, this researcher conducted a survey of intellectual interests in poetry at El Centro College. Ninety-five selected sophomore English literature students were asked attitudinal questions about poetry
in order to discover ideas upon which a more tenable approach to
instruction of poetry might be developed for junior college students.
Students were asked their general attitudes towards poetry, their
favorite kinds of poetry, the types of poetry that they especially dis-
liked, their favorite poets, how much time that they spent reading
poetry which had not been assigned, and how would they improve the
instruction of poetry.

Sixty-seven of the students stated that they liked one or
more kinds of poetry; twenty students stated that they disliked all
types of poetry; eight students expressed no opinion at all. Fifty-two
students selected romantic poetry as their favorite kind of poetry;
twenty-two students chose modern poetry as their favorite kind of
poetry; the remainder of the students' choices could not be categorized.
For example, three students said that rhyming poetry was their
favorite kind of poetry. Fifty-eight students stated that they disliked
poetry which was difficult to understand, such as metaphysical,
imagist, or symbolist poetry. Four students were not in favor of
poems which were too long.

In the favorite poet category, no clear distinction was made
by the students; however, most of the poets selected were funda-
mentally romantic poets. Robert Frost, Rod McKuen, Edgar Allan
Poe, Emily Dickinson, Robert Browning, and William Shakespeare were the favorite poets of the students.

Fifty-five of the students said that they read poetry which had not been assigned; twenty-nine said that they never read poetry on their own time; six students made no comment.

Perhaps the most enlightening answers of the students were given when they were asked how to improve instruction. Sixty-one of the students stated that the best way to study poetry was for the instructor and students to explicate the poem. They expressed the belief that through careful explication of the poems, students could grasp the meanings that might be relevant to them. Four of the students stated that the way to improve instruction was to make an extensive study of the works of major poets. For example, instead of studying just a few poems by many poets, students should be permitted to study many poems by a few poets. Nineteen of the students made no comment.

In view of their interests in romantic and modern poetry, junior college students appear to be searching for something which would help them to restore and to maintain their individualities in our technological society. They realize that changes in our culture are occurring so fast that the individual "self" may be in danger of yielding to "group" identity. Automation in many instances has
lessened the importance of the individual; moreover, man's place in the society seems to be unstable.

Because of the academic ability, socioeconomic background, goals and vocational aspirations, intellectual interests and personality types, and reasons for attending and withdrawing from college of junior college students, an existential theory of education is suggested as one of the possible ways of educating and supplying the needs of these special kinds of students. In Chapter III the individual in a technological society, an individual's needs in a technological society, and an existentialist theory of education will be discussed.
CHAPTER III

AN EXISTENTIAL THEORY OF EDUCATION

The Individual in the Technological Society

Our scientific age is one of individual and social problems for all men, and there are many opinions about what kind of education is appropriate to meet them. Some believe that a scientific education is preferable; others, a liberal education. But some suggest that a liberal education blended with a scientific one would restore needed balance to man.

Whitehead in 1929 asserted that a liberal education was a necessity, for

. . . in its essence a liberal education is an education for thought and for aesthetic appreciation. It proceeds by imparting a knowledge of the masterpieces of thought, of imaginative literature, and of art. The action which it contemplates is command. 1

However, a correlative of the rise of modern technology is a slighting of the student's aesthetic nature by many schools. Read states that " . . . technology is a ruthless tyranny and its processes

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demand from the educational system a training directed exclusively toward conceptual modes of thought.\(^2\) Hutchins thinks present educational practices are meaningless. \(^3\) "At present education means nothing in the U.S.; it is a vast personnel system for the use of the employers."\(^4\) It is a technology assisting a technology. Juenger also deplores the modern system of education. He stated:

> When too much emphasis is placed on facts, education strives for a handbook knowledge, imparted to the student through surveys, profiles, graphs, and statistics of the subject matter. True education is incompatible with this kind of knowledge and with this method of instruction, for the crude empiricism into which such training has fallen is a purely mechanical piling up of facts.\(^5\)

Many educators today think that a proper course to follow in organizing a curriculum is to harmonize the teaching of science and art. Langsner, for example, stated that science interprets the phenomenal world with reference to the coherences of structure and

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\(^4\) Ibid.

behavior. Art transforms the phenomenal world into poetic metaphors with reference to experience unique to man. Both are indispensable to the enrichment of life in our civilization, and each can only benefit from a mature reciprocity with the other. 6

Sweetkind suggests that the English teacher should be informed of the latest developments in science. A great deal of modern poetry has striven for a unified sensibility of mind and heart. The rapprochement of poetry and science is growing closer when we realize that both tend to create a nonmaterial world that only an alert imagination can grasp. Poetry and science then become complementary symbol systems that clarify nature and our relationship in the world. Instead of being enemies, poetry and science should become allies in investigating the mystery of human existence and in exploring the joys and agonies of the human condition. Our best hope for survival lies in ending this cultural schism and establishing harmony between these two essential activities of mankind. 7

Read believes that our present civilization is in danger of collapse unless we do something to change our perspectives. The

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artist must render images to society, or there are no ideas and then our civilization will perish. He stated:

I believe that there is only one way of saving our civilization and that is by so reforming its constituent societies that, in the sense of the phrases already defined, the concrete sensuous phenomena of art are once more spontaneously manifested in our daily lives. I have called this reform education through art, and it now has advocates throughout the world. But what I have not sufficiently emphasized and what is not sufficiently realized by many of my fellow workers in this field is the revolutionary nature of the remedy. An education through art is not necessarily anti-scientific, for science itself depends on the clear manifestation of concrete sensuous phenomena, and is necessarily impeded by the language game. But an education through art does not fit human beings for the mindless and mechanical actions of modern industry; it does not reconcile them to a leisure devoid of constructive purpose; it does not leave them satisfied with passive entertainment. It aims to create "stir and growth" everywhere, to substitute for conformity and imitation in each citizen an endowment of imaginative power "in a kind perfectly unborrowed and his own."9

Oppenheimer, a distinguished American physicist, stated:

For the artist and for the scientist there is a special problem and a special hope, for in their extraordinarily different ways, in their lives that have increasingly divergent character, there is still a sensed bond, a sensed analogy. Both the man of science and the man of art live always at the edge of mystery, surrounded by it; both always, as the measure of their creation, have

9Ibid.
had to do with the harmonization of what is new with what is familiar, with the balance between novelty and antithesis, with the struggle to make partial order in total chaos. They can, in their work and in their lives, help themselves, help one another, and help all men. They can make the paths that connect the villages of arts and sciences with each other and with the world at large the multiple, varied, precious bonds of a true and world-wide community.\textsuperscript{10}

Oppenheimer suggests that there may be enough similarities between art and science that the one may complement the other.

Because changes come so fast in our technological society, many people are utterly unprepared to cope with life. Individuals are often bewildered, frustrated, and disoriented in their dealings with other people. They no longer see others as individuals. Alvin Toffler says that people are suffering from the "dizzying disorientation brought on by the premature arrival of the future." The product of the greatly accelerated rate of change in society arises from the superimposition of a new culture on an old one. Man now faces the prospect of dislocation. Because these changes are avalanching down upon us so fast, existentialists have different viewpoints on how one is to live in a technological society.

Existential Interpretations of the Individual and Technology

Existentialists react in various ways when confronted with the influences of science and technology on human existence. Greene believes that it is difficult for an individual to maintain his identity under these conditions. She states that many scientific advancements create favorable environments for the crowd but not for the individual:

It is difficult, however, in a day of mass communications, city living, and systematization, to experience oneself as a separate and autonomous being. Yet, if a student is submerged—or submerges himself in a class, a category, or even a privileged (or underprivileged) minority, he ceases to learn. He can only learn if he feels responsible for becoming, for achieving himself. This means that whatever membership he chooses for himself, be it in a peer group, a club, an organization, or society at large, must not obliterate his sense of his own uniqueness and responsibility. As a mere cog, a cypher, he will not learn; "for a crowd is the untruth." 11

Morris believes that nobody paid any real attention to Kierkegaard during the nineteenth century. Men were too busy searching for the truth in a scientific world; however, during the twentieth century man began to question the real possibilities of science. Morris said that the "system builders" failed: 12


By the twentieth century, however, the Grand Designs began to collapse; like cardboard boxes in the rain, they quietly folded into grotesque shapes of irrelevance. Science, having promised so much, had not delivered. As a logic for explaining the world, it seemed helpless before the juggernaut of modern events. How, one might ask, can science and system rationalize an age in which men schedule two world wars in every lifetime and casually discuss, as just another problem in social affairs, the prospect of total human annihilation?  

Barnes thinks that individuals really should have no fear of a scientific world. People should use modern inventions but only in the objective world:

The world of science is never comprehended as a thing-in-itself independent of the intellectual structure imposed on it. It is the contention of phenomenologists and existentialists alike that even if we could know that the latest scientific field theory was the final and absolutely accurate interpretation of the universe, the scientific world would still not be the world that anybody lives in. We make use of it as the stuff of our projects, but it remains only part of the furniture of the live world in which we truly reside. The life-world is the world as it appears to each one of us with its "horizons of meanings," its values, its organization in relation to ourselves as vantage point and center of reference. In the life-world, objects are not portions of matter but instruments and possibilities.  

Fromm does not look too kindly upon the influences that science has had in this century. Man now deals with figures and

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13 Ibid.
abstractions. His concept of the world no longer corresponds to human dimensions:

Science, business, politics, have lost all foundations and proportions which make sense humanly. We live in figures and abstractions; since nothing is concrete, nothing is real. Everything is possible, factually and morally. Science fiction is not different from science fact, nightmares and dreams from the events of next year. Man has been thrown out from any definite place whence he can overlook and manage his life and the life of society. He is driven faster and faster by the forces which originally were created by him. In this wild whirl he thinks, figures, busy with abstractions more and more remote from concrete life. 15

Finally, the new science of cybernetics has heralded an era that brought on the automatic factory which now requires no workers. Scientists are now predicting "reasoning machines" 16 to be fully developed in the next few years.

Heinemann states that man must make a choice:

The alternative with which we are faced is: either atrophy of our brain power; degeneration of men; decline of his intellectual and spiritual activities which become more and more mechanical; and in the end slavery in new totalitarian regimes with ever-centralized control; or a spiritual revolution; an awakening of man to the fact that he, after all, is a spiritual being with inexhaustible spiritual powers; and a stern determination to defend his liberty and to subordinate the so-called progress of science and technology to the moral and


spiritual ends of humanity within a democratic order. Courage, faith and heroic defiance may be the only means for mastering a dangerous development which we are unable to stop. 17

It seems to the existentialist that the age of technology does create problems for all men. The existentialist recognizes that man needs to regain the ability to control himself and to subordinate machines, for he is in danger of losing his individuality in this highly technical society.

Individual Needs in a Scientific and Technological Age

Individual needs in our society have never been greater because of massive technological changes. It appears that these changes have depersonalized and dehumanized individuals, for the changes have come so rapidly since World War II that individuals have not been able to adapt to the new conditions. Change follows change very quickly. Percy Shelley in "Mutability" assured us that the only thing that people could be absolutely certain of was change. During Shelley's time, however, people had ample opportunity to adjust to change and then coast for a while before new changes appeared, because the pace of life was not so accelerated. Change appears to be a way of life for the future. Human

17 Ibid., p. 29.
nature is continually changing, and these changes give rise to new human needs.

In this day of "fast" living, brought on by continual change, individuals must have time to get acquainted with themselves. They need to get to know their own feelings; then possibly they can share their feelings with others. Gardner emphasized:

The maxim "Know thyself"—so ancient, so deceptively simple, so difficult to follow—has gained in richness of meaning as we learn more about man's nature. Modern research in psychology and psychiatry has shown the extent to which mental health is bound up in a reasonably objective view of the self. And we have learned how crucial is the young person's search for identity. 18

To be "authentic" an individual must first know himself; then the person may seek self-fulfillment through himself and others. People must have intimate relationships, whether for short or long durations of time, to remind them that they are still members of the human race. Individuals must have new plans for living which will encourage emotional intimacy; then they can satisfy the need to experience themselves and others. Jaspers stated that people must be sincere to themselves and to others:

Whoever philosophizes wants to live for truth. He questions wherever he goes, whatever he experiences, whatever men he meets, and above all he questions what he himself is thinking, feeling, and doing. Things and people and he himself should become clear. He does not withdraw from them. He exposes himself to them. He would rather founder on truth than be happy in illusion. 19

Individuals need to become aware of the necessity for "closeness" among all people.

Marshall McLuhan believed that technological changes recast the entire character of the individual and compel him to rediscover himself in depth instead of in detachment and objectivity. It seems that man does need to rediscover himself in order to realize his fullest potentials, or he may lose his identity because of technological advances.

As each individual begins to realize that he is an important and worthy person, he should develop and fulfill his potential in this technological society. Of course, one is expected to develop in such a way as to make favorable contributions to society. Gardner stated:

We say that we wish the individual to fulfill his potentialities, but obviously we do not wish to develop great criminals or great rascals. Learning for learning's sake isn't enough. Thieves learn cunning, and

slaves learn submissiveness. We may learn things that constrict our vision and warp our judgment. We wish to foster fulfillment within the framework of rational and moral strivings which have characterized man at his best. In a world of huge organizations and vast social forces that dwarf and threaten the individual, we must range ourselves whenever possible on the side of individuality; but we cannot applaud an irresponsible, amoral, or wholly self-gratifying individuality. 20

Individuals today need experiences that foster their "humaneness." They need to experience many things in order to discover their values, for the real purpose of life is to experience oneself and to experience others. Individuals, of course, must experience, not manipulate, human beings.

Individuals need to feel worthy; they need to achieve self-esteem and the esteem of others. In our society today individuals find it difficult to feel worthy, for our society is imbued with utilitarian principles. Individuals become concerned with objects; they establish rules and regulations and by doing so, they inhibit the growth of people as living human beings. Gardner believes,

As a society becomes more concerned with precedent and custom, it comes to care more about how things are done and less about whether they are done. The man who wins acclaim is not the one who "gets things done" but the one who has an ingrained knowledge

of the rules and accepted practices. Whether he accomplishes anything is less important than whether he conducts himself in an "appropriate" manner. Thus do men become prisoners of their procedures. 21

Shelley also believed that society has a way of crushing individuality. People are not really allowed to be themselves because society insists upon a code of morality which was handed down from past generations. Shelley's formula for curing society of its ills was for man to evaluate man as a man. Men should treat one another as subjects; then man would have dignity, self respect, and worth. And the surest way for man to achieve self esteem and the esteem of others was through the all redeeming power of "love."

In this technological society today, people need to be concerned with the problems of life that all people face. Those problems are loneliness, superficiality, frustration, fear, guilt, anxiety, and despair. People need to come to the aid of one another. John Steinbeck in The Grapes of Wrath left the impression at the end of his fine novel that the only real hope for man was for man to save man, or man would be destroyed by the "manipulators" in society. William Wordsworth "grieved" over what man had done to man. Individuals need to learn how to make use of their therapeutic natures, for

people can be of benefit to each other. Perhaps they may find cures for existential loneliness by being "close" to each other.

People in our society today need to be able to make their own decisions about many things, but one definite need for now and for the future is the need for a "continuing" education. The quest for knowledge is part of the human condition. Learning is part of creative living, and the more progress that our culture brings the more society needs abstract thinkers. Fromm stated,

In fact, an increasing ability to form abstractions is characteristic of the cultural development of the human race. If I speak of "a table," I am using an abstraction; I am referring, not to a specific table in its full concreteness, but to the genus "table" which comprises all possible concrete tables. If I speak of "a man," I am not speaking of this or that person, in his concreteness and uniqueness, but of the genus "man," which comprises all individual persons. In other words, I make an abstraction. The development of philosophical or scientific thought is based on an increasing ability for such abstractification, and to give it up would mean to fall back into the primitive way of thinking.22

The concept of learning today must include, in large doses, the affective, emotional, and interpersonal dimensions. People need learning in these dimensions if they are going to live enriched lives in a world of technology and in a world of rapid and continuing

change. They need to be educated in awareness and intimacy in addition to all of the intellectual aspects of education in order to develop and grow. Gordon states that all people need certain forces that influence their behavior and development:

We can label them in a multitude of ways, but they all may be seen as aspects of the urge to develop, mature, and enhance the experiencing organism, and to "preserve, protect, and defend" the already developed organization. All life seems to follow these two urges--growth and development--and the accompanying maintenance of organization.23

The Existential Predicament in Society

Eric Fromm established the Existential predicament in his book *Escape from Freedom* when he said that individuals were often disturbed over the baselessness of their values. Freedom was too much for people; people must have directions, laws, and moral principles dictated to them by some higher authority. They escape from freedom by submitting to external authorities. People in the Communist countries today have no real worries over making the proper choices. The Existentialist frowns upon any submission to any higher authority than oneself. He unequivocally rejects those outside pressures which attempt to force him to think like a group. Morris stated the Existential view on the ideal society:

If the authentic man is our aim, then the authentic society is also our aim. That society is authentic in the degree to which it fails to provoke in the individual citizen these urgings to escape from his freedom. That society is authentic which refuses to specify "the good" to its citizens. That society is authentic in the degree to which it summons the citizen to stand by itself, for himself, in shaping the direction of his life, and therefore the meaning of his existence. That society is authentic which never achieves a "national purpose," which is, in fact, uninterested in achieving one, but interested only in being the host to individual purposes in its citizens.\textsuperscript{24}

Jaspers stated that man can be authentic only if he has political freedom. Man is free to arrange and order his own affairs only when he has political freedom. This freedom can be maintained by politics; however, one's freedom may have difficulty coexisting with the freedom of others.\textsuperscript{25}

Politics aims at the subjugation of force by debate, by treaty, by training the communal will in legal ways. This state of affairs requires the appropriate statesmen. Statesmen who do not desire to be dictators, because it does not please them to rule over slave souls. They demand power only for their term of office, while they enjoy the confidence of their people, the confidence of citizens, not of subjects, and they resign as soon as they lose this confidence. They hate force, but are demagogues in the true sense of the word, which means educators of the people. They articulate the true wishes of the people in concrete situations, giving facts and reasons, so that the people, examining themselves, can recognize their own

\textsuperscript{24} Morris, p. 103.

\textsuperscript{25} Jaspers, p. 52.
judgment in them, and be spurred in their decisions. Their words and deeds are still remembered after millenia.\(^{26}\)

No one really knows if such a society is possible in which each person takes responsibility for all the choices he makes. However, such a society would truly be an Existential one, and the Existential educator would welcome the opportunity to work with individuals who exist alone as individuals.

The Existential posture is based upon the idea that man has been "thrown into the world," but he has never been able to figure out the reasons for his existence. Man is aware that he exists, yet he cannot come up with answers that he so desperately needs. Therefore, man struggles, often futilely, to create his own system of values. Heidegger attempted to explain one's ontological freedom:

Heidegger is the philosopher of the *Dasein* (existence). He is concerned with what it means "to be in the world," not only as mind but as concrete being. "Being in the world" reveals the human reality. To be in the world is to be conscious of anxiety and of having to die. Anxiety and death reveal the revealing condition of man. Heidegger attempts to point to this real in the human reality, a reality whose Being reveals itself as "being here."\(^{27}\)

\(^{26}\) Ibid.

It would appear, then, that man has a unique problem which is really insoluble. He attempts to unravel the mystery of why he exists, and at the same time he knows that he can never achieve the answer. Man must operate in a world which is hostile to him; therefore, problems arise when he struggles to create his own system of values. To encourage students to search for the reasons for their very existence is the proper course for an Existential education.

The Existential Definition of Education

Many educational theorists have all-encompassing ideas on proper ways to educate the youth of today. They even furnish or establish substantiated proof on the success of their beliefs, but the majority of these theories have serious flaws in them. Morris claims that most educators consider students as objects which are to be manipulated and are to be shaped in some fashion known only to the educator:

The young, in these conceptions of education, are to be used; they are to be employed on behalf of (1) a prepared, preconceived idea of "human nature" which they are expected to fulfill, (2) an extant body of subject matter which they are expected to absorb, (3) an objective concept of a culture's ways and means of living which they are expected to assume, or (4) a set of dispositions, deemed fundamental, which are to be formed in them and for which they are expected to become the living vehicles.²⁸

²⁸ Morris, p. 108.
The student is too often treated as an object and not as a subject, which emphasizes that educational processes are outside the learner. These processes obviously do not permit a student to fully self-actualize, for he is not permitted self-direction and self-determination. Goodman offers hope that students can receive a proper education through Existential techniques:

We can, I believe, educate the young entirely in terms of their free choice, with no processing whatever. Nothing can be efficiently learned, or, indeed learned at all—other than through parroting or brute training, when acquired knowledge is promptly forgotten after the examination—unless it meets need, desire, curiosity, or fantasy. Unless there is a reaching from within, the learning cannot become "second nature," as Aristotle called true learning. It seems stupid to decide a priori what the young ought to know and then try to motivate them, instead of letting the initiative come from them and putting information and relevant equipment at their service.\(^\text{29}\)

There is really no great value to studying formal subjects, established by a prearranged curriculum, before the age of twelve. With the proper guidance, the child will learn through the experience that he has, and he will want to go on learning after he has experienced his existential moment, or when he becomes intensely aware of his existence.

The Existential Moment

The Existential moment occurs at about the same time as puberty; however, no Existential educator as of yet has been able to discover any correlation between puberty and one's Existential moment. The moment occurs when an individual suddenly becomes aware of his existence in this world as a human being. He is charged now with the responsibility of creating his own existence. He must now make choices; no one from this moment on may decide his course of action for the future. He must create his very existence, for he is determined that there is no a priori nature which can decide his future or give him laws to follow which would predetermine his essence. Merleau-Ponty suggests that when an individual's primacy of perception comes, it creates some problems, but one may find possible solutions:

Just as the perception of a thing opens me up to being, by realizing the paradoxical synthesis of an infinity of perceptual aspects, in the same way the perception of the other founds morality by realizing the paradox of an alter ego, of a common situation, by placing my perspectives, and my incommunicable solitude in the visual field of another and of all the others. Here as everywhere else the primacy of perception--the realization, at the very heart of our most personal experience to the regard of others--is the remedy to skepticism and pessimism. 

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Morris thinks that most children may reach the age of awareness when they suddenly become defiant and may blurt out to a parent, "Well, I didn't ask to be born, ya know!" From this moment on, the child has started on his road to being responsible for his existence. He now becomes answerable to himself, for he can no longer turn back the clock of time and ask someone to make his choices for him. He has reached the point of no return, and what lies beyond is of tremendous importance. For the world of the Existentialist is void of all prior meaning. The individual must somehow create a world of something out of nothing. As Sartre says, it is the "sculpturing of one's figure in the world." The Existentialist education is one that emphasizes to the student that he is an individual who must take charge of his own life. He is responsible for being human.

The Existential Educational Task and Purposes

The Existential educational task really does not begin until a student has become aware of his own existence; therefore, Existential educators do not insist upon, nor do they recommend, any specific kind of training for students in the elementary grades. Existential education begins when a student has become personally answerable for his own life. And it is at this time that Existential

31Morris, p. 114.
educators need to provide occasions for the students to become aware of their very existences. Sartre maintained that each person must accept the responsibility for his own life:

I am responsible for everything, in fact, except for my very responsibility, for I am not the foundation of my very being. Therefore everything takes place as if I were compelled to be responsible. I am abandoned in the world, not in the sense that I might remain abandoned and passive in a hostile universe like a board floating on the water, but rather in the sense that I find myself suddenly alone and without help, engaged in a world for which I bear the whole responsibility without being able, whatever I do, to tear myself away from this responsibility for an instant. For I am responsible for my very desire of fleeing responsibilities. 32

Existential educators believe that the nature of each learner is completely singular and unique. There really is no generalized nature, for each individual makes his own nature by exercising his own personal freedom of choice. Educators, then, must provide an atmosphere which permits "inescapable" freedom of choice for each learner. Each learner must determine his own future:

We ought to teach people that we are responsible and free, that authenticity and the ethical life are values worth striving for. We should show them the difference between being-with others and being-one-with others. We should help them to understand their relation to their own emotions, to realize that they are not enslaved to their past and that they will themselves

determine the quality of their own future. We should unashamedly proclaim the doctrine of the irreducibility of each independent subjectivity and affirm that nobody should ever be relegated to object status because of some accident of his birth or social circumstances. 33

The existential educative process stresses that each learner has only a "thing" kind of existence until self awareness dawns. Educators need to stress, then, the processes that increase awareness of self and self fulfillment. Morris said, "Let education be the discovery of responsibility! Let learning be the sharp and vivid awakening of the learner to the sense of being personally answerable for his own life." 34 It appears that the best way for a student to learn is to become involved in learning situations:

In education, it means the learner's experience of getting personally implicated in his subject matter and in the situation around him. It means being aroused by questions of bad and good, right and wrong, pro and con, yes and no. In short, it means awakening to the normative quality of experience—in a book, in a teacher's remark, in a classroom situation. 35

Personal involvement permits the learner to assert a personal, subjective view on anything.

33 Barnes, pp. 316-317.
34 Morris, p. 117.
35 Ibid., p. 119.
Instruction which motivates students to awaken their sensibilities and to intensify their feelings is necessary. Education needs to create within the individual an arousal of one's emotions and open a student's perceptive apparatus to receive symbolic experiences which awaken new and hitherto unfelt emotions in the student's consciousness:

Consider any major theme of humanistic writing—death, love, suffering, guilt, freedom—and let the student in the classroom be put in touch with increasingly strong doses of what the important figures in our literary past have had to say about them. Of these, certainly the most powerful is the theme of death. Are we ready to induct high school youngsters into a subjective consideration of this most profound of human encounters? Are we prepared as teachers to have them really get inside this most existential of all human problems? The Existentialist teacher would insist on it. And he would introduce it to the youngster with materials ranging from Jack London's "To Build a Fire" to Caryl Chessman's Cell 2455, Death Row. Let the students get inside the heart of the man freezing to death, of the man before the firing squad or sitting in the electric chair or gas chamber. Let him ponder the meaning of his own life by deliberately pondering the truth that on some future day it will be abruptly canceled from the universe with no trace remaining, as abruptly as any firing squad might cancel it. 36

Much of this theory for instruction of poetry dwells upon the importance of the student's being able to gather and relate ideas which may have meaning for him. Moreover, many of the poems

36 Ibid., p. 140.
selected for this theory for instruction of poetry are romantic poems set in the past; however, these poems do not preclude a student's being able to gather meanings which may have significance for him now. The student draws the meanings from the past and relates them to his present need; it is assumed at this point that learning takes place. Sartre stated,

... the meaning of the past is strictly dependent on my present project. This certainly does not mean that I can make the meaning of my previous acts vary in any way I please; quite the contrary, it means that the fundamental project which I am decides absolutely the meaning which [my] past ... can have for me. ... I alone in fact can decide at each moment the bearing of the past. ... by projecting myself toward my ends, I preserve the past with me, and by action I decide its meaning. ... Thus all my past is there pressing, urgent, imperious, but its meaning and the orders which it gives me I choose by the very project of my end. 37

It would seem then that students create their own meanings; or as Existentialists would say, they "appropriate" ideas.

Existentialist education begins when the student reaches out for an understanding of the subject matter. It is the student's attitude towards the subject and what meanings he may desire to appropriate that really determine the importance of the curriculum. Kneller stated that this is really where an Existentialist education begins:

37 Sartre, p. 555.
The existentialist attitude toward knowledge radically affects the teaching of those subjects which are dependent upon systems of thought or frames of reference; it states that school subjects are only tools for the realization of subjectivity. 38

Kneller's statement may be said to represent the entire Existentialist epistemology or at least a capsule review of Existentialist education. Subject matter is not there to be mastered by the students; it is there to be "chosen" by the students. Subject matter and experience in school should be made available for the student's "appropriation."

The subject matter that seems to be the most suitable for an Existentialist would be those subjects that permit the student to be almost entirely creative, such as in the areas of drama, music, art, and the like. However, other subject areas of a normative sort, which are those subjects that allow for decision-making on the part of the learner, would be history and literature.

Morris stated that literature is ideal subject matter for the Existentialist teacher:

The study of literature is equally relevant for the awakening of strategic choice making on the part of the learner. And by "strategic" I mean choice making of a magnitude which bears on the shape and direction of an entire human life. Shakespeare's

Hamlet, a perennial figure, comes immediately to mind. It is a work in which the agonies of personal definition make a persistent whisper to the student: "What would you have done?" Wherever ethical questions are raised for which convenient precedents in the present-day experience are not available--there one will find the kinds of literature capable of arousing the existential awareness of the learner.  

Existentialism questions the kinds of teaching that deal in old generalizations and external rules and regulations and which seem to forget the private experience of the learner. The individual learner should be the center of the learning process, but often educators insist upon "group" thinking and "group" everything.

Hopefully, an ideal teaching situation may often arise in a classroom teaching situation. For example, Morris told of a final examination given by Robert Frost:

...the teacher may imply experiences in the literary arts of short-story writing and poetic expression. Spontaneity is the principal caution; nothing is quite so preposterous as to "assign" a student the task of writing an original poem "to be handed in tomorrow." But, whatever poetic or prose inclinations reveal themselves, the teacher should immediately seize on such opportunities and quicken the student's desire to express himself in his own way. In this connection, I am reminded of the final examination Robert Frost gave to one of his classes. At the close of the course, the students gathered dutifully with their blue books, ball-points poised for three hours of question answering. Mr. Frost entered the room at the

39 Morris, pp. 126-127.
appointed hour and wrote the entire examination on
the blackboard in two words: "Write something." Then he left. 40

The Existential Teacher and Learner

Finally, the relationship between teacher and learner is one
in which the teacher seeks to awaken awareness and responsibility
on the part of the learner. The teacher strives to awaken the
learner's awareness of truth without inculcating his own truths:

If education means to let a selection of the world
affect a person through the medium of another person,
then the one through whom this takes place, rather,
who makes it take place through himself, is caught in
a strange paradox. What is otherwise found only as
grace, inlaid in the folds of life--the influencing of
the lives of others with one's own life--becomes here
a function and a law. But since the educator has to
such an extent replaced the master, the danger has
arisen that the new phenomenon, the will to educate,
may degenerate into arbitrariness, and that the edu-
cator may carry out his selection and his influence
from himself and his idea of the pupil, not from the
pupil's own reality. 41

It seems as though each teacher comes to realize that suc-
cessful teaching is paradoxical. A successful teacher is one who
virtually teaches himself out of a job. A teacher motivates the
learner who no longer needs to be taught, for the student becomes

40 Ibid., p. 138.

41 Greene, p. 50.
free and self-actualizing. Students become free to establish their own standards in what they choose to learn:

A teacher knows that he has succeeded only when he has evidence that his pupils can hold something to be true that he himself is convinced is true, without having come to this truth by imitating the teacher, by reasoning, or by other powers of persuasion, including the persuasion of example. When one sees one's own ideas quoted verbatim, one's heart should sink. But when one sees one's own ideas thought out anew as for the first time, then he is seeing the beginning of a free mind. 42

Good teaching it appears, then, widens the gap between the teacher and the learner. The teacher does not seek to produce convergent thinkers. The teacher strives to produce students who dare to think for themselves, and when the teacher is successful in doing this, he knows that his students will be free, self-moving subjects.

The individual encounters many problems in our technological age today. Many persons are in danger of losing their identities in our technological society; therefore, individuals need to learn to be autonomous. Today, too many pressures and demands are on people to do what the group wants. One is often rewarded for his conformity and is too often chastized for his individuality. People need to rebel against conformity for conformity's sake; they need to realize their

fullest potentials, and conformists do not develop themselves fully. Man has the need to control his life now and in the future, and it seems that the best kind of life in which each person would develop his potentials would be one in which the person was unique and adaptable to change.

Ten authorities on poetry will be examined in order to discover a wide range of ideas on what poetry can do for people living in a technological age. From these ten theories of poetry, five theories which contribute most to the development of the student will be selected for use in instruction of poetry.
CHAPTER IV

THEORIES OF POETRY

Introduction

There is no absolutely valid way to classify theories of poetry because each poet has his own unique ideas that go into the creation of a poem. All theorists do recognize, however, that poetry is a product of the poet’s imagination and is, therefore, contingent upon what lies about him. The poet writes about persons, places, and things; and he becomes fairly consistent in the ways that he believes poetry should be written. In Chapter V the theories of poetry of Edgar Allan Poe, Emily Dickinson, Henry James, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Robert Frost, E.E. Cummings, John Dryden, Percy B. Shelley, Robert Browning, and Matthew Arnold will be discussed, and five theories will be selected for use in this study.

Edgar Allan Poe

Edgar Allan Poe stated his theory of poetry in The Poetic Principle. Poe was a romantic poet who believed that a poem must stimulate the imagination:
I need scarcely observe that a poem deserves its title only inasmuch as it excites, by elevating the soul. The value of the poem is in the ratio of this elevating excitement. ¹

Brevity was Poe's first principle of poetry. The excitement which a poem created within a person was essential. Once this excitement ceased, as it might in a lengthy poem, the poem was no longer poetic. Basically, Poe believed that excitement could be maintained easily in a short poem. However, he did go on to say that a long poem might be regarded as poetic if one looked upon it as a series of minor poems:

In regard to the Iliad, we have, if not positive proof, at least very good reason, for believing it intended as a series of lyrics; but, granting the epic intention, I can say only that the work is based in an imperfect sense of art. ²

Poe said a poet's effort was commendable, but the lengthy poem should not be praised for effort's sake. After all, one should judge poetry by the impression and effect it had on the reader. Then again the poem might be too brief:


² Ibid., p. 587.
Undue brevity degenerates into mere epigrammatism. A very short poem, while now and then producing a brilliant or vivid effect, never produces a profound or enduring effect. ³

Poe was vehemently opposed to poems being didactic. This kind of poetry was really an enemy to the poet and poetry:

It has been assumed, tacitly and avowedly, directly and indirectly, that the ultimate object of all Poetry is Truth. Every poem, it is said, should inculcate a moral; and by this moral is the poetical merit of the work to be adjudged. ⁴

Poe disagreed very strongly with this philosophy, for he believed that the most beautiful poems were those written solely for the poem's sake. In enforcing a truth, one needed the severity of simplicity, preciseness, and terseness. "In a word, we must be in that mood which, as nearly as possible, is the exact converse of the poetical." ⁵

Poe divided the mind into three distinct categories. The mind, he said, is composed of pure intellect, taste, and moral sense. The intellect is concerned with truth; the taste, with the beautiful; and the moral sense, with duty. The moral sense is composed of conscience, which teaches obligation, and reason, which teaches expediency:

³ Ibid., p. 588.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Ibid., p. 589.
An immortal instinct, deep within the spirit of man, is thus, plainly, a sense of the Beautiful. This it is which administers to his delight in the manifold forms, and sounds, and odours, and sentiments amid which he exists.\textsuperscript{6}

It was through a mere repetition of these ideas that poets created; it was through the satisfaction of the thirst for the immortal and eternal. It was in poetry that one "felt!" briefly those things that might be present in immortality.

Poe said that the poetic sentiment developed its best adjunct in music, for through music, the soul might attain supernal beauty. It was in the contemplation of beauty, which excited the soul, that one recognized the poetic sentiment:

I make beauty the province of the poem simply because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring as directly as possible from their causes.\textsuperscript{7}

It was in the beauty that one found the essence of poetry. According to Poe, other qualities which were of great value to a poem were the gracefulness of its meter and its naturalness. Poetry should also be written in a tone that agreed with its subject matter. Imagination, versification, and theme were also important tools of the poet. The greatest and truest of all poetical themes was love. However,

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., p. 591.
passion alone degraded rather than elevated the soul, and truth was useful only when it led to a harmony which was not present before.

Emily Dickinson

Emily Dickinson did not have a literary career during her lifetime. Only seven of her poems had been published while she was alive. Except for T.W. Higginson and some close friends, few people ever saw any of her verse until 1890. Four years after her death, the first volume of her poems were published by Mabel Loomis Todd and T.W. Higginson.

On April 15, 1862, Emily Dickinson sent Higginson four of her poems. She wanted Higginson's commentary on the poems. She asked specifically if her verses "breathed." Higginson sensed some quality in her work; but he was embarrassed, for he did not know how to classify the poems. Later, in 1891, Higginson wrote an article describing his early correspondence with Emily. He stated,

The impression of a wholly new and original poetic genius was as distinct on my mind at the first reading of these poems as it is now, after thirty years of further knowledge; and with it came the problem never yet solved, what place ought to be assigned in literature to what is so remarkable, yet so elusive of criticism.  

Higginson described Emily Dickinson's poems as wayward and unconventional to the last degree. Her poetry lacked proper form, measure, rhyme, and grammar; nevertheless, she had an exacting standard of her own, and she would wait many days for a word to come to her.

Emily Dickinson was a romantic poet with sad thoughts. She embodied both hope and pain. Indeed, throughout her poetry she reflected her acute awareness of her existence in a universe to which she had no choice but to respond. She responded immediately and intensely. Albert Gelpi states that "Emily Dickinson was urgently aware that in the life of consciousness, the primary duty was to catch the irrecoverable moment." This Miss Dickinson did. Gelpi appropriately describes Miss Dickinson's approach to writing, using a poem by the poet Robert Frost. In "Carpe Diem" Frost stated that "The present is too much for the senses." Possibly the present is confusing for man. However, it was not "too present" for Emily Dickinson to imagine. It was this confusion, the throes of the intense experience, out of which Emily Dickinson created some of her most imaginative poetry. Through her detailed descriptions, man's experience took substance.

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One of the better ways in which to find Emily Dickinson's theory of poetry is to examine her themes. The themes which motivated a large portion of Miss Dickinson's poems were the acts of the mind in quest of love, death, immortality, and possibly literary recognition. Hope, despair, pleasure, joy, pain, and ecstasy were the specific topics of a significant number of Emily Dickinson's poems. Through these topics, Emily Dickinson developed her vivid and often unique expression of human experiences. She explored the emotions and the mind, tracing the individual's experiences as he pursued or evaded his needs. Her ideas found emphasis in her imagery and carefully chosen details, resulting in a poetic picture of both the mind and emotions, in action and in suspension. Emily Dickinson achieved a poetic definition in which she contrasted a particular emotional or psychological response. These poems of contrast often conveyed the importance that Emily Dickinson apparently placed on suffering. Albert Gelpi suggests that for Emily Dickinson life was a mass of "contrary states which had somehow to be reconciled or accommodated."\textsuperscript{10} For example, pleasure was actually distilled from pain.\textsuperscript{11} Operating on this same thesis, grief amplified joy, despair made hope palpable, and suffering produced strength.

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., p. 104.

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 105.
The dark side of life often prevailed in Emily Dickinson's poems. Her poems of pain and pleasure, ecstasy and despair, grief and hope illustrated her insight and skill as a poet. She had the ability to detach herself from the experience and thereby create a unique, yet highly feasible picture of the mind and the emotions. Hope lived; pain became an acute perception; and anguish pushed, pierced, and punctured. If Emily Dickinson's human contact were truly limited, she excelled because of her abstinence. 12

Henry James

Although Henry James never actually wrote poetry, it nevertheless played a significant role in his literary life. James was a writer who wished to improve all art, and he regarded literature as a serious art.

James continually expounded his belief in intellectual and emotional substance, exquisite form and, most of all, the duty of a writer to have complete technical mastery of his art. He wanted no part of the "spontaneous," sentimentalized appeal to the emotions only. He felt that, if a subject was worthy of presentation, it deserved to be shown as clearly and intelligently as possible.

12 Ibid.
Once, when chided by George Bernard Shaw for offering audiences "works of art" rather than "help," James replied that works of art "... are capable of saying more things to man about himself than any other 'works' whatever are capable of doing."\textsuperscript{13}

H.G. Wells had accused James of looking at literature as an end in itself. And James responded to his criticism:

It is an art that makes life, makes interest, makes importance, for our consideration and application of these things, and I know of no substitute whatever for the force and beauty of its process.\textsuperscript{14}

James's unceasing concern with the draftsmanship involved in the production of literature was evidenced by the many essays he wrote on the subject. Perhaps James's most famous essay on poetry was a criticism of Whitman's "Drum Taps." He was appalled at what he considered to be Whitman's crudity and sloppy form. With sharp acerbity, he took Whitman to task for sneering at "art, measure, grace and sense" and offering nothing positive in its stead. James postulated that "to be positive requires reason, labor, and art." He charged Whitman with attempting to excuse poor form by claiming to appeal to the soul of man, while in actuality, he


was insulting the intelligence of man. James made it clear that he believed that the artist must entirely sublimate his personality to an idea:

You must be possessed, and you must strive to possess your possession. If in your striving you break into divine eloquence, then you are a poet. 15

James was only twenty-two years old when he wrote this scathing review of Whitman's work. In later years his attitude towards Whitman mellowed, and he came to appreciate him as a "natural" poet. 16 Essentially, though James maintained the same concept of poetry for the rest of his life. He was never quite happy with prosaic or artless subject matter. Evidence of James's unchanging attitude towards subject matter during his later years is found in his expressed disappointment with Kipling as he progressed "from the Anglo-Indians to the natives, from the natives to the Tommies, from the Tommies to the quadrupeds, from the quadrupeds to the fish, and from the fish to the screws and engines." 17 Additionally, James took a dim view of the "provincialism" of his fellow Americans,

15Dupee, p. 55.
16Ibid., p. 217.
17Ibid., p. 38.
Emerson and Thoreau. In fact, he deplored Thoreau as being worse than provincial.

Henry James had a deep appreciation for poetry; moreover, he seemed fascinated with poets and poetry. On several occasions he used poets as characters or as the basis for themes in his fiction. He spoke of Coleridge in glowing terms and reverently referred to the Byronic age. He had been disdainful when Emerson spoke disparagingly of Shelley.

Poetry was also woven into James's literary life through his critical essays. His remarks on Whitman's "Drum-Taps" was only one of many critiques. Early in his career he published French Poets and Novelists and Partial Portraits, each of which contained several essays on various poets. Other uncollected essays on poetry were published individually in magazines. In his critical prefaces it was not unusual for James to speak of certain characterizations as "pure poetry" or to mention the "poetic situation."

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18 Ibid., p. 38.

19 Ibid.


21 Dupee, p. 38.
If James was fascinated by poets and their art, the poets certainly reciprocated in kind. Robert Louis Stevenson wrote a poem about James. T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound wrote admiring essays about him. Not all poets who wrote about his work were so flattering, but they all acknowledged his artistry.

It is likely that these artists recognized that James really produced poetry rather than prose. It is surely no accident that poet-critic Louise Bogan included James in her *A Poet's Alphabet.* In *The Great Tradition* Leavis called James a poet-novelist.

Whether James thought of himself as a poet can never be known. But critics do know that James held clear, carefully thought out opinions about poetry. As a true artist he tried to appreciate genuine talent wherever he found it, but he simply was not capable of violating the classical precepts very much. A poet who blended together the classical and romantic precepts was Edwin Arlington Robinson.

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22 Gale, frontispiece.


Edwin Arlington Robinson

Edwin Arlington Robinson stated his theory of poetry explicitly and implicitly; however, one must rely mostly on implications as to what Robinson's theory of poetry really was. Robinson admitted that poets of other ages influenced his writing style. Moreover, many of his themes were taken from earlier works of other poets.

One can easily say that Robinson was a master of poetic forms such as sonnets, ballades, villanelles, and the like. Many of his early works were in the shorter poetic forms. Some of the more prominent ones were "Ballade of Broken Flutes," "Cliff Klingenhagen," and "Villanelle of Change." But later in his life, when his work was more well known, he tended to write long dramatic narratives, which include "Lancelot" and one of his last works, "King Jasper." However, Robinson thought that the form of the poem was less important than the wording of the poem. Before he would publish a poem, he had to satisfy himself. Sometimes it would take him weeks just to write a sonnet. He would rearrange words until he would find the exact combination that he wanted.

Some of the poets of Robinson's period thought that there were limitations on the subjects that poetry could deal with, but Robinson totally rejected this idea. While other poets were writing about nature, Robinson was writing about people with various
problems. In a sense, Robinson was a realist. His realism was a large part of his strength, but he embraced certain aspects of the romantic tradition and the classical tradition as well. He expertly blended these influences with his realism, which was a major characteristic of his style. The two principal themes in his poetry were failures that succeed and successes that fail. What really interested him was a person's state of mind and the influence of one person on another.

A major influence upon Robinson's poetry was the classical tradition. Early in life he was introduced to Greek and Roman writers, including Virgil, Ovid, Horace, and Homer. He read the classics extensively, and these poets influenced his style greatly. He translated many selections and put them in his own poetic form. These include "Horace to Leucoenoe" and "the Galley Race" from the Aeneid. Also many of his poems, such as "The Ballade of Broken Flutes," had classical themes in them.

Another influence on Robinson's poetry was the Romantic Movement. Robinson was very imaginative and very emotional. He brought out the feelings of other people with great imagination, which he did in "Miniver Cheevy" and "The Mill." In many of his poems Robinson's characterizations came alive, and readers could associate Robinson's characterization with people that they knew or had known.
Robinson believed that a poet must be an interpreter of life and that the poet should be objective and truthful in his interpretation. The function of a poet, therefore, was to present life as he sees it. And many of Robinson's interpretations were of the lives of people whom he had known in his lifetime. In order to write poetic characterizations, Robinson created Tillbury Town, a town much like the one that Robinson grew up in. The people of Tillbury Town were often the subjects in his poems. Though the names are different, nearly everyone has known a Miniver Cheevy or a Richard Cory.

Finally, Robinson believed that a poem did not have to be written in any particular form. Any form would suffice. A poem should be worded carefully and precisely in order to get the message across, and it should be the expression of human experience as seen through the eyes of the poet.

Robert Frost

Robert Frost expressed through his poetry the experiences and everyday occurrences of life that almost everyone can relate to in one way or another. Frost focused attention on people, nature, events, and things. He caused people to stop and see what they had only looked at but had not been aware of. He developed insight which enabled each person to observe the details of the ideas which the poem was expressing. Frost described a whole poem as,
Poetry is a reaching-out toward an expression; an effort to fulfillment. A complete poem is one where an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found the word. 26

As one reads Frost's poetry, one reads the words, forms a thought, and lives an emotion. And through a simple kind of speech, Frost managed to express a wide variety of emotions and experiences. This ability has resulted in his wide appeal.

Frost's theory of poetry was premised upon three related ideas. First, the poet must know, trust, and recognize himself. Second, the poet must know himself in relation to other people. Third, the poet must believe in his ability as an artist and form-giver. Self-belief, love-belief, and art-belief formed the basis for his poetic life and writings. 27

Robert Frost's own belief about the poetic impulse was that he found himself propelled forward, as if by faith, so that the poem was somehow believed into existence; and for the reader to believe the poem into existence, he must place his own interpretation and emotions into the poem.


Frost had many definitions of poetry, but he preferred to say of poetry,

... it is a metaphor, saying one thing and meaning another, saying one thing in terms of another, the pleasure of ulteriority.  

He liked to talk in parables and hints, yet the meanings were not hidden to the extent that they were not obtainable.

Frost was often referred to as a naturalist, and he thought of himself as an environmentalist. He saw nature as a symbol of man's relation to the world. And as the remoteness of nature is revealed, so is the tragedy of man's isolation. Frost believed man could never find a home in nature; neither could he live without it, but man could assert the reality of his spirit and thus exist independently of the physical world, through the act of looking squarely at the facts of nature.  

Although Frost portrayed nature as an almost overwhelming force, he set man above nature, because of man's capacity to dream, to think, and to create ideas. He felt there was a continuous struggle between man and his spirit and the limits and confines of nature. Man might win the battle through both the use of his intellect and the

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28 Ibid., p. 132.

use of his spirit from within. Moreover, the meaning one found in nature depended on the idea conveyed by the human mind. What Frost found in the middle of the forest was not the image of the spirit confined to man and nature but a symbol of the spirit from within the human which could rise above the physical elements of the world.  

Frost insisted that his poetry must have form. Through form he was able to control the emotions, thoughts, and images. Frost also believed that the meaning and form in a poem must fuse as one. Each part would actually reinforce the other.  

E.E. Cummings

E.E. Cummings did not write a theory of poetry; however, the elusive quality of his presence in his own poetry, coupled with his rather explicit notions of what a poet should be, give rise by implication to what he thought poetry ought to be.

His own poetry was written in a charmingly fresh and innovative style and form. Clothed in the innovations were poems of every emotional description. They ranged from the most tender poems of love to scathing and bitter satire.

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30 Isaacs, p. 152.

31 Thompson, p. 28.
Cummings stressed the importance of living and "being."

And to him an artist's individuality must be developed:

... so far as I am concerned, poetry and every other art was and is and forever will be strictly and distinctly a question of individuality... poetry is being, not doing. If you wish to follow, even at a distance, the poet's calling (and here, as always, I speak from my own totally biased and entirely personal point of view) you've got to come out of the measurable doing universe into the immeasurable house of being. 32

Cummings kept himself true to his philosophy in his poetry. His poems were devoted to the glorification of the freedom of the individual. To Cummings, an artist must protect his individuality in order to live consummately, and a person must also be an artist in order to achieve a worthwhile process of living. The artist, his art, and his individuality increased each other by degrees, which made an individual become and finally "be." This philosophy was appropriately brought forth in his introduction to The Enormous Room:

If people were interested in art, you as an artist would receive wider recognition--
Wider?
Of course
Not deeper
Deeper?
Love, for example, is deeper than flattery.
Ah--but (now that you mention it) isn't love just a trifle old fashioned?

I dare say.
And aren't you supposed to be ultramodernistic?
I dare say.
But I dare say you don't dare say precisely why you consider your art of vital consequence--
Thanks to I dare say my art I am able to become myself.
Well well! Doesn't that sound as if people who weren't artists couldn't become themselves?
Does it?
What do you think happens to people who aren't artists? What do you think people who aren't artists become?
I feel they don't become; I feel nothing happens to them; I feel negation becomes of them. 33

Thus Cummings asserted that a person should be an individual to become an artist, and he must become an artist to become a worthy individual. Only through art can an individual complete himself; thus Cummings believed that poetry helped him to achieve his consummate freedom.

John Dryden

John Dryden wrote in all literary genres; however, he excelled in poetry and at a time when verse was really a way of communicating. He was one of the most intellectual men of his day.

Dryden had acquainted himself with the works of other poets; consequently, he was very much aware of what a poet should be. 34

He states,

Mere poets are as sottish as mere drunkards are, who live in a continual mist, without seeing or judging anything clearly. A man should be learned in several sciences, and should have reasonable, philosophical, and in some measure a mathematical head, to be a complete and excellent poet, and besides this, should have experience in all sorts of humors and manners of men. . . . 35

Dryden was an inquisitive man who read to increase his knowledge in all areas of learning. And as a result of his extensive reading, much of his poetry was filled with allusions to science, mythology, and theology. 36

Dryden was a poet who took his art seriously; and he insisted that in the creation of a poem, a poet should work assiduously toward perfecting his verse:

The composition of all poems, or ought to be, of wit; and wit in the poet, or wit in writing is no other than the faculty of imagination in the writer, which, like a nimble spaniel, beats over and ranges through the field of memory, till it springs the quarry it hunted after; or, without metaphor, which searches over all the memory for the species or ideas of those things which it designs to represent. 37

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid., p. 4.

37 Ibid., p. 32.
Dryden also thought wit to be a balancing of "genius" and "art." Earlier, in his college days, he was attracted by his teacher's theory of images and said, "Imaging is, in itself, the very height and life of poetry."  

Dryden was a forerunner in English poetry, for he was very capable in his ability to separate his thoughts in order to give significant effects in his poetry. His works were full of parallels with references to technical points. He compared diction in poetry to color in paintings, and he used words in the same way that an artist would use a paint brush. He stated,

The surface of a poem or a painting should be smooth and beautiful and decorous; no word or phrase should be inserted which might strain the intelligence of elegant readers or spectators to understand. Technical diction is barred for the benefit of those men and ladies of the first quality who have been better bred than to be too nicely knowing in the terms.

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39 Van Doren, p. 41.

40 Ibid., p. 47.

41 Ibid., p. 53.

42 Ibid., p. 54.

43 Ibid.
Dryden arranged his words in order to give his verse the sound of music. His main concern was for "even, sweet, and flowing lines." Dryden's poetry was that of statement. He was an opinionated poet who loved people and literature, and he wrote English poetry with a certain amount of passion.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

Percy Bysshe Shelley was inspired to write *A Defence of Poetry*. Thomas Love Peacock, Shelley's friend, had written *The Four Ages of Poetry* in which Peacock had suggested that poetry was no longer useful to man. According to Peacock, prose was destined to replace poetry as the way for man to communicate. Originally, Shelley had planned to write *A Defence of Poetry* in three parts in order to fully refute Peacock's assertions. However, Shelley died before he was able to complete the other two parts.

Shelley believed that there were two classes of mental action. One class of mental action was reason, and the other class of mental action was imagination. Reason was the summary of things that man already knew, and imagination was how man perceived the things that he already knew. Shelley defined poetry as the expression

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44 Ibid., p. 60.
45 Ibid.
of the imagination, and he said that those individuals who possessed an abundance of imagination were called poets.

Shelley believed that poetry was by far superior to prose. He stated that "Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds." He also said that poetry was a thought or feeling that is colored, and that a poem which reflects the truth was the image of life. To Shelley the difference between a poem and a story was that a story was a collection of facts, and a poem was a collection of facts written in colorful, spirited language, making the facts exciting and beautiful. A poem has no time limit on its effect.

In A Defence of Poetry Shelley claimed that poetry had a functional purpose. Poetry created new materials of knowledge, power, and pleasure; and poetry produced a desire to reproduce and arrange material in a certain rhythm and order. Poetry described the ordinary, everyday things in a more meaningful way. But Shelley believed that few poets had exhibited fully the beauty of their conceptions.

Shelley claimed that the literature written during the Romantic Period was the beginning of a new and fresh approach to writing.

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Much more spirit was being shown by the writers who were being motivated by a social revolution going on, but Shelley criticized the public for having a narrow view of this progress. Shelley said that poets were all the creative minds that broke out of the limitations of their ages; moreover, poets were obliged to give moral, political, and historical knowledge to people in all areas.

Shelley believed that a poet did not reach the height of his fame until later generations had criticized and appreciated his works. If a poet were good, his poetry would survive. He said that one should not judge the poet for his way of life; moreover, one should not attempt to discover why a poet wrote a poem. A poem was cultivated in the mind, and the mind could not account for the origin of the poem.

Shelley believed that poetry was never logical, for poetry was created and was not subject to control by the mind. The origin of the poem had no necessary connection with the consciousness. He thought that one should not attempt to determine that consciousness and will were the necessary conditions of all mental causation. The inspiration to write poems came at intervals, and a poet could not be put on a regular schedule. However, the poet was more organized than the average man and more sensitive to pain and pleasure.
Robert Browning

Robert Browning indicated that the essential purpose of poetry should be to awaken the reading public to an awareness of life, for he felt a very strong urge or concern toward the fundamental problems of humanity. These basic concerns included progress, imperfection, human love, and human failure.  

Browning believed that the poet could never accomplish what he desired in an imperfect society; therefore, the poet must learn to find beauty in imperfection. The poet must be content to accomplish only partial good. Similarly, poetry itself could never be perfect; at its best it would be an inadequate verbal instrument which only partially expressed the total poetic vision.  

Browning accepted the commonly held belief that the poet was a man set apart from those less sensitive than himself, and that his major advantage lay in the perception of beauty. He was one of the "regal class." Within this "regal class" there were those who took different approaches to beauty.  

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48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.
Browning seemed to think that the true poet must progress through a number of stages before he reached a valid perception of beauty. He believed that a poet's ultimate success depended on his ability to merge his own being with the object of contemplation. The scale of ascendency toward the highest level of perception began with the discovery of beauty and delight in it for its own sake. The poet then began to endow the object with qualities of his own being. The object received the consciousness of the poet which enabled the poet to move outside of his own consciousness. Finally, the poet came to understand how the individual objects of beauty fit into a larger scheme; the various aspects of beauty were seen as a unity which expressed the sum of all beauty, God. To become such a poet, it was absolutely necessary for the individual to suppress self. For the true artist paid tribute to God by acknowledging Him as the sum of all beauty; the false artist, like the false philosopher, adored self.

Browning stated that the poet should be primarily dedicated to the observation of his fellow man, and he differentiated among three ways in which the poet employed his observations in the composition of poetry. The first and least effective method was simply to

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50 Ibid., pp. 62-63.

51 Ibid., p. 64.
repeat, descriptively, what had been seen. The second and somewhat more valuable method was to add a short commentary and explain how the subject appeared to the poet. The third and highest level of communication enabled common man to see with the eyes of the poet. The insight that this kind of poet possessed was particularly valuable, for he had the unique ability of seeing into the very essence of another man by reading what was disclosed on his face. One of the elements which the poet tried to detect, and in turn integrate into his poetry, was the mood which engulfed the subject, and the causes underlying that mood. 52

Browning felt the trouble with all poets was their inability to turn their talent for observation to its greater advantage because, as a race, they were utterly incapable of action. He explained that the time when the true poet also became a man of action would not be in this life. 53 However, Browning felt that talented poets should be kept at their tasks, since they did have an important function to perform and other men would feel their absence if they gave up their work. 54

52 Ibid., pp. 65-66.
53 Ibid., p. 66.
54 Ibid.
Browning learned that the same gulf which separated aspiration from the possibility of achievement with respect to life itself separated an ideal theory of poetry from the technical realities which the practice of poetry demanded. Synthetic poetry was in theory the highest level of poetic achievement, but Browning knew that language would never be an adequate instrument to accomplish the ends poetry set for itself. Just as the potentiality of the soul was limited by the body, the poet's desire to communicate was limited by words.\footnote{Ibid., p. 69.}

Browning learned that poetry could not express the whole, any more than poets could grasp it. The poet must accept the limitations of poetry and people and attempt to make them better but not perfect. Browning achieved a moral-aesthetic synthesis which was to remain the basic principle of his system of thought throughout his career. He clearly understood that a disparity existed between what he was and what should be, but he also saw that the business of the poet was to bridge that gap and, insofar as he was able, reconcile these apparent opposites.\footnote{Ibid., p. 77.}
Matthew Arnold

Matthew Arnold's essay *The Study of Poetry*, written in 1880, served as the introduction to an anthology of English poetry. *The Study of Poetry* appeared late in his career, many years after he had given up writing poetry himself and had turned to writing essays in literary criticism. It is notable that this essay has been an important force in shaping literary taste in England and in America. 57

Arnold expected much from poetry. Poetry was to guide the human race:

The future of poetry is immense, because in poetry, where it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay. 58

Arnold saw good poetry as the one institution of man that could endure time and trial and finally be man's guide to a richer, fuller life. He felt this even more deeply since at the time of his writing the established church appeared to be losing its authority in the world. Arnold also felt the time had come to think of poetry on a much higher plane than had been the practice before. Of this he said,

57 Abrams and others, p. 1108.

58 Ibid., p. 1109.
We should conceive of poetry worthily, and more highly than it has been the custom to conceive it. We should conceive of it as capable of higher uses and called to higher destinies. . . . 59

Arnold believed that good poetry served as a criticism of life. And as other institutions failed, poetry would help to interpret life; it would help to console and sustain mankind. Man must learn to identify the "best" poetry; then poetry which would be written at a later date could be compared to the "best" poetry.

Arnold recognized the difficulty that confronted the student of poetry in recognizing the "best" or great poetry. He gave advice to the students so that they might be able to discriminate between poetry and the "best" poetry. He felt that too often students of poetry succumbed to the temptation to adopt fallacious estimates of the poetry they studied. These estimates were judgments based on history and on personal likes and dislikes. Historical records of poets often caused a student to overrate the works of the classical poets. On the other hand, students very often overrated the poets who were in temporary vogue. Arnold believed that many English authors who were popular during the Romantic Period, such as Byron, were highly overrated. 60

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid., p. 1069.
Arnold felt that classical poetry, though diversified, contained common characteristics. For the student to be able to discern greatness in poetry, he must be able to recognize these common characteristics and evaluate their presence in the poetry. These characteristics were Truth, Seriousness, Diction, and Movement. These elements were to be found in passages from accepted poets such as Dante, Shakespeare, and Milton. He stated his views on the verse of the great poets:

Indeed there can be no more useful help for discovering what poetry belongs to the class of the truly excellent . . . than to have always in one's mind lines and expressions of the great masters, and to apply them as a touchstone to other poetry.61

Arnold also felt that poetry must bring joy to its reader in order to help make life more bearable.62 After the student learned to recognize the elements or characteristics of great poetry, the student could make worthwhile critical estimates of the poetry which he was studying.

Of all the elements of classical poetry, Arnold emphasized greatly that which he termed "quality of high seriousness.11 It was very important to him that the poet be capable of being a serious

61 Ibid., p. 1114.
62 Ibid., p. 1011.
thinker who could supply guidance as well as entertainment to his reader. Arnold's belief that a classic must contain "a quality of high seriousness" kept him from naming Chaucer a classical poet, since he did not find the quality of high seriousness in Chaucer's work. Following the same criterion, Arnold also denied Burns the position of a classical poet, but he steadfastly praised much of his work, especially that poetry done in Scots.

Arnold held high ideals and hopes for poetry. He could foresee grand poetry becoming a new, higher criticism of life, a criticism that mankind could use in improving life. Ultimately, he felt that great poetry could inspire and entertain; and at the same time, great poetry could be used as a philosophical guide for handling life's problems.

These are the theories of poetry of six leading American poets and four leading English poets. Certain poems of Emily Dickinson, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Robert Frost, Percy B. Shelley, and Robert Browning will be explicated in Chapter V in order to bring out the special attitudes of these five poets. The poems of these five romantic and modern poets are especially suitable to the purposes of this theory for instruction of poetry (Table III). These poets offer personal meanings that may be "appropriated" by junior college students.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Need</th>
<th>Theme in Poem</th>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Poem</th>
<th>Poet</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student may relate to and appropriate the thoughts of others on death.</td>
<td>Unforeseen death and Intimation of Immortality</td>
<td>Romantic</td>
<td>&quot;Poem No. 712&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student may acquire another very important reason as to why brotherhood is</td>
<td>Concept of dignity in Immortality</td>
<td>Romantic</td>
<td>&quot;Poem No. 946&quot;</td>
<td>Emily Dickinson</td>
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<td>important.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student may satisfy his need to acquire a new meaning for time in eternity</td>
<td>Concept of time in eternity in contrast to time on earth</td>
<td>Romantic</td>
<td>&quot;Poem No. 1056&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student may satisfy his need for supernatural guidance</td>
<td>Concept of man and his relationship to a divine Being</td>
<td>Romantic</td>
<td>&quot;The Children of The Night&quot;</td>
<td>Edwin Arlington Robinson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student may acquire hope that spiritual knowledge can be obtained.</td>
<td>Concept of spiritual faith</td>
<td>Romantic</td>
<td>&quot;Credo&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Need</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student may see dangers and errors in judging people.</td>
<td>Characteristics of a misunderstood leader</td>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>&quot;The Master&quot;</td>
<td>Edwin Arlington Robinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student may appropriate the idea that man's finite mind cannot grasp the infinite or understand the ways of God to man.</td>
<td>Man's place in an ordered universe</td>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>&quot;A Masque of Reason&quot;</td>
<td>Robert Frost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student may see the necessity of and the importance of change.</td>
<td>Nothing is permanent but change</td>
<td>Romantic</td>
<td>&quot;Mutability&quot;</td>
<td>Percy B. Shelley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student may acquire tolerance in accepting views of others.</td>
<td>One perceives only shadows of what is real</td>
<td>Romantic</td>
<td>&quot;Sonnet: 'Lift Not the Painted Veil&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student may acquire the idea that tenacity in any pursuit may be the difference between success and failure.</td>
<td>Life consists of many unpleasant and almost insurmountable barriers</td>
<td>Romantic</td>
<td>&quot;Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came&quot;</td>
<td>Robert Browning</td>
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CHAPTER V

INSTRUCTION OF POETRY

Introduction

Finally, the basic foundations of this theory for teaching of poetry are premised upon the fact that El Centro Junior College students represent a wide range of capacities. Most of the students are not as academically competent as their senior college peers. They have limited vocabularies and limited abilities in reading, which in turn results in limited aesthetic knowledge. Few students have had previous satisfying exposures to the study of poetry in school; and because of the socioeconomic level of most of the students, many of the students did not receive any encouragement to read any sort of great literary works at home. Many of these students grew up in environments which stressed practical reasons for acquiring an education; hence El Centro Junior College students as a rule do not have the same interests that senior college students have.

Because of these differences between El Centro Junior College students and senior college students, this theory for instruction
of poetry is intended to appeal to the practical nature of El Centro Junior College students. This theory for instruction of poetry deals only with the poets' uses of subject matter or ideas in their theories of poetry. It is believed that romantic and modern poetry express more subjective thought, and the attitudes expressed in these kinds of poems and theories of poetry relate more to the existential attitudes of El Centro Junior College students. It is also believed that the using of the more abstract processes of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation in teaching will create more student interest in the subject of poetry because no assiduous attempt will be made by the instructor to dwell on the more concrete levels of thought, which involve knowledge, comprehension, and application. Meanings only in the poems will be emphasized; accordingly, the objectives established for this proposal dwell upon building positive attitudes, which in turn should assist individuals to cope with the realities in a technical age. All of the objectives are premised on existential attitudes toward the proper ways to educate youth. Existentialists embrace the idea that all individuals are in danger of losing their subjectivity because of the tremendous changes in society that continually take place.
Objectives

The characteristics of junior college students, the individual's status in a technological society, and certain theories of poetry provide the resource material from which the objectives for this course of study are formulated. These objectives are designed so that they may produce a favorable corresponding change in the student's behavior pattern. These objectives are stated below; questions that relate to the objectives follow.

1. The student will become more aware of self and the need for self fulfillment. He will establish his purposes, values, and possibilities in life; moreover, he will recognize the degrees to which his purposes, values, and possibilities are not expressed and not achieved. To what extent do you feel that you have a basic life purpose defined for yourself?

2. The student will become more aware that he is a person of worth. He will exhibit more confidence in his person; accordingly, he will become more self reliant. Are there matters about yourself that are of basic concern and doubt for you?
3. The student will become more aware of his inescapable freedom of choice and the responsibility for his choosing. He will recognize that no prior nature can determine his choices. He alone will assume the burden for his choices. Is your very existence on in which you are unable to avoid "choosing" your way through life?

4. The student will learn to create his own nature through his freedom of choice. He will exercise his prerogatives when confronted with the normative qualities of experiences. Do you feel as though you are a "free" agent, absolutely free to set your own goals and make your own decisions?

5. The student will develop an awareness of what goes on in an individual, an openness to all of one's experiences toward oneself and toward others. The student will reflect an increased self esteem and esteem of others. Are you more willing to share your thoughts and feelings with others?

6. The student will seek ways of modifying his existential loneliness. He will relate more effectively to his peers. Have you sought ways in which you might become more satisfied with life?
7. The student will become aware of the need for "closeness" between persons. The student will demonstrate a capacity for more profound relationships. To what degree do you feel the need for close relationships with others?

8. The student will develop his ability to relate to the ideas, desires, feelings, hopes, angers, fears, and despair of others. The student will evidence a greater tolerance and sympathy for others. Do you tend to evaluate others as "subjects" or "objects"?

9. The student will develop a more unitary view of man, a view which might bind men together. The student will contribute more significantly to an egalitarian view of society. What common traits and beliefs do you see in yourself and others?

10. The student will learn that knowledge is to be used to assist each person to live his own unique way of life. The student will express sentiments consonant with the notion that each individual used knowledge to achieve self realization. To what extent do you see knowledge assisting you to achieve self actualization?
11. The student will learn through personal "appropriation" of knowledge. The student will pursue scholarship out of a healthy curiosity. How much do you feel responsible for your own knowledge?

12. The student will develop confidence in his ability to learn. The student will exhibit traits of self sufficiency and industry. Are you in doubt as to your own command of the fundamental processes necessary to learning?

13. The student will find it permissible to engage in daydreams and fantasy and to think creative thoughts. The student will reveal a propensity for imaginative thinking. Do you perceive ideas that are totally unrelated to reason?

14. The student will become more aware of the world of abstract knowledge. The student will be capable of manipulating abstract symbols to achieve a given solution. Do you experience difficulty in appropriating ideas of others?

15. The student will become more aware of many of life's problems that he may confront. The student will participate more vigorously in the social life of his community. Have you felt the desire and need to improve existing social conditions?
Many of these objectives cannot be quantified in a very satisfactory manner; however, the student will come to recognize these changes in his behavior pattern as they influence him in decision-making and problem-solving. The objectives for this course emphasize attitudinal changes on the part of the student.

Existential educators do not embrace, nor do they insist upon any specific learning theory as such. However, for this proposal for instruction of poetry, insight and gestalt learning modes will be used and discussed more fully than any other learning theory. It is believed that these learning modes will create better learning conditions for the student than other learning theories.

Learning Modes Implied

Learning is often described or defined in many ways, but nearly all educators agree that learning is something that takes place within the learner. Whatever this something is must be motivated and guided toward favorable ends by the instructor. Many different things may be done to create interest. For example, the instructor may utilize resource materials which are of particular interest to the learner; he may make assignments that stimulate the learner; or he may ask the kinds of questions that arouse the curiosity of the learner. The learner's inner responses are fundamental to the learning process, for the learner must be so stimulated that he will want to learn whatever the instructor is teaching.
When learning is taking place, some kind of change will occur in the learner's behavior. The learner may acquire new skills, information, or different attitudes. The learner must actively pursue certain objectives; and when these objectives are met, the learner sees the changes that are taking place. Very often the behavior change may be nothing more than a changed way of thinking which grew out of the experiences of the learner. For this study the definition of learning is stated in the following:

Change in response or behavior (such as innovation, elimination, or modification of responses, involving some degree of permanence), caused partly or wholly by experience, such "experience" being in the main conscious, but sometimes including significant unconscious components, as is common in motor learning or in reaction to unrecognized or subliminal stimuli; includes behavioral changes in the emotional sphere, but more commonly refers to the acquisition of symbolic knowledge or motor skills; does not include physiological changes such as fatigue, or temporary sensory resistance or nonfunctioning after continued stimulation.¹

It may be difficult at times to measure learning because much learning cannot be quantified very easily. However, Crow states that learning is achieved

(1) when learning content can be repeated verbatim, or

(2) when new ideas have been gained from the material studied and can be expressed in the learner's own words.\footnote{2}

Of particular significance to the learner in this study is the method of achieving learning by acquiring new ideas. The learner is encouraged to analyze and compare ideas that will be of particular importance to him. Moreover, this entire theory of instruction of poetry places a high priority upon the avoidance of rote memory learning. Deese cited important research carried on by Katona, who attempted to show the superiority of learning by understanding over rote learning.\footnote{3} Katona produced evidence to show that learning by understanding produces transfer more readily than rote learning. The sum and substance of his work is that organization is essential to effective thinking and learning, and rote memory learning is inferior to learning by understanding.\footnote{4} The learner appropriates ideas that are meaningful to him, and as the learner understands the ideas, he can integrate the ideas into a workable pattern.

Learning outcome rest primarily on the learner's desire to achieve a definitive goal. The learner must realize that what he is

\footnote{2}{Lester Crow and Alice Crow, \textit{Educational Psychology} (New York, 1963), p. 226.}


\footnote{4}{Ibid., p. 313.}
doing is of real importance to his mental development. In this particular proposal for instruction of poetry, emotional attitudes are considered to be very essential as forces in the achieving of certain learning outcome. Effective learning in this proposal rests fundamentally on the student's being able to gather and relate ideas which have meaning for him.

Through the study of poetry, the learner is encouraged to enhance his own experiences by becoming involved in and relating to the thoughts that the poets had about love, death, immortality, happiness, and the like. The learner is given the opportunity to have other ideas and possibilities open up to him; and when this or that learning experience is made available to the learner, then he may perceive what these experiences can mean for him in a world of others. The learner will become aware of himself. He will see himself as a human being with attitudes, emotions, values, and ideas interacting with other people in his own environment. The learner will enlarge his own private subjectivity through the means of poetry. He will see himself as a creator of his own values as he appropriates the thoughts of the poets. The learner will create his own personal answers to all normative questions that arise through his study of poetry.
This theory for instruction of poetry is established almost exclusively on the use of insight in achieving learning outcome. The learner in studying poetry establishes or possesses a sense of or feeling for pattern of thought. Insight in poetry comes about as the learner first attends to the general outline and later fills in the details. Crow believes that some subjects may be understood to a greater degree by using the insight approach. He states,

Art, music, literature, and similar subject areas that include elements of appreciation lend themselves to the Gestalt approach.  

A learner has insight into a poem to the extent that he is able to understand the poem as a whole. Problem-solving on the part of the learner is an example of insight which results when the learner integrates his concepts. Problem-solving is essential to the learner in understanding meanings in poetry. The learner may use poetry as a means to discern the true nature of his own situation as he gathers and relates meanings in poems. He will have elucidating glimpses into his own experiences as he shares the experiences of the poets.

Since the word "insight" means different things to different educators, much controversy may develop over the use of the

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5 Crow, p. 235.
term. Much disagreement may be avoided by a careful definition of the term. Bayles states,

We use it to designate whatever pattern actually is sensed, whether deeply perceptive or undiscerningly shallow. An insight may be comprehensive and widely generalized, or it may have only a single experience as a referent. An insight may be true or it may be false; it may be vague or it may be clear; it may be thoughtfully derived or it may represent merely a snap judgment. It is always one's sense of pattern, what one takes a situation to be. It is never to be confused with any set of words that may be used in connection with it; it is what lies back of words, the meanings that words are designed to convey.6

Proceeding from the Gestalt point of view, one may assume that learning is concerned with the whole individual. Learning takes place as the individual interacts with his environment. The individual acquires new ways of seeing and reacting to his environment. These new ways of seeing and reacting constitute insight. One knows that insight is functioning when one perceives the problem.

In this theory for instruction of poetry, learners are encouraged to gain insights into the poems. Learners are motivated to get the point, to grasp the idea, or to catch on to meanings in poems. With the use of instructor-student discussion and explication, the learner may come to see relationships in a poem. Noll states,

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He knows what leads to what and how to reach his goal. At this point he has learned.

The teacher encourages insight when she presents learning tasks as whole common-sense units and focuses the learner's attention on the elements and relationships that will enable him to attain his goal.

The Gestalt psychologists, who introduced the concept of insight, believed that it occurs suddenly. All at once we see a situation in a new way, perhaps with a feeling of discovery or understanding. 7

Teachers use a variety of ways to encourage insight learning. For example, a teacher may find diverse ways to organize learning materials. These ways are

Overviews, outlines, analogies, and diagrams are some of their ways. When verbal materials have been well-organized, the main ideas stand out clearly and are supported by lesser generalizations, as well as by specific details. Such a structure encourages the development of a similar mental or cognitive structure that is resistant to forgetting and the best of all bases for further learning. 8

An important facet of this theory is the ability of the learner to synthesize meanings in poetry. The learner perceives or understands the total meaning of the poem because he responds to the parts which make up a total meaning. The poem loses something when it is analyzed just to break it into its component parts, for


8 Ibid.
every poem is more than the sum of its parts. A book is more than the words and paper; a house is more than wood and nails. A learning situation is more than the parts of which it is composed. According to the Gestalt point of view, the poem should always be studied as a whole rather than separated into its component parts. However, analysis of a poem is permitted in Gestalt psychology provided that the analysis of the poem is done in such a manner just to see how the parts constitute the whole. Pinter states the Gestalt point of view:

The hypothesis of the Gestalt psychology is that all mental phenomena have a structure or pattern. The problem of association, approached from this standpoint, is not to explain how ideas or any other occurrences are associated, for they never existed otherwise than as parts of a totality or configuration. Ideas, events, etc., do not come in isolation; they are always part of some definite context or pattern by virtue of which alone they have no meaning and significance. According to this theory, one sentence of a poem serves to stimulate recall of another sentence because the whole poem is thus being partially reinstated as a unit. Still, contiguity remains as a factor not to be disposed of; for contiguity of experience is an essential element in the formation of the pattern itself.  

Therefore, it is believed that perception and learning consist in the discovery of a perceived whole or experience. One of the first Americans who interpreted and supported Gestalt psychology was

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Wheeler. He postulated the advantages of learning by wholes from the following principles:

1. Any item of reality is in its own right an integrated whole that is more than the sum of its parts; it possesses properties not characteristic of its parts.
2. Parts derive their properties from the whole.
3. The whole conditions the activities of its parts.
4. Parts emerge from wholes through processes of differentiation or individuation.
5. Wholes evolve as wholes.  

Applying Wheeler's principles to the study of poetry, one may conclude that learning takes place most efficiently when the poem is studied as a whole, and the specific meanings in a poem are best learned when the parts they play in the whole poem are clearly comprehended.

Dewey was another educator who believed that meaning is important to the learner. He stated,

To grasp the meaning of a thing, an event or a situation is to see in it its relation to other things: to note how it operates or functions, what consequences follow from it, what causes it, what uses it can be put to. . . . since all knowing aims at clothing things and events with meaning it always proceeds by taking the thing inquired into out of its isolation. Search is continued until the thing is discovered to be a relative part in some larger whole.  

Real progress in understanding why learning by wholes is superior to learning by parts has been substantiated even further by experimental work carried on by Seagoe. She concludes,

When a whole is defined as a Gestalt with important inner relationships, and when that unit produces a relatively large ideational factor, the material is more economically presented as a unit rather than as segments, as judged by efficiency of mastery and by retention. Part presentation saves time . . . although mastery of the parts does not assure mastery of the whole. 12

It is believed that learning in poetry is most efficient when the learner first grasps the meaning and organization of the whole poem and then the learner proceeds to give attention to the parts and the relation of each part to other parts and to the whole. Learning also is of greatest value to the learner when the poems are meaningful and rich in associations.

In addition to the whole-part relationship in the study of poetry, students are encouraged to evaluate poems by using insight. Rewarding integrations seem to appear when students use the intuitive pattern of thought. Perhaps they may receive as much pleasure from reading a poem as the author had when he wrote it:

Or again, in the fields of aesthetics, why does the evaluation of the world of great creative artists call for an act of appreciation and understanding which is best described as insightful? Why does the contemplation of a work of art pass over into an act which creates a psychic synthesis between the observer and the work observed? How can criticism be made really creative?  

It is believed that by using the insight theory of learning in studying poetry, students will become personally implicated in the subject matter. Moreover, their personal experiences will become richer for having done so, for they will appropriate abstract ideas that have meaning to them.

It appears that all learning has to do with changes in behavior. The instructor may effect these changes in behavior much more easily if the learner has goals that may be achieved in a learning activity. It is believed that the achievement of worthy outcomes in this proposal for instruction of poetry can be met more efficiently by using the insight theory of learning; however, other theories of learning are not precluded in this study.

Goal-directed activity is essential to the success of this course of study. The instructor and learner must know and understand the goals to be achieved, for purposive activity implies the

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understanding of the goal, knowledge of what must be done to attain the goal, and practice aimed at that achievement. The instructor should give stimulating leadership in learning activities, for learners need at times to be helped to realize their educational purposes or goals. For example, instructors may provide this leadership in helping students to understand meanings in poetry, which the students may wish to appropriate.

Meanings in Poems of Romantic and Modern Poets

In Chapter VI meanings in the poems of Emily Dickinson, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Robert Frost, Percy B. Shelley, and Robert Browning will be discussed. Certain poems by these poets have been selected in order to bring out ideas that arouse the imagination and contribute to thought. The theories of poetry of these poets are considered to be especially suitable for the teaching of poetry to El Centro Junior College students. Three poems by Emily Dickinson have been selected in order to bring out her special attitudes on death and immortality.

"'You mention immortality. That is the Flood subject,'" Emily Dickinson wrote to Thomas Wentworth Higginson at the height of her powers. Immortality was indeed her flood subject,
overflowing into endless poems and letters.\textsuperscript{14} Many of the poems deal with the concept of immortality and the timelessness of the "place" or "zone" in which the consciousness of man spends eternity.

Poem No. 712 is concerned with the death of a lady and the immortality of her consciousness in a timeless eternity:

\begin{verbatim}
Because I could not stop for Death--
He kindly stopped for me--
The Carriage held but just Ourselves--
And Immortality.

We slowly drove--He knew no haste
And I had put away
My labor and my leisure too,
For His Civility--

We passed the School, where Children strove
At Recess--in the Ring--
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain--
We passed the Setting Sun--

Or rather--He passed Us--
The Dews drew quivering and chill--
For only Gossamer, my Gown--
My Tippit--only Tulle--

We paused before a House that seemed
A swelling of the Ground--
The Roof was scarcely visible--
The Cornice--in the Ground--
\end{verbatim}

Since then--'tis Centuries--and yet
Feels shorter than the Day
I first surmised the Horses' Heads
Were toward Eternity--15

The images are precise and further the theme of the poem as each image extends and intensifies the other. Death is pictured as a genteel driver who takes the lady out for a drive and becomes the guide who leads the lady to eternity. Death is a "kindly" gentleman who slowly drives the carriage in the first two stanzas of the poem. The lady does not fear death because of his cordiality, even though the poem implicitly reveals that the lady has no choice about taking the carriage ride. "Because I could not stop for Death--/He kindly stopped for me" shows that the journey was inevitable.

"The Carriage held but just Ourselves--/And Immortality." The presence of immortality is mentioned, but the lady concentrates her attentions on the driver and other aspects on the journey. The second stanza continues to show the pleasure of the ride as the lady puts away all of her activities, alliterative "labor" and "leisure," in order to ride with the unhurried gentleman. The slow-paced action changes to a charged forward movement through repetition of the word "passed" in stanza three. The journey is actually

underway and progress moves more quickly than it does in the first two stanzas. The carriage and its three occupants "passed the School," "passed the Fields," and "passed the Setting Sun--." After passing the children at play, the carriage progresses to a field of grain. The grain is alive, because it is "Gazing," but gazing implies indifference and passivity. Then the carriage moves from light into evening as it passes the "Setting Sun." This sequence follows the natural route of a funeral procession past the village schoolhouse, the outlying fields, and finally to the cemetery.

In stanza four the pleasant images of the carriage ride change in mood and tone. The lady begins to feel herself in an environment that is stranger to her than that of the preceding stanzas. She reverses her earlier statement of "We passed the Setting Sun" at the end of stanza three to "Or rather--He passed Us--," indicating that nature is still the same and in control, but that her experiences are altered. As "The Dews drew quivering and chill" the lady becomes aware of the inappropriateness of her garments in her present surroundings. Her sheer, "Gossamer," cobweblike gown and netlike "Tulle" tippet do not protect her from the chilling dews away from the sun. In portraying the new setting, the poet uses images which shift from light to darkness, from warmth to chill, and from motion to pause. "The identification of her new
'House' with a grave is achieved by the use of only two details: a 'Roof' that is 'scarcely visible' and a 'Cornice,' the moulding around the coffin's lid, that is 'in the Ground.'\textsuperscript{16} The grave is not her destination as the carriage only "pauses" there. "Eternity" is her destination, evident as she surmises that that is the direction toward which the "horses' Heads" are turned.

"Since then--'tis Centuries" describes eternity's timelessness. These unmeasured centuries in eternity feel "shorter than the Day" in which she surmised the direction toward which the horses were headed. Her last exact measure of time is the last day that she passes familiar earthly objects during the carriage ride before her consciousness becomes immortal.

Poem No. 946 is concerned with the dignity embodied in the concept of immortality:

\begin{verbatim}
It is an honorable Thought
And makes One lift One's Hat
As One met sudden Gentlefolk
Upon a daily Street

That We've immortal Place
Though Pyramids decay
And Kingdoms, like the Orchard
Flit Russetly away.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{16}Anderson, p. 244.

\textsuperscript{17}Johnson, p. 687.
The poem states that immortality is an "honorable Thought" that inspires one to lift his hat as he encounters "Gentlefolk" on the street. The dignity of man that causes him to be respectful toward his fellowman stems from this concept of man having an "immortal Place." The lifting of the hat, a common daily courtesy, is contrasted with the uncommonly grand images of "Pyramids" and "Kingdoms." The immortality of man is the essence that makes his life more permanent than the "Pyramids" and "Kingdoms." Man will live in his "immortal Place" after the "Pyramids decay" and after "Kingdoms, like the Orchard / Flit Russetly away." The simile of the "Orchard," planted trees arranged by man, that "Flit," pass quickly from one place to another, aptly describes "Kingdoms" as they rise and fall throughout centuries. "Russetly" may refer to an apple orchard or simply to the color red.

Man's life is insignificant beside the endurance of "Pyramids" and "Kingdoms" except for the existence of his "immortal Place" that enables him to outlive these man-made structures and systems. The idea of man's immortality gives dignity to all men and inspires man to greet his fellow human being with respect and courtesy because every human being has that unique quality.
In poem No. 1056 Emily Dickinson discussed the immortality of man's "Consciousness" in terms of a "Zone" where the two become synonymous and inseparable:

There is a Zone whose even Years  
No Solstice interrupt--  
Whose Sun constructs perpetual Noon  
Whose perfect Seasons wait--  

Whose Summer set in Summer, till  
The Centuries of June  
And Centuries of August cease  
And Consciousness--is Noon. 18

This "Zone" is timeless and motionless and is suspended in a state called "perpetual Noon." In order to describe the stasis of the "Zone," the poet sets it against the terms of earthly flux and time measurements: "Centuries," "years," "Solstice," "Summer," and "Noon." When these temporal divisions cease to function in the "Zone," time becomes immeasurable. The existence of "even Years" without corresponding uneven years means that time, as opposed to the passage of time, is smooth and free from variations. Time is uninterrupted by Solstice. A further stoppage of time in this "Zone" is shown by the fixation of the sun at "Noon," resulting in "perpetual Noon" and by halting of the seasons at the point of perfection.

18 Ibid., p. 745.
In this "Zone" summer sets in itself ("Summer set in Summer") rather than going into a changing season, and time is not expanded until the days of June and August become centuries that eventually cease to be. Summer is followed by summer. The "Zone" is described as a place where light is at its brightest, "perpetual Noon," and where light is at its longest point of duration, "Summer set in Summer." The final line of the poem introduces man's "Consciousness" as "Noon." In line three "Noon" is described as "Perpetual," and if "Consciousness--is Noon," (line eight), then one may deduce that "Consciousness" becomes "perpetual" or immortal in this "Zone."

Emily Dickinson's poems numbered 712, 946, and 1056 establish a sequence of thoughts on death and immortality. These poems contain many unusual thoughts which are heightened because the poet employed certain methods and techniques to achieve these thoughts in her poems. The instructor may assist the student in understanding the poem by reading it aloud and emphasizing key words and meanings; however, the instructor should not discuss questions that deal with prosody. He may ask questions that assist the students in gathering meanings that may have relevance to them. Questions from these poems that lend themselves readily to discussion are:
Poem No. 712

1. What abstract symbols must you manipulate in order to "appropriate" meanings about death?

2. Have you thoughts that increase or lessen your fear of death?

3. What images serve to increase your awareness of approaching death in others?

4. What patterns of thought concerning your own death arouse your imagination?

5. Do you find that the death of loved ones leaves you incapable of expressing your true feelings?

Poem No. 946

1. Would a belief in immortality increase your awareness of self and of others?

2. What gestures of courtesy may one use to acknowledge the existence of others?

3. What ideas do you believe in that assure you that life has a purpose?

Poem No. 1056

1. Do you consider things to be relative, including man's present social condition?
2. Is the belief in immortality something to strive for at all costs?

3. How do you perceive the existence of a life after death?

Emily Dickinson wrote primarily about her ideas of things; however, Edwin Arlington Robinson focused his efforts on man. He wrote poems mainly about his friends, but a few of his characterizations were about great men in society. "Edwin Arlington Robinson's business was the writing of poetry. His poetry was concerned almost exclusively with people: not so much with what these people did, but with what they thought and how and why."\(^\text{19}\) Judging from his titles alone—for example, "Luke Havergal," "Mr. Flood's Party," "Captain Craig," "Merlin," "King Jasper"—it is clear that individual man is the essential phenomenon for him.\(^\text{20}\) Robinson's remark on Kipling's animal stories is other evidence of the importance of man:

> My taste in this direction corresponds with my indifference to the doings of trained animals. I prefer men and women who live, breathe, fight, make


love, or go to the devil after the manner of human beings. Art is only valuable to me when it reflects humanity or at least human emotions.\textsuperscript{21}

In men of all conditions and characters Robinson has found his material. But he still is consistent in his presentation of the problem which existence is. A little light in a great deal of darkness, a wisp of music in a universe of irregular and ominous drums--it is in such images that he tells of man's never quite wholly vain struggle for self-respect.\textsuperscript{22} "It is undeniable that Robinson tends to be somber, but that his somberness is not synonymous with pessimism or despair is well illustrated in the manner in which he lightens the shadows by admitting here and there a glimpse of the sun until the 'feel' of the poem is of light rather than darkness."\textsuperscript{23} Although this quotation refers directly to "Captain Craig," it can also be applied to the poems that are examined in this paper. Each of Robinson's characterizations has its own inner truth that propels the central figure through the dark sea of frustration. For some the truth is related to a divine nature, but for each the knowledge

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., p. 50.

\textsuperscript{22}Mark Van Doren, \textit{Edwin Arlington Robinson} (New York, 1927), pp. 49-50.

\textsuperscript{23}C. Elta Van Norman, "Captain Craig," \textit{College English}, II (February, 1941), 467.
emanates from a spiritual, not material, power that endows each man with the will to endure. This spiritual element existent in the nature of every man enables him to seek a divine Being and to experience relationships with mankind.

Robinson's definition of the world reveals his emphasis on spirituality. In answering a charge of pessimism, he said, "The world is not a 'prison-house,' but a kind of spiritual kindergarten, where millions of bewildered infants are trying to spell 'God' with the wrong blocks." One of Robinson's early poems that deals with the concept of man and his relationship with a divine Being is "The Children of the Night":

THE CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT

For those that never know the light
The darkness is a sullen thing;
And they, the Children of the Night,
Seem lost in Fortune's winnowing.

But some are strong and some are weak, --
And there's the story. House and home
Are shut from countless hearts that seek
World-refuge that will never come.

And if there be no other life,
And if there be no other chance
To weigh their sorrow and their strife
Than in the scales of circumstance,

'T were better, ere the sun go down
   Upon the first day we embark,
In life's embittered sea to drown,
   Than sail forever in the dark.

But if there be a soul on earth
   So blinded with its own misuse
Of man's revealed, incessant worth,
   Or worn with anguish, that it views

No light but for a mortal eye,
   No rest but of a mortal sleep,
No God but in a prophet's lie,
   No faith for "honest doubt" to keep;

If there be nothing, good or bad,
   But chaos for a soul to trust, --
God counts it for a soul gone mad,
   And if God be God, He is just.

And if God be God, He is Love;
   And though the Dawn be still so dim,
It shows us we have played enough
   With creeds that make a fiend of Him.

There is one creed, and only one,
   That glorifies God's excellence;
So cherish, that His will be done,
   The common creed of common sense.

It is the crimson, not the gray,
   That charms the twilight of all time,
It is the promise of the day
   That makes the starry sky sublime;

It is the faith within the fear
   That holds us to the life we curse;--
So let us in ourselves revere
   The Self which is the Universe!
Let us the Children of the Night,
Put off the cloak that hides the scar!
Let us be Children of the Light,
And tell the ages what we are!25

In the first paragraph the speaker identifies the "Children of the Night" as people who "never know the light." "In Robinson's early poems light invariably stands for the perception of spiritual truth."26 Interpreting light in this sense, the "Children of the Night" do not have knowledge of some undefined spiritual nature and are apparently handicapped as they are "lost in Fortune's winnowing"; they are unable to find any stability within the uncertainties of living where "Fortune" provides favorable conditions for some and unfavorable conditions for others. Fate is so indifferent to the plight of man and so removed from compassion that smiles and frowns on the lives of people, and the people who do not possess any inner spiritual knowledge that produces a degree of stability are alone and confused in the morose moments of life. The success and failure of the individual are only dependent upon the strength or weakness of that individual, and many who intently search for solutions or


success in the world will never attain this security in the spiritual "house and home."

The speaker continues through a negative approach by saying that it would be more advantageous to man that he should die by drowning in the beginning of his life than to live a lifetime without some beneficial spiritual belief or knowledge. Death would be more palatable to mankind than a life filled with mind-baffling darkness where he has opportunity to know "no other life," a life with spiritual knowledge; moreover, if these misfortunes are only "whims of circumstance" and have no larger meaning, then one might as well die and have done with it.

The speaker then reveals his belief in God in his definition of a confused soul: "God counts it for a soul gone mad." The man who is so undiscerning that he cannot discover his own intrinsic value or who is so care-ridden that he fails to perceive any spiritual "light," "rest," or "God," or anything else in which to place his trust is considered insane by God, who, unlike "Fortune" or fate, is just.

No God but in a prophet's lie,
No faith for "honest doubt" to keep.

implies a transcendental idea that the speaker accepts spiritual knowledge which exists beyond the limits of organized religion.
Having previously attributed justice to the nature of God, the speaker adds the quality of love at the beginning of stanza eight. The love in God causes Him to reveal Himself as a dim "Dawn" that individual man can perceive and ponder enough to realize that creeds of organized religion have made "a fiend of Him" rather than reveal His true nature. The real God who is this faint light of the "Dawn" should cause man to forget orthodox creeds and to adhere to "the common creed of common sense" since it is the only creed that recognizes the actual essence and goodness of God. If men respect and follow this "common creed of common sense," God's will can be executed. The gist of The Lord's Prayer is coupled with transcendental aspects in this stanza as the inference is that each individual has innate spiritual knowledge, and it can be activated by man trusting his own common sense.

The speaker's affirmation of faith in spiritual power is contained in the sunset in eternal twilight, in "the promise of the day" that causes the night to be beautiful, and in the faith that man has even when he fears the life he holds so closely. During these dark moments it is his faith that provides him with his "other life" and "other chance" to obtain some understanding of the relationship of his personal fate with that of circumstances. Then the speaker urges man to recognize and "revere" in himself that element which is
kindred in spirit to the universe; this transcendental concept indicates that each man contains a spark of divinity. 27

The poem concludes on an evangelical note as the speaker exhorts the "Children of the Night" to leave the unhealthy attitude of the darkness that scars them and to live a wholesome existence in the healthy, spiritual light. Unlike the night people who hide, the "Children of the Light" proclaim their knowledge through the "ages."

Chard Powers Smith writes that "Robinson neither had nor wanted a doctrine, a theology, a religious system anymore than he wanted a philosophical system . . . but he searched for the generic Being, calling the object variously 'Truth,' 'Wisdom,' and 'The Light.'" 28 As to the nature of the divinity that "he so consciously affirmed, Robinson was conveniently inconsistent, shaping it to the needs of the particular passage in the particular poem." 29

In "The Children of the Night" the higher spiritual Being is called God; however, in the next sonnet, "Credo," the divinity is described as "Light." "Credo" is self-expression of the speaker and is a personal statement of belief in spiritual "Light":


29 Ibid., p. 301.
CREDO

I cannot find my way: there is no star
In all the shrouded heavens anywhere;
And there is not a whisper in the air
Of any living voice but one so far
That I can hear it only as a bar
Of lost, imperial music, played when fair
And angel fingers wove, and unaware,
Dead leaves to garlands where no roses are.

No, there is not a glimmer, nor a call,
For one that welcomes, welcomes when he fears,
The black and awful chaos of the night;
For through it all--above, beyond it all--
I know the far-sent message of the years,
I feel the coming glory of the Light. 30

In the octave the speaker is alone and lost; he has no star
in his veiled heaven to guide him to any familiar destination. In
this state of aloneness his consciousness is so removed from the usual
noises and voices of reality that he can hear nothing except a "whisper"
that seems to be very distant from him. This sound is like a
"bar of lost... music" and is so faintly heard that it is apparently
played in some existence outside nature or this world. 31

As Robinson used light imagery for the perception of spiritual
truth, he also used certain other references to convey or reinforce

30 Edwin Arlington Robinson, Collected Poems (New York,
1965), p. 94.

31 W.R. Robinson, pp. 64-66.
the same concept. One common extension is music; therefore, when the speaker in "Credo" hears the sound of a bar of "imperial music," the implication is that he is sustained by some spiritual force or inner spiritual knowledge. The unearthly and unnatural surroundings of the music seem to strengthen this concept of spirituality:

\[
\text{played when fair} \\
\text{And angel fingers wove, and unaware,} \\
\text{Dead leaves to garlands where no roses are.}
\]

At the beginning of the sestet loneliness and darkness are still the companions of the speaker as he lives through the "black and awful chaos of the night." As he experiences the paradoxical emotions of welcoming and fearing the night, he is aware that spiritual truth will prevail through the despair that is contained in the night.

The speaker in "Credo" who has no visible help to sustain him through his seclusion in the desolate darkness is very much like the "Children of the Night" who find the night "sullen" and who would have been better off dead than living without realizing any spiritual knowledge. But as the speaker in "The Children of the Night" is fortified by faith in God, so the speaker in "Credo" is sustained by his faith that spiritual knowledge can be grasped even in the night. Again the light image is used to express the spiritual power of sustenance:
For through it all--above, beyond it all--
I know the far-sent message of the years,
I feel the coming glory of the Light.

In Edwin Arlington Robinson: A Poetry of the Act, W.R.

Robinson writes that

Robinson welcomed the black and awful chaos
of the night because only when the luster of the materialistic world and flesh are obscured can the far-sent message come through. The far-sent message, identified with the Light, is perceptible only if the glittering mask of phenomena is blacked out. The soul can emerge only when the essential in man eclipses the accidental.32

As Robinson was about to leave Harvard in 1893, he wrote to Gledhill: "I feel that things are coming out all right some time, but the action is slow."38 Not long after this letter, he wrote "Credo" containing "the coming glory of the Light." He said concerning himself and his poetry,

I shall keep on having the same faith in myself . . . a kind of optimistic desperation. . . . I don't seem to have any capacity for discouragement . . . in my verses. . . . I intend that there shall always be at least a suggestion of something wiser than hatred and something better than despair.34

32 Ibid., p. 138.
33 Smith, pp. 300-301.
34 Ibid.
In "The Children of the Night" and "Credo" Robinson uses the light image to introduce whiteness that is symbolic of spiritual truth in contrast with the blackness of despair and confusion that fill the night image. In each work the speaker is sustained through turmoil of existence by a faith in spiritual power described as light and music.

Edwin Arlington Robinson's "The Children of the Night" and "Credo" concern themselves with myths. To comprehend the deeper significant implications in these two poems, the student needs to understand what myths are and why man believes in myths. Therefore, the instructor should give a short lecture on the history of myths and the importance of myths in man's heritage. Included in this presentation should be an explanation of Robinson's pursuit of myth. Both "The Children of the Night" and "Credo" should be read by the students before an explication is done in class. Students then should be encouraged to compare or contrast the ideas in the two poems, for the two poems serve to complement each other.

Questions for discussion are,

THE CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT

1. What personal decisions regarding one's purposes, values, and possibilities in life must everyone make?
2. To what extent may you assist individuals who do not perfect their possibilities?

3. What concepts do you hold that substantiate your belief that each person must create his own nature?

4. What must you do in order to become a person of worth?

5. What may you do in order to modify your existential loneliness?

6. Confronted with a choice, would you choose to seek spiritual knowledge which transcends the reasoning power of man?

7. Do you have views that people without direction in life should "drown." In what ways do you agree with others that these kinds of people should die on the first day of their lives?

8. How has organized religion limited your pursuit of faith?

9. What ideas may you "appropriate" from organized religion that may give you moral direction in life?
CREDO

1. In what ways, if any, can self analysis make you more aware of "self"?

2. Explain why you ascribe your own lack of direction at times to external causes.

3. In your opinion does music contain some sort of inner spiritual knowledge?

4. In what ways may your existential loneliness be modified?

5. In what ways do you often find that you are a victim of your own anxiety?

One particular relationship of man which interested Edwin Arlington Robinson is that of leader of society; this is explored in "The Master." Parallel to the lives of many great leaders in history, who suffered abuses of all sorts, Abraham Lincoln's life is one of suffering and forbearance also as he accepts and executes his responsibility. In the poem the speaker sees Lincoln, a "Titan" in a society filled with "little children," as a man who is worthy of admiration from his countrymen, but who is instead "sneered" at,
"reviled," and "jeered" by men incapable of recognizing virtue and excellence in a leader: 35

THE MASTER

A flying word from here and there
Had sown the name at which we sneered,
But soon the name was everywhere,
To be reviled and then revered:
A presence to be loved and feared,
We cannot hide it, or deny
That we, the gentlemen who jeered,
May be forgotten by and by.

He came when days were perilous
And hearts of men were sore beguiled;
And having made his note of us,
He pondered and was reconciled.
Was ever master yet so mild
As he, and so untamable?
We doubted, even when he smiled,
Not knowing what he knew so well.

He knew that undeceiving fate
Would shame us whom he served unsought;
He knew that he must wince and wait—
The jest of those for whom he fought;
He knew devoutly what he thought
Of us and of our ridicule;
He knew that we must all be taught
Like little children in a school.

We gave a glamour to the task
That he encountered and saw through;
But little of us did he ask,
And little did we ever do.
And what appears if we review
The season when we railed and chaffed?
It is the face of one who knew
That we were learning while we laughed.

The face that in our vision feels
Again the venom that we flung,
Transfigured to the world reveals
The vigilance to which we clung.
Shrewd, hallowed, harassed, and among
The mysteries that are untold,
The face we see was never young
Nor could it wholly have been old.

For he, to whom we had applied
Our shopman's test of age and worth,
Was elemental when he died,
As he was ancient at his birth:
The saddest among kings of earth,
Bowed with a galling crown, this man
Met rancor with a cryptic mirth,
Laconic--and Olympian.

The love, the grandeur, and the fame
Are bounded by the world alone;
The calm, the smouldering, and the flame
Of awful patience were his own:
With him they are forever flown
Past all our fond self-shadowings,
Wherewith we cumber the Unknown
As with inept, Icarian wings.

For we are not as other men:
'Twas ours to soar and his to see;
But we are coming down again,
And we shall come down pleasantly;
Nor shall we longer disagree
On what it is to be sublime,
But flourish in our perigee
And have one Titan at a time. 36

The time of the poem, as a note in Collected Poems indicates, is shortly after the Civil War. In the opening stanza the

narrator admits to the greatness of the President in spite of the paradoxical opinions in the nation. Lincoln is introduced to the nation by rumor in every state in the Union. Although his political debut appears ridiculous to Americans, his character soon effuses enough magnetism to negate partially this attitude so that he is, at the same time, "loved" and "feared." The narrator emphasizes Lincoln's importance by stating that the ultimate tribute given to him will come from history which will honor him with remembrance while ignoring the men who wrongly judged him.

At the time that Lincoln is asked to serve, the nation is troubled with "perilous days" and men's hearts are "sore beguiled"; this era evidently refers to the unrest in the nation before the outbreak of the Civil War. Lincoln observes the situation and realizes the full impact of the burden he will carry if he leads society at this particular time in history; however, he accepts the responsibility of public leadership and simultaneously reconciles himself to his own personal destiny. Again the narrator examines Lincoln's character to find him "mild," yet wild and "untamable." Doubt, on the part of society, makes it wonder if one who is so "wild" in nature can master a nation. But doubt apparently exists only in the mind of society and not in Lincoln himself because he has a more intimate and surpassing knowledge:
We doubted, even when he smiled,
Not knowing what he knew so well.

Lincoln's knowledge also makes him aware that the nation
he serves will not appreciate or understand his efforts until after his
active service is ended, and that he will have to abide the ridicule of
an immature society in order to help it achieve some measure of
maturity. Robinson uses the image of teacher and pupil to convey
this impression:

He knew that we must all be taught
Like little children in a school.

The immaturity of society's little children is further revealed as it
considers a leader's task as glamorous and proceeds to expound
society's own importance to the extent that it criticizes its truly
superior leader by "railing and chaffing." Again as Lincoln realistically evaluates the wearisome labor embodied in the leadership
position, he refrains from transferring actual responsibility to the
"children" by asking for little help from them; and the speaker concedes that society only superficially helps the master because it is
more concerned with the role of critic that is more equal to its
talents.

In reflection the speaker recalls the face of Lincoln as he
patiently realizes that the "children" are actually learning to some
degree even while they laugh; he remembers that Lincoln, although
acutely feeling the "venom" of society's viciousness, remains watchful and protective over the insecure nation; he remembers the toll which responsibility exacts from Lincoln's energy as he describes Lincoln's face:

Shrewd, hallowed, harassed, and among
The mysteries that are untold,
The face we see was never young
Nor could it wholly have been old.

This passage implies an idea of immortality associated with wisdom, both ancient and new. The ageless qualities of Lincoln are expressed as the speaker considers the master's genius to far exceed the boundaries encompassed in the "shopman's test of age and worth," and paradoxically says that Lincoln is "ancient at his birth"; he is fortified by immeasurable greatness and ability. A series of oxymorons convey the burdensome task of the leader: "saddest king," "galling crown," "cryptic mirth." The speaker says Lincoln is weighed down with the condemnation of society resulting from his unappreciated service and misunderstood judgment, he is able to retain the dignity and ability to meet "rancor" not with rancor, but with personal laughter. The unhappy king image shows the depth of respect that the speaker holds for the master because a king through royal power could be irresponsible and popular with his people, but Lincoln strives to be king in a truer sense, and chooses to wear the "galling crown" of harassment from his people.
In the last part of the poem the attributes of the leader's greatness in the eyes of the world and his ability to endure are constantly compared to the shortcomings of the children of the night, who "cumber the Unknown /As with inept, Icarian wings." Lincoln's society, the bird-like man who manages to soar but lacks astute perception, relaxes into a lower level of quality to disagree pleasantly on qualities of superiority after its leader's departure, the real genius having been removed from its circle. As the nation thrives in its state of inferior quality, it can only endure "one Titan at a time," and the reader is left to ponder society's treatment of its next peerless master.

The depth of intensity in this work is felt by the use of words such as "sneered," "shame," "wince," "venom," "vigilance," "smouldering," and "flourish"; it expresses more than a pallid tribute to the greatness of Abraham Lincoln. Louis Coxe writes that Robinson saw Lincoln as "the great teacher and we [the American people] would not learn; he loved greatly and we paid no heed; he saw the truth and we looked elsewhere." Coxe feels that the American people will some day pay dearly for neglecting the teaching and example of Lincoln.  

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37 Coxe, p. 126.
Edwin Arlington Robinson's poem "The Master" illustrates some of the characteristics of a great leader in society. Of course, this poem has meanings that are difficult to find if one is not familiar with certain biographical information concerning Abraham Lincoln; therefore, the instructor should give a biographical sketch of Abraham Lincoln. Along with this information, the students might find it useful to know the connotations of words "politician" and "statesman." The students should look up the allusions to Greek mythology before attempting a close reading of the poem. Questions for discussion are,

THE MASTER

1. What kinds of individuals are attracted to you because of their intellectual and personality characteristics?

2. In what ways do you face up to your own responsibilities? Are you an authentic person?

3. Do you see a need for a greater tolerance and sympathy toward others?

4. What are some of the ways that you can seek both truth and happiness?

5. Is self reliance and confidence something that all men today should strive for?
6. In what ways would an egalitarian view of society today improve our social conditions?

7. What are solitude's compensations as you see them?

8. In what ways can you cite evidence that man needs to experience closer interpersonal relationships?

9. What are some of the ways or specific times that you have defied authorities who went against your own will and conscience? In what ways is such an individual likely to be socially destructive?

10. What kinds of meanings in life do you find yourself "appropriating"?

Edwin Arlington Robinson was more interested in man's relation to man. He made no judgments, nor did he attempt to inculcate the minds of his readers with unanswerable questions. However, Robert Frost did not concern himself so much with man's place in society. Frost sought to find man's place in the universe.

Late in his life Robert Frost began a search for answers to puzzling questions of life, and the result was a poem offering man a
way to accept life on earth through courage, accomplishment, submission to life, and a realization that man's finite mind cannot grasp the infinite or comprehend the fact of human suffering or of evil and injustice in a divinely ordered world. In arriving at some answers and raising even more questions, Frost used the vehicle of a long dramatic poem: *A Masque of Reason*.

The masque is generally based on the Biblical theme, although it only vaguely hints at the actual Old Testament theme rather than use it. *A Masque of Reason* takes its characters and patterns from the Book of Job. Frost uses Job's suffering and his rational search for a reason for his fate as the plot for the poem. Obviously, Frost considered the poem important, for he stated that "All my poetry is a footnote to it."38

*A Masque of Reason* is not a retelling of the Bible story. Frost retained only four of the Book's characters: Job, his wife, God, and Satan. In length, structure, style, and intent Frost's poem has no relation to the great book of the Bible. Yet the basic ideas outlined in the masque are very much a part of the Biblical poem.39 Job is one of the Wisdom Books of the Bible and was


probably written during the patriarchal age, some 2,500 years ago. It is a dramatic poem set in a frame of epic narrative. Reuben Brower calls the book "the most subversive book in the Old Testament." Job deals with four basic questions: (1) the reconciliation of unmerited suffering with the love and justice of God; (2) the existence of goodness irrespective of reward; (3) the providential government of the world; and (4) the delay of divine justice in punishing the wicked. Frost used the problems of the Biblical story for the framework of his poem but deviated from the actual Scriptural account, calling his narrative "the Forty-third Chapter of Job."

The Biblical report opens with a picture of Job as the richest, purest, and greatest man in the East. The next scene is represented as taking place in heaven where the sons of God come to present themselves before God, with Satan taking his place among them. God asks Satan if he has considered Job and his goodness, and Satan answers that Job serves God for what he gets in return. This reply of Satan leads to the whole action of the book. Job is given into the hands of Satan, is totally ruined, is consoled by three friends. He remains

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unmoveable in his integrity and belief in a just God and is finally restored to his former position.

Unlike MacLeish in J.B., Frost disregards all the Biblical narrative and begins his poem long after the canonical account. He places his drama in "A fair oasis in / the purest desert," with two persons identified only as "Man" and "Wife" present on stage. If one takes the drama as a serious theological dissertation, then the opening will show Frost's belief in salvation as a possession of every religion, not Christianity alone. Frost combines heathenism, Judaism, and Christianity into one religion at the beginning of the dialogue:

Man: I said the incense tree's on fire again.
Wife: You mean the Burning Bush?
Man: The Christmas Tree.
Wife: I shouldn't be surprised.
Man: The strangest light!
Wife: There's a strange light on everything today.
Man: The myrrh tree gives it . . .
   The ornaments the Greek artificers
   Made for the Emperor Alexius,
   The Star of Bethlehem, the pomegranates,
   The birds . . .
   Yes, and look, the Tree is troubled.
Wife: Someone's caught in the branches.
   So there is.
   He can't get out.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 587.}
The "Tree" is never definitely identified, and therefore may be either the incense tree, the Burning Bush, or the Christmas Tree. Frost equates the symbols of heathenism, Judaism, and Christianity and confines the same God in the branches of the one symbolic tree. Stock calls the passage "magnificent rhetoric" and from the theme show that the poem "has relevance for all mankind, whether pagan or Christian."  

As God emerges from the tree, the Wife immediately anthropomorphizes him and sets the mood for the poem:

Wife: It's God. I'd know Him by Blake's picture anywhere.  

God is further anthropomorphized by Frost in his stage direction describing the pitching of the Deity's throne:

(The throne's a plywood flat, prefabricated, That God pulls lightly upright on its hinges And stands beside, supporting it in place.)

After the throne is set up, the religions of the world are again combined before it as the Man searches for the reason behind the "pitching throne." He suggests the throne may be for "Royal Court,"

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45 Frost, p. 588.  
46 Ibid.
"Court of Law," or "Judgment Day," following the heathen, Hebraic, and Christian religious symbols.

The Wife finally identifies her husband in urging him to go to God and "Tell Him He may remember you: You're Job." Frost uses one of his rare puns in God's answer: "... you're Job, my patient."

Frost can never be divorced from his dramas, as he can never be separated from his other poems. "Before the Masque of Reason Frost's personality presented itself as kindly, pungent and temperate, and to the point of reserve." After the Masque of Reason, a new side of Robert Frost was brought to light. Winters accuses Frost of using allusions to Blake and the plywood throne for "the shock of cleverness." He continues by saying that the details are irrelevant to any theme discernible in the poem. Winters' attack aims at Frost's later allusions to Herrick as a "mutilated fragment that has no purpose, but is merely an aimless effort to be

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47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.


funny." Even if Frost deliberately tries to shock and to force his wit, he succeeds beyond his highest expectations in injecting himself and his New England humor into the semi-religious poem. The character of Thyatira, Job's wife, is a vivid example of Frost's ability to portray wittily a shrewd, skeptical, modern, cosmopolitan woman who knows all the tricks and games of the modern world (including twenty questions), and who in the end is concerned with nothing more profound than snapping a picture of God, Job, and the Devil. Thyatira succeeds in charming God as a modern executive's wife might impress the president of the company at a cocktail party. She doesn't ask God for any real truth, but asks instead for some "tiny scraps of palliative reason." She emphasizes the superficiality of the search of the problem, and so explains the failure of the probe.

Frost may have chosen his name for Job's wife, who is unnamed in the Book of Job, from a Biblical passage found in Revelation 2:18-28:

To the angel of the church at Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes flame like fire and whose feet gleam like burnished brass: I know all your ways, your love and faithfulness, your good service and your fortitude; and of late you have done even better than at first. Yet I have this against you:

\[51^{Ibid.}\]

\[52^{Stock, p. 380.}\]
you tolerate that Jezebel, the woman who claims to be a prophetess, who by her teaching lures my servants into fornication and into eating food sacrificed to idols. I have given her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her fornication. So I will throw her on a bed of pain and plunge her lovers into terrible suffering, unless they forswear what she is doing; and her children I will strike dead. This will teach all the churches that I am the searcher of men's hearts and thoughts, and that I will reward each one of you according to his deeds. And now I speak to you others in Thyatira, who do not accept this teaching and have had no experience of what they like to call the deep secrets of Satan; on you I will impose no further burden. Only hold fast to what you have, until I come. To him who is victorious, to him who perseveres in doing my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—that same authority which I received from my Father—and he shall rule them with an iron rod, smashing them to bits like earthenware; and I will give him also the morning star.

Many of the traits of the "Jezebel" in the church at Thyatira are found in Job's wife. The "Jezebel" claimed to be a prophetess, and Job's wife told God, "The witch of Endor was a friend of mine." "Jezebel" held only contempt for God, and Job's wife, who trenchantly recognized God by Blake's Picture, recusantly tells God, "I have a protest I would lodge with You." "Jezebel" was obviously not among those who "had no experience of what they like to call the deep secrets of Satan," and Job's wife was so enchanted with the Devil that she asked him,

... Oh, by the way, you haven't
By any chance a Lady Apple on you?
... . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
How I should prize one personally from you. 53

53 Frost, p. 604.
The stinging wit of Frost may have bridged the Hebraic theme of the drama and the Christian allusions found throughout it by a pagan's being chosen from the New Testament to portray the wife of Job.

After the anthropomorphic character of God, the bitter character of Job, and the sarcastic yet charming character of Thyatira are established, the masque moves rapidly through the use of poetic banter. God admits his guilt for Job's suffering, shyly asserting, "I trust you're quite recovered, /And feel no ill effects from what I gave you." Job answers bitterly that he likes the frank admission of God, but prefers the absence of God to the company of Him: "The let-up's heavenly." God lays the foundation for the remainder of the drama by thanking Job briefly:

... for the way you helped me
Establish once for all the principle
There's no connection man can reason out
Between his just desserts and what he gets.

... My thanks are to you for releasing me
From moral bondage to the human race.

I had to prosper good and punish evil,
You changed all that. You set me free to reign.
You are the Emancipator of your God.

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54 Ibid., p. 588.
55 Ibid., p. 589.
56 Ibid., pp. 589-590.
Frost continues to destroy the reasonableness of God by having Him rationalize Job's suffering with the naive whimper: "And it came out all right." Although the drama has barely begun, the problem is established and the characters are fixed by means of cogent condensation.

Most of Frost's critics are insulted by his jovial treatment of a Deity. Squires comments,

It is all very well for Frost in other poems to tease his reader or to tease his characters, but Frost's God ought to be greater than Frost. He ought not to tease, ought not to lose His divinity. . . . Somewhere I have read that the masques are examples of Yankee humor (though I know of no other similar examples) but the phrase, if it describes, hardly excuses. I cannot speak for the orthodox, but I should think most sensitive readers might be distressed for an entirely simple reason: Frost's masques are meaningless without reference to the Biblical originals, and once these originals are brought to mind, the discrepancy between the earnest and the flip is painful; the difference between the cosmic drama and Yankee humor is unnerving.

. . . Too often he supposes that to save himself from appearing a fool he must prove himself a wise man. Too often he pursues no lover's quarrel with the world, but only a casual flirtation with the reader. 57

Brower simply calls the masques "irreverent," 58 and Winters in his consistent deprecation of Frost says, "It is a curious

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58 Brower, p. 212.
performance to signalize the seventieth birthday of a poet of so
great reputation."59 Actually Frost cannot be accused of much
more irreverence that the Biblical Job displayed when he was rather
unsure that he even liked God at all, and when he boldly stated that he
surely did not like what God was doing. Frost's Job sighed "The
let-up's heavenly," while the Biblical Job voiced the same opinion
in wishing for the grave.

Throughout the drama Frost attacks organized religion and
man's rational approach to Scripture. Thyatira informs God that her
friend the Witch of Endor was burned for witchcraft. God replies
"That is not / Of record in my Note Book." But Thyatira persistently
continues with the rebuff, "Well, she was. / And I should like to know
the reason why." After her demand the plywood throne collapses.
The implication is that Frost has contempt for man's enforcement
of his own reason upon the Bible. Although a matter is not on record
in the Scriptural "Note Book," man is unhampered and in disregard
soars into his own theological fantasies. It is because of man's
absolute rational approach to God that God's throne has fallen, Frost
implies.

59 Winters, p. 385.
Thyatira begins a surface probe of God's intent, and concludes that all God can do is "lose Your temper / When reason-hungry mortals ask for reasons." Job, the symbol of orthodox theological thought, tells his wife not to question God, but "go to sleep. God must await events / As well as words." Job attempts to attack blind acceptance of faith and religion by telling God,

I need some help about this reason problem
Before I am too late to be got right
As to what reasons I agree to waive.

I waived the reason for my ordeal--but--
I have a question even there to ask--
In confidence . . .

I'd give more for one least beforehand reason
Than all the justifying ex-post-facto
Excuses trumped up by You for theologists.

I'm curious. And I'm a grown-up man:
I'm not a child for You to put me off
And tantalize me with another 'Oh, because.'

Why did You hurt me so? I am reduced
To asking flatly for the reason--outright. 60

After making his only demand of God, Job slides back into orthodox conformity when God stammers at him with, "I'd tell you, Job--." Job fatalistically accepts God's omnipotence with "All right, don't tell me then / If you don't want to. I don't want to know." Job

60 Frost, pp. 595, 597-598.
asserts the plight of man's existence is in an absolute epistemological void:

We don't know where we are, or who we are.
We don't know one another; don't know You;
Don't know what time it is. We don't know, don't we?

You could end this by simply coming out
And saying plainly and unequivocally
Whether there's any part of man immortal.
Yet You don't speak.  

Thyatira remains on the outskirts of the entire discussion, and curtly quips, "You won't get any answers out of God." Then she takes the form of fused Christian religion in a confused eschatological bombast directed toward God, and ends her monologue by disconcerting God to the point that He is forced to give a reason for His behavior:

I'm going to tell Job why I tortured him.
And trust it won't be adding to the torture.
I was just showing off to the Devil, Job,
As is set forth in chapters One and Two.

Do you mind?  

God's glib answer is nothing more than an unreasonable, deified, practical joke prompted by a dare from Satan. By this time Job has so conformed to unreason that he doesn't even question God's action:

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61 Ibid., pp. 598-599.
62 Ibid., p. 600.
No. No. I mustn't.
’Twas human of You. I expected more
Than I could understand and what I get
Is almost less than I can understand.
But I don't mind. Let's leave it as it stood.
The point was it was none of my concern.
I stick to that. 63

Frost further anthropomorphizes God by having Him admit
temptation of the Devil, and His humiliation at the Devil's endeavor to
convince Him that there is no difference in the motives of God's follow-
ers and those of Satan's: "Both serve for pay." God continues to
alleviate His guilt by assuring Job "I took your side / Against your
comforters in their contention / You must be wicked to deserve such
pain." Job is finally beaten into total acceptance of God's former
assertion that the "discipline man needed most / Was to learn his
submission to unreason. . . ." Job's inquiry into reason stops, and
Frost leaves him for the remainder of the drama as a man resolved
to yield to Fate in lieu of reason.

After Frost seals off Job's mind from reason, he uses the
remaining lines of A Masque of Reason to deprecate organized religion
through use of Satan as one of the dramatis personae. Before God
calls the Devil on the scene, He climbs upon His throne, speaking to
Himself:

63Ibid.
I'll get back on my throne
For this I think. I find it always best
To be upon my dignity with him. 64

Frost seems to be taking a slap at the pietistic attitude of Christianity
when faced with evil or anything it feels is below its righteous dignity.

Job's wife appeals for a personalized apple, and God defends
the Devil:

He's unhappy. Church neglect
And figurative use have pretty well
Reduced him to a shadow of himself. 65

Marion Montgomery feels that Frost is not playing, but rather revealing
his superstitious nature in emphasizing Satan in the play. "If
his method is humorous," Montgomery says, "he still intends some
seriousness." 66  Frost does display belief in some type of Satan
which always remains with man to tempt him, just as he indicates a
belief in a Supreme Being. His theology as seen in his poetry has
prompted some critics to assert that "Frost is at best agnostic." 67
Montgomery defends Frost's theology, as if it needed a defense, by

64 Ibid., p. 602.
65 Ibid., p. 605.
67 Ibid.
declaring that "Frost's hesitancy in speaking dogmatically on the subject of the supernatural is due more to his acceptance of mystery in existence than to agnosticism."  

The nature of Satan is defined by Frost through Job's wife as a being that "takes no steps! / He isn't really going, yet he's leaving." It is Satan's ability to leave and yet not leave that is described as a "tendency" by Job and his wife. Winters contends that Frost aimed satire "at the word 'tendency,'" but the exact meaning is not clear: It may mean trivial fashion; it may mean intellectual movement; it may indicate Frost is unable to distinguish between the two." It may also indicate that Winters did not read the passage carefully and without bias.

Frost brings the drama to a close with an apathetic Thyatira, camera in hand, arranging Job, God, and Satan beside the throne for a picture. Her grouping also includes the placing of all religions into the same picture, the Christmas tree becoming the Burning Bush decorated with "gold enameled artificial birds." But organized religion, whether it be Christian, Hebraic, or heathen, will not show in the picture: only God, Satan, and Job; that is, symbols of good,

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68 Ibid., p. 343.
69 Winters, p. 384.
evil, and man will be seen. In his final analysis of the situation, Frost deals a death blow to the questioning, although unreasonable person of Thyatira by placing her outside the boundaries of the picture, leaving only the whimsical, tyrannical force of good, the tempting 'tendency' of evil, and a man stripped of reason willing to stand between good and evil, accepting by faith a Fate in which he has no more control than has a puppet dancing on the ends of strings.

Robert Frost's *A Masque of Reason* represents a summation of his philosophical views. More meaning can be discovered in this poem if students have a basic knowledge of Frost's philosophical position; therefore, the instructor should present Frost's ideas in a brief lecture. The instructor should encourage students to be familiar with the Book of Job, for students may arrive at many important decisions by comparing or contrasting the Book of Job with *A Masque of Reason*. Students should read the poem in its entirety before a classroom explication is attempted. Because of the length of the poem, line by line explication is not recommended in the classroom. However, all significant ideas should be discussed, for these ideas form a pattern in the poet's thinking. Questions for discussion are,

*A MASQUE OF REASON*

1. What attitude toward religion in general do you maintain? Would you describe this attitude as
reverent or irreverent? Compare or contrast these religious views with those of others.

2. In what ways do you think that suffering, merited or unmerited, makes you a better person?

3. In what ways are you idealistic enough to pursue goodness regardless of its reward?

4. Do you believe that salvation for man is achieved through a particular religion?

5. What religious attitudes have the most relevance for you?

6. What symbols are beneficial to you in gathering meanings in life?

7. In what ways do allusions to religion affect you?

8. Do you see the need for more profound relationships in our technological age today?

9. Based on your past experiences, have you always gotten what you deserved?

10. What meanings in life appeal most to your imagination?
11. From your own observations, sum up the plight of man today.

12. What are the mysteries of existence that you must decide for yourself?

13. What unitary view of man may you share with others?

14. In what ways do you have the feeling that man's quest for values today is not in agreement with his way of life?

Frost finally came to the conclusion that man must accept his fate in the divinely ordered world, but Percy B. Shelley did not readily embrace the idea. Shelley was very much of the opinion that the world was not divinely ordered. The world was only as man perceived it, and the world was constantly undergoing change; and as a result, man should enjoy those things that permit him to reach an idealized state of being.

Shelley endeavored to find a significant relationship between the subjective and the objective worlds. He attempted to bridge the gap between the mind and the external world; however, he did not start with the usual distinction between subject and object. He stated that "the mind cannot create; it can only perceive," and "nothing exists but as it is perceived." The mental image results
from perceiving something whose nature we cannot know, and consequently, with respect to the mind, the perception is the sole object. The subject is what we are; the object our percepts and feelings. Reality to Shelley was a continuous mental act, a vain striving by the mind to identify its shadowy images with the corresponding but unknowable external world that has cast them. Man sees what "seems," not what "is."70 Shelley's poem "Mutability" is an example of his belief that nothing is eternal or absolute:

MUTABILITY

We are as clouds that veil the midnight moon;  
How restlessly they speed, and gleam, and quiver,  
Streaking the darkness radiantly!--yet soon  
Night closes round, and they are lost forever:

Or like forgotten lyres, whose dissonant strings  
Give various response to each varying blast,  
To whose frail frame no second motion brings  
One mood or modulation like the last.

We rest.--A dream has power to poison sleep;  
We rise.--One wandering thought pollutes the day;  
We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep;  
Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away:

It is the same!--For, be it joy or sorrow,
The path of its departure still is free:
Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow;
Naught may endure but Mutability. 71

The poem begins by comparing people to clouds which are soon
destroyed by the coming of the night. The poet suggests that people
have but little time to enjoy life, for death soon ends man's existence;
and man's life is constantly altered in the same way that music
played on a lyre is never the same as it was when played before.
Man faces each day by experiencing joy or sorrow, for he perceives
things in the manner that he wants to. Each man has the power to be
happy or sad depending upon what he cares to visualize at the moment.
Since Shelley is stating "Naught may endure but Mutability," he
implies that man should "seize the day." Or man needs to enjoy
himself at all times, for all that he has is the present, since nothing
but change is eternal.

And in the Sonnet: 'Lift Not the Painted Veil' Shelley postu-
lates the ideas that most individuals do not have the courage to face
reality. People live only in the physical world:

SONNET: 'LIFT NOT THE PAINTED VEIL'

Lift not the painted veil which those who live
Call Life: though unreal shapes be pictured there,
And it but mimic all we would believe
With colours idly spread, --behind, lurk Fear
And Hope, twin Destinies; who ever weave
Their shadows, o'er the chasm, sightless and drear.
I knew one who had lifted it--he sought
For his lost heart was tender, things to love,
But found them not, alas! nor was there aught
The world contains, the which he could approve.
Through the unheeding many did he move,
A splendour among shadows, a bright blot
Upon this gloomy scene, a spirit that strove
For truth, and like the Preacher found it not. 72

In "I knew one who had lifted it--he sought / For his lost heart was

tender, things to love, / But found them not," the poet says that he
knew one individual who tried to rise above the physical world. Per-
haps the person wanted to live in a world of love and spirit, where

man was more subjective; but he found himself all alone. Nothing in
the physical world was of value to the person. Society had rejected
his ideas, and he couldn't accept the ideas of society, for he was "a

spirit that strove / For truth, and like the Preacher found it not."

The poet's thoughts seemed to be premised upon his belief
that love is the only cure for man's ills; however, man insists upon a
moral code which really destroys that which it purports to protect.

Shelley had a tendency to lose touch with reality, for he really lived in two worlds:

One was the world of his everyday experience, the world of suffering, oppression, and cruelty, which he found intolerable; the other was an imagined world of absolute justice, goodness, and love. To such a mind Platonism was congenial, for it sees the cosmos as divided between the passing and shadowy domain of sense experience and the criterion world of Forms, perfect eternal, out of time and space, the locus of all reality. Beauty and Goodness, of which the world of sense is only a distant and illusory reflection. 73

Percy B. Shelley had an unusual theory on the nature of how one acquired his perceptions. The instructor needs to give a brief but meaningful lecture on how various poets describe what takes place between "subject" and "object." Following these remarks, the instructor needs to elaborate on Shelley's ontological view of existence, for students may not fully understand the works of Shelley unless they know how the poet saw life. To gather the meanings in "Mutability" and the "Sonnet: 'Lift Not the Painted Veil'" no advance reading is really necessary; however, students may find it helpful to know the reference to the "Preacher" in the sonnet.

Questions for discussion are,

73 Abrams, ed., II, 403.
MUTABILITY

1. In what ways do you believe that the only thing permanent is change?

2. Discuss the ways that you often use figurative language to enhance your subjectivity.

3. Have dreams and wandering thoughts had destructive powers to you?

4. Considering our present social conditions, can you detect any note of optimism for yourself?

SONNET: 'LIFT NOT THE PAINTED VEIL'

1. What must you do today to be a truly authentic person?

2. What are some fears and hopes that you may share with others?

3. What emotion may bring man closer to man? Do you believe that man may not be capable of profound human relationships?

Shelley's attitude may be realistic, but Robert Browning would not readily accept all of Shelley's views. Browning was an ardent admirer of Shelley, but Browning believed that some things are permanent and real. All that one has to do is search for these
eternal truths. In "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came" the poet suggests that man must endure to the end in order to find success.

After reading Browning's "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came," one is inclined to agree with James Cowan that "the ambiguity of 'Childe Roland' serves as an unstructured stimulus for the projective interpretations of readers." Browning himself tended to confuse rather than to clarify the matter of just what the poem "Childe Roland" really means. Therefore, it would be naive and unrealistic to expect an explicit meaning to emerge from any amount of study focused on a poem that the author himself insisted repeatedly "was written without any moral purpose whatever." Indeed it would appear that "Childe Roland" is not easy to explicate, since it is "a kind of dream."

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The line from Shakespeare that forms the title of the poem came from *King Lear*, "the most pessimistic of Shakespeare's plays." The line is sung by the character Edgar, who, during a wild storm, pleaded with the Lord to "Do poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend vexes." "Poor Tom," it seemed, had been led by the "foul fiend" on an arduous journey through "ford and whirlpool, over bog and quagmire," during which all sorts of ruthless, medieval torture and suffering had been inflicted on him. Edgar now asked the Lord to have pity on poor Tom, and at the scene's end he sang,

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Childe Roland to the dark tower came,
His word was still, -- Fie, foh, and fum
I smell the blood of a British man.
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Perhaps Browning's "Childe Roland" was brought to fruition in the same manner that Coleridge was inspired to write the fragmentary poem "Kubla Khan." Browning may have fallen asleep while reading *King Lear*, and it is possible that he may have dreamed his highly imaginative version of "Childe Roland."

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79 Berdoe, p. 102.

80 Ibid., p. 103.
Superficially, "Childe Roland" is a tale of a knight who has embarked on a pilgrimage to a certain dark tower, the path to which is replete with difficulties and dangers, and the road taken virtually unknown to the somewhat weary and confused seeker. The poem begins with an encounter between Roland and "that hoary cripple" who gives the knight directions to the Dark Tower. The latter rather hesitatingly sets off on the path pointed out by the sinister old man:

... neither pride nor hope rekindled at the end described,  
So much as gladness that some end might be.

Apparently Roland has been engaged in his quest for some time already, and he has heard reports of the failures of other adventurers who preceded him on the path. At any rate, he is filled with weariness and despair as to the outcome of his journey. No sooner is he embarked on the new path than everything behind him dissolves, so that he finds himself surrounded by a "grey plain... I might go on; nought else remained to do." The new landscape is desolate and decayed--"starved ignoble nature." No flowers, only weeds, flourish here; a "stiff blind horse" stands in stupefaction as if thrust out from the devil's stud:

"See or shut your eyes," said Nature peevishly,  
"... 'tis the Last Judgment's fire must cure this place,  
Calcine its clods and set my prisoners free."
Dismayed, the pilgrim tries to think back on "earlier, happier sights" in his youth, recalling his friends, Cuthbert and Giles; however, it occurs to him, both of them met disgraceful, tragic ends. Discarding such demoralizing reminiscences, Roland quickly returns to the morbid present. Suddenly a "petty yet so spiteful" river crosses his path, over which hang scrubby black alders with willows that seem to him suicidal. Fording the stream, fearful of stepping upon "some dead man's cheek," he expects to enter less miserable territory—"Vain presage!" If anything, the new country is even more frightening to behold:

. . . toads in a poisoned tank,
   Or wild cats in a red-hot iron cage—
   The fight must so have seemed in that fell cirque.
   What penned them there, with all the plain to choose?

Next, there appear various mechanical devices—an engine and a wheel or brake—simply stuck in the earth. Finally, feeling "just as far as ever from the end," Roland finds himself surrounded by mountains—"with such name to grace mere ugly heights and heaps."

Seeing the mountains as obstacles to his progress, the knight is about to give up, when "came a click as when a trap shuts—you're inside the den!" Between two hills, locked together like two bulls in combat, sits a "round, squat turret," the Dark Tower itself. Roland chides himself for almost failing to notice the Tower, comparing the
situation to a sailor who sees a rock too late to avoid wrecking his ship. The hills seem to be an audience of giants who are crying, "Now stab and end the creature--to the heft!" The tension mounts. A noise is everywhere, tolling like a bell; the names of the lost adventurers who preceded him are in his ears:

There they stood, ranged along the hillsides, met To view the last of me, a living frame For one more picture! in a sheet of flame I saw them and I knew them all. And yet Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set, And blew, "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came."

So ends the narrative of "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came."

Browning's critics seemed to have taken the liberty to construct rather involved interpretations of "Childe Roland," for aside from the basic universal quest theme, the poem is full of highly suggestive images that challenge explication. G. K. Chesterton alone seems content with a "surface" interpretation. He heralds "Childe Roland" as the genesis of "an entirely new and curious type of poetry of the shabby and hungry aspect of the earth itself." Acknowledging that daring poets had long sought an escape from the limitations of sheltered gardens and orchards, Chesterton claims,

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That sense of scruffiness in nature, as of a man unshaved, had never been conveyed with this enthusiasm and primitival gusto before. . . . It is the song of the beauty of refuse; and Browning was the first to sing it. 82

Now, where Chesterton seems truly to part from the crowd is in the following statement:

Oddly enough it has been one of the poems about which most of those pedantic and trivial questions have been asked, which are asked invariably by those who treat Browning as a science instead of a poet, "What does 'Childe Roland' mean?" The only genuine answer to this is, "What does anything mean?" Does the earth mean nothing? Do gray skies and wastes covered with thistles mean nothing? Does an old horse turned out to graze mean nothing? If it does, there is but one further truth to be added—that everything means nothing. 83

So Chesterton in effect accuses "those deeply probing critics of a younger generation" 84 of dissecting and analyzing the life and work of Browning as if conducting a scientific investigation, rather than dealing with the man as an artist and the work as his art. He insists the two methods are entirely different. Thus he is opposed to the "scientific" process of correlating details from the life of the poet with the miscellaneous details in his poems. For Chesterton, 82

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82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid., p. 42.
a good poem speaks for itself, just as "a dream is its own interpretation." 85

Many other commentators, however, especially the younger critics, have indeed more or less seized upon "Childe Roland" as seemingly a kind of vehicle for the expression of their personal philosophies. Naturally, this situation is hardly uncommon in literary circles. In fact, any reader is bound to read any poem in terms of his own understanding and outlook—he cannot do otherwise; and poetry is, after all, meant to stimulate and aid the individual in his quest after truth. Moreover, critics, like everyone else today, have been deeply influenced by psychoanalysis, both its theories and its techniques. Thus everyone, especially the intellectual, has an almost natural tendency to apply Freudian theories and methods to any analytical or critical endeavor.

Barbara Melchiori, like others of the new breed, consulted a wide variety of sources, both literary and personal, that appear in Browning's poems. She recognized that the very condition of multiple allusions generates a broad range of interpretation. Basically, she concluded that "Childe Roland" is "a poem of the monster, a poem of hate, of the thoughts Browning habitually fought and

repressed.\textsuperscript{86} She emphasized, however, that she does not mean to imply that the poem is a statement of what Browning really believed. Instead, she considered it a one-sided excursion into the interior darkness of the individual psyche to confront that potentially destructive seat of energy Jung referred to as the Shadow.\textsuperscript{87} As such, she felt, "Childe Roland" served to balance the optimism expressed in several of Browning's more popular poems:

\begin{quote}
The quality of the best of Browning's poems lies in the constant struggle between what he professes consciously and the dark monster inside the Shadow. This struggle gives tension to his writing and adds to the ambiguity of much of his language.\textsuperscript{88}
\end{quote}

The waste land of "Childe Roland" she considered the legendary waste land devastated by a dragon. This monster never actually appeared in the poem, but the atmosphere of horror and fear were the more intense because it was always known to be there. For the unseen is always more frightening than the seen, and "Childe Roland" has many elements of nightmare.\textsuperscript{89} She quoted from a letter of

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\textsuperscript{86}Melchiori, p. 139.
\textsuperscript{88}Melchiori, p. 139.
\textsuperscript{89}Ibid., p. 114.
\end{flushright}
Browning's to his wife dated some six years before he penned "Childe Roland":

... nightmare dreams have invariably been of one sort. I stand by (powerless to interpose by a word even) and see the infliction of tyranny on the unresisting man or beast—and I wake just in time not to die.  

Furthering this view of the poem, Mrs. Melchiori claims that all of Browning's most intensely personal ideas of horror are gathered together and glare out from the grim lines of "Childe Roland": the horror of war, the sense of social guilt, the dread of unchastity, and ultimately the fear of death.  

She found the posture taken in "Childe Roland" to be the exact opposite of the "optimistic, conscious position assumed by Browning at the time in his public statements and in his conscious poetry." The basis of Mrs. Melchiori's interpretation seems to lie in a view of the poem as an expression from and of the unconscious. Thus, while in his conscious moments he vigorously professed and advocated love and cheer, Browning, like all great artists and everyone for that matter, experienced in the unconscious world the opposite--Hate, Lust, Spite—the Shadow. As such, she

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91 Melchiori, p. 117.

92 Ibid., p. 121.
pointed out, "Childe Roland" has close associations with Coleridge's Rime of the Ancient Mariner and "Kubla Khan," much of Blake's work, and in general with the long stream of visionary poetry running through English literature, about which Mrs. Melchiori observes:

Such poems, though enigmatic to their authors, are at the same time most revealing inasmuch as they release ideas and feelings which, when he is in conscious control, the author hides from himself as well as others. 93

So, for those who cannot be satisfied with the Chestertonian view that a poem is its own interpretation, the key to assimilating and accepting the method employed by the various outspoken commentators like Barbara Melchiori lies, perhaps, in recognizing that

Scholars have justly been dissatisfied with Browning's denial of multiple sources for "Childe Roland," and have subsequently ransacked literature for parallels to the poet's thought and imagery—therefore, anything which Browning might have used, unconsciously, as a source. 94

It appears that critics have written a host of conflicting interpretations of Browning's meaning in his fine poem, "Childe Roland."

Many of the ideas, either implicit or explicit, in the poem reflect the romantic ethos. Most of the romantic poets longed for adventure, that unyielding desire to travel to strange lands and places.

93 Ibid., p. 139.

94 DeVane, pp. 229-230.
These places or countries offered in their imagination freedom from the cold, impersonal life of the Neo-classical period. Roland, too, is traveling cautiously into an eerie land that remains one of a vast waste land or of something inhabited by creatures of the devil. There are other typically romantic ideas in "Childe Roland." Romantic poets liked to write about things in the past, especially the Middle Ages. Roland is also the epitome of the romantic nature of man. He has high "hopes," and he knows that he must go on; the quest becomes a never ending activity. His experiences continually give him a feeling of loneliness, frustration, and despair; yet undaunted by his chances of failure, he must go on. One might say that Roland is almost Hemingwayesque or Byronic. He knows that his chances for success are not good; however, he plans to play it out to the end with dignity.

Robert Browning's poem "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came" requires much research before students can grasp the meanings in the poem. Some prior information on knights and knighthood assists one in comprehending the poem; moreover, students would find it helpful for the instructor to point out some meaningful thoughts about medieval life in general. Students should research the allusions that would assist them in the total comprehension of the
poems before a close reading is attempted in the classroom. Questions for discussion are,

CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME

1. What are the ways that you can relate to the ideas, desires, feelings, hopes, angers, fears, and despair of others?

2. What unknowable thoughts appeal most to your imagination?

3. What choices have others made that you could not have made under the same conditions?

4. In what ways do others make you more aware of the need for your own self fulfillment?

5. Elaborate on the ideas regarding success that you possess.

6. At what point in any venture have you felt like giving up?

7. Have you ever experienced in any quest an inspiring expression of defiance and courage?

8. How does landscape affect you?

9. What allegories have you discovered in life that have significance for you?
10. Do you believe that total comprehension of anything is absolutely necessary for you to accept and to "appropriate" meanings?

11. In what ways have you been stimulated and aided in your search for truth?

The objectives for this proposal for instruction of poetry focus on the student. Poetry as such is considered only as a means to an end. But to study poetry is to lay bare the nerve endings of one's emotions and to invite stimulation from the poet's work. Ideally, the student will open his perceptive being to receive symbolic experiences from the poem which will arouse new unfelt emotions in his subjective consciousness. The asking of questions to which no one really knows the answers runs counter to most recognized concepts of teaching and learning; however, the instructor is obligated to use imagination and insight to achieve results in awakening the student to his awareness of choice, freedom, and responsibility. Questions that relate to the objectives are,

1. Have you become aware of the need to perfect your own possibilities in life?

2. Do you have confidence in your value as a person?

3. Have you realized that you alone are responsible for
all of your choices?

4. Have you acquired the ability to make your own decisions?

5. Do you now share your experiences with others?

6. What ways have you discovered that help to modify your existential loneliness?

7. Have you established intimate relationships with others?

8. To what degree do you now sympathize with others who have feelings of frustration and despair?

9. Have you become aware of the necessity for improving existing social conditions?

10. Have you come to the conclusion that knowledge can assist you to fulfill many of your expectancies?

11. Have you learned to "appropriate" knowledge that will improve and enhance "self"?

12. Have you acquired study habits that will contribute to your own intrinsic worth?

13. Do you now see the value in engaging in fantasy and in imaginative thinking?

14. Have you acquired the ability to enhance "self" by using abstract symbols to manipulate your thoughts?

15. Have you recognized the problems that all men face,
which you in association with others are obligated
to seek solutions for these problems?

Summary

Emily Dickinson, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Robert Frost, Percy B. Shelley, and Robert Browning expressed various attitudes on persons, places, and things. Emily Dickinson, a very personal poet, wrote much about death, immortality, and nature. Edwin Arlington Robinson concerned himself with men's motives and ideals, and he brooded over the dark destinies of men. Robert Frost sought to find man's place in the universe, for he was not certain of the love and justice of God. Percy B. Shelley suggested that men need to shake off the chains of the past, of custom, of selfishness, and to press onward to the vital task of constructing a world characterized by kindness, generosity, and love. Browning celebrated the glory of human aspiration and courage. Life to Browning was a kind of moral proving ground where faith was rested and thus his repeated emphasis upon the glory of human courage, endurance, and aspiration. Such were the attitudes of these five very different kinds of poets.

Of special interest to an instructor of poetry and a student of poetry is how to realize the greatest benefit from studying poetry. Most instructors of poetry generally agree that when a poem is
studied properly, it will give the learner insight into the realization of human experience. The student can become aware of those inevitable events faced by other people. He will read about the opinions that great poets had about crucial happenings in life. He will come to grips with problems on how to face life now and what, if anything, one may expect to occur after death. The student may appropriate meanings from the poetic masters; these meanings may give direction and guidance to the student in our technological society today. Perhaps, through the magic of poetry the teacher and learner can share the experiences of the poets, and both can be more aware of life and more autonomous in a scientific and technological age.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The problem of this study was to develop a proposal for the teaching of poetry. The proposal was based on certain characteristics of junior college students; the individual in the technological society; existentialism, the technological culture, and purpose of education; and certain theories in poetry. The proposal for instruction of poetry contains objectives that are designed to meet student needs by focusing on meanings in romantic and modern poetry.

The characteristics of junior college students considered were academic ability, socioeconomic status, goals and vocational aspirations, intellectual interests and personality types, and reasons for attending and withdrawing from college. Junior college students as a group score lower than senior college students on tests such as ACT which are designed to measure academic performance. The parents of junior college students tend to have lower socioeconomic status than parents of senior college students; however, the evidence that is available now appears to indicate that junior colleges are
providing educational opportunities for students who come from these lower socioeconomic levels. In *A Study of the Need for Additional Centers of Public Higher Education* in California in 1957, it was found that the junior college provides educational opportunities for students regardless of income level. Similar studies have found the same results. Junior college students usually choose to attend a junior college because the cost factor is low, and the junior college is usually close to their homes. Many of these students also need some kind of financial assistance in order to attend and to remain in school. The goals and vocational aspirations of junior college students are directed towards training that will help them to earn a higher income. These students tend to desire a more definite pathway to success. Intellectual interests and personality types vary considerably in junior colleges; however, the Center for Research and Development in Higher Education at Berkeley developed an intellectual-predisposition scale that clearly differentiated between junior college students and senior college students. As a rule, junior college students tend to feel more comfortable in athletic skills, industrial arts, and home economics. In a special survey of El Centro student intellectual interests in poetry, it was found that these El Centro students prefer romantic and modern poetry to other kinds of poetry. This survey was essential in order to discover the kinds of poetry that could be
useful in developing a proposal for the instruction of poetry. The main reasons given by junior college students for attending college were to prepare for a job that pays well, to please their parents, and to develop their self concepts. Many of the junior college students who withdraw from school do so in order to seek full-time employment. Many others withdraw because of poor health; however, only one per cent of the students stated that they had completed their educational goals at the time of their withdrawal.

A study of the influences of science and technology upon individuals today revealed that science and technology have acquired a central and dominant position in human life. Authorities have differing viewpoints about what is to be done in order to prepare individuals to cope with the changes taking place in society today. Some authorities believe that a scientific education is necessary; others, a liberal education. But still others maintain that a scientific education blended with a liberal education would restore man to his proper balance.

Existentialists react in different ways when confronted with the influences of technology on human existence. Erich Fromm and Maxine Greene believe that individuality is crushed by science and technology. Some existentialists, however, think that science and technology can be used as tools to increase man's subjectivity.
Individual needs in this technological age have never been greater; therefore, individuals need to perfect their possibilities. They can achieve greatest intrinsic rewards by being autonomous. They need to realize that each person is important; accordingly, people need to develop close interpersonal relationships. Therefore, all people must learn to use knowledge to enhance individuality, for too much pressure is on people today to conform to group standards.

Existentialists believe that too many individuals today submit to external authorities because people cannot cope with too much freedom. Existentialists believe that an authentic society would be one in which each person would make his own choices.

An existentialist education is one in which educational processes concentrate on the subjectivity of the learner. These processes permit a student to self-actualize; he is permitted self-direction and self-determination. Knowledge as such is not decided a priori for the learner. The student learns through his experiences until he reaches his existential moment. After he reaches his existential moment, he must then make all his choices, which in turn creates his own existence. Existential educators insist that the nature of each learner is unique and singular; consequently, each learner must decide all things for himself, even that which he chooses to know. And the best way for a learner to know is to become personally involved in
learning situations. Literature is one of the best subjects for an existential education, for the learner may participate in decision-making on his own. The teacher must strive to produce the kind of student who thinks for himself. Ideally, the existential teacher teaches himself out of a job.

For this proposal for instruction of poetry, it was decided that ten theories of poetry would supply enough information from which ideas could be drawn that would correlate with the other bases for the theory. Therefore, the theories of poetry of Edgar Allan Poe, Emily Dickinson, Henry James, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Robert Frost, E. E. Cummings, John Dryden, Percy B. Shelley, Robert Browning, and Matthew Arnold were surveyed in order to find a wide range of ideas on what poetry should be. Edgar Allan Poe stressed that poetry must make a notable impression on the mind. The impression must neither serve a moral intent nor give information. Emily Dickinson emancipated diction, meter, and rhythm from formal artificiality. She exercised absolute freedom in choice of subject matter. Henry James believed that a poet should be overtly conscious of a poem's internal consistency. A poet must make form and content work together. Edwin Arlington Robinson believed that a poet must interpret life; moreover a poet must be completely objective in his interpretation of life. Robert Frost stressed that poetry must
express feelings of the heart and mind. Each person must draw his own conclusions as to the meanings conveyed in each poem. E. E. Cummings wrote poetry in lower case letters; his verse has run-on lines; he violated all standards in writing. He believed that a poet should stress the importance of being an individual. John Dryden commented on matters of public concern; he thought a poet should be objective in his writing. He believed that poetry should be written in dignified, unaffected, precise, and musical language. Percy B. Shelley emphasized that poets should be leaders in society; however, poets should not be judged by moral standards. Robert Browning stressed that poetry should stir men to action. Poetry should somehow attempt to give a positive attitude towards success in the world. And Matthew Arnold had faith that poetry could make men's life more bearable. Poetry should show a knowledge of life and conflict, and man could learn from poetry what life was really about.

The objectives established for this theory for instruction of poetry emphasize the importance of the individual's knowing himself and the necessity of interpersonal relationships. Moreover, meanings in poetry for personal "appropriation" of knowledge are also stressed, for it is believed that junior college students will establish and maintain favorable attitudes toward poetry when they are permitted to gather and relate ideas which may have significance to them.
The learning modes implied for this theory are premised fundamentally upon insight learning. The learner is encouraged and motivated to gain insights into the poem; moreover, he is also encouraged to gain insights into his own experiences. Through a study of the poems, learners will become aware of the ideas that poets have had on many different subjects. The learner is encouraged to analyze and synthesize these meanings in the poems as a means to appropriate ideas which may enhance the learner's subjectivity. The learner at all times is encouraged to increase his own self awareness. And in this way he will begin to see the need to seek answers to normative questions that come up in poetry and in his own life. While studying poetry, the learner is motivated to acquire new ways of seeing and reacting to his environment. These new ways of seeing and reacting to one's environment constitute insight.

The learner studies the whole poem in order to understand the total organization of the poem. The poem then may be broken down into various concepts; however, students are cautioned against considering a poem solely on the merits of the various parts. The parts of the poem must be considered only in relation to the whole poem.

Goal-directed activity is also fundamental to this proposal for instruction of poetry. Both the instructor and the student must
have goals that are to be achieved. Purposive activity implies the understanding of the goal, knowledge of what must be done to attain the goal, and practice aimed at achievement of the goal.

Certain poems of Emily Dickinson, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Robert Frost, Percy B. Shelley, and Robert Browning were selected for use in this study, for the romantic and modern attitudes expressed by these poets were more in keeping with the attitudes and needs expressed by El Centro students. Emily Dickinson wrote much about death and immortality. Edwin Arlington Robinson wrote of man's spiritual needs and of great men in society. Robert Frost sought to find man's place in the universe. Percy B. Shelley wrote of man and his existence in a changing world. And Robert Browning offered hope that endurance and optimism may make man successful. These poets believed that through poetry man may find greater meanings in life. And by studying the poems of these great poets, students may find meanings in life that exhibit the quality of human experience with which they can relate.

The phenomenon of testing and evaluating can never be fully understood. The act of awakening awareness and of awakening freedom and responsibility cannot be measured very satisfactorily. It is an act which can be understood only by being felt. However, the kinds of questions that lead to inquiry about the nature of one's
existence, one's relationship to other individuals, and one's personal "appropriation" of knowledge are deemed fundamental to the success of this proposal for instruction of poetry. The tests are entirely subjective; moreover, the student is encouraged at all times to evaluate himself in order to see if he truly is becoming an "authentic" human being.

The methods for this proposal for instruction of poetry emphasize a variety of ways for presenting the poems, and no sequential order is intended. The instructor may read the poem aloud, emphasizing key words and phrases. He may ask the students for their own interpretations of certain lines and how these lines contribute to the whole poem. The instructor may give critical comments by authorities on certain poems. At times definitions of elusive terms may be given to students, such as the word "myth." The instructor may encourage students to discover meanings that have significance for them, especially those meanings that contribute to enhancement of "self." Perhaps, on occasions, the poet may read his work, and the students may relate more to the meanings. Finally, the students are encouraged to analyze their own life situations, and they may come up with some decisions that will assist them to perfect themselves in our present society.
Recommendations

It is recommended that much more research be carried on in order to discover more precise information on the characteristics of junior college students. Other tests besides the tests that are designed to measure academic ability should be given in order to find out what special abilities junior college students may have. More evidence is needed in order to discover what kinds of activities are encouraged in the homes of junior college students, especially in the homes of culturally deprived students. More research is needed in order to discover the various sources of financial assistance available to junior college students. Much more information is needed on the personality characteristics of junior college students and on the area in which the junior college students feel comfortable. Much more research is needed in order to discover the needs of junior college students living in a technological society.

It seems that the needs of junior college students are not the same as senior college students; however, junior college students do not need a watered-down senior college program. And in order to avoid a weak senior college program, new programs must be developed for junior college students.

It is suggested that the needs of El Centro College students for instruction in poetry can be most effectively met in the teaching
and learning environment by studying romantic and modern poetry through existential methods and procedures. It is also suggested that the objectives for this theory for instruction of poetry can be achieved to a greater degree by teaching analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of poetry rather than knowledge, comprehension, and application of poetry. Finally, the instruction of poetry can be a satisfying experience when it attains success; and it is recommended that this proposal for instruction of poetry be effected in junior college teaching situations.

This proposal for instruction of poetry was directed toward correlating the needs of junior college students with certain objectives in a course in poetry. As a result of the foregoing, the method may proceed by involving the student in analysis of his own experiences and attitudes through the thoughts and expressions of romantic and modern poets. Questions to which students address themselves in this analysis maintain this focus. Discussion of poems and poets, lectures, readings, and other activities are selected accordingly.
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