A LITERARY COMMUNE

THESIS

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

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Ann N. Black, B. S.

Denton, Texas

August, 1974
Initially, this work recognizes that college students often fail to understand or to appreciate the language of literature; therefore, a proposal has been developed that incorporates the typical methods and media of two academic areas—literature and oral interpretation—into a synchronized, dual approach to the study of literature.

Chapter I discusses contemporary problems of literacy in general; Chapter II explores the traditional teaching approaches of English and oral interpretation; and Chapter III develops a possible literary communal effort by outlining a survey course in British Literature and presenting a series of exemplificative Writers Theatre scripts. Chapter IV reviews the associative problems that apparently exist between oral language and the written symbol and recommends that a companion project might demonstrate more fully the efficacy of an integrative approach to the teaching of writing.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. THE LACKLUSTER OF LITERACY</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. EXPLORING THE MEDIA</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. LITERATURE IN CONCERT</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The Essence of Audience&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the Silence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The Truth Is&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Prince of Poets&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;An Anatomy of Swift&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Heroic Couplets Reach their Apogee in Pope with Sound and Sense and Harmony&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Vis-à-vis Posterity&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. ORGANIC LEARNING</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

THE LACKLUSTER OF LITERACY

There is ruth and wisdom in Horace's apothegm: "It is not easy to say well-known things in ways that are peculiarly your own." Even as one begins work, he is aware that it will be difficult to develop unique truths from familiar problems. Exploring "well-known things" in literacy today means questioning common beliefs and practices and then offering new concepts and ways. It will not be easy; one must struggle for insight and style. The work begins, however, for one hopes to contribute, in some measure, to the creative language of man.

The first chapter of this study discusses, in a limited way, the inherent values of reading and writing and reviews the problems that have arisen with their apparent waning. Chapter II offers, in response to these problems, a dual literature program that would be oral in its attack and cerebral in its effect, but always literary in its function. Chapter III develops the proposal through projected outlines and sample scripts, utilizing the methods and media of two academic areas. The last chapter summarizes the projected proposal and suggests a companion

---

effort that might also be instrumental in bringing about that desired state of literacy in which man consciously refines his language and cultivates his literature.

It is a "well-known thing" that being literate has become equated with being civilized, for the tools of communication hold unique powers to widen the horizons of men. For primitive man, thoughts and actions are merely of the moment, but the concept of time changes with the tablet, the paper, the book. Ideas and time can be recorded. The literate man receives and sends from beyond himself, becoming a part of the past and a link to the future. Communicating, and hence civilizing, man moves to the next plateau.

It is not surprising, then, that languages have evolved with civilizations. Indeed, as the cultures of man expanded, his need to translate thoughts and actions into symbols grew; and, gradually, the ability to read and write messages emerged as a necessary skill, and later even as an art. Today, however, communication has gone beyond the written or spoken word. Now mechanical forces bombard the senses with a voluble language of sights and sounds. A new kind of language is being sent; one of feelings, not thoughts, and quite apart from words. Listening to or viewing this language, men are moved and persuaded, even changed. In this slick world of mechanized communication, the illiterate can receive information, yet remain intellectually numb. We may laugh at Mel Yalik's cartoon of the computer that is emitting
brain waves that say, "I think; therefore I am," but the threat to our literacy seems clear.²

However, if literacy disappears, as it might conceivably do in an Orwellian world, the individuality of man may also disappear; for it is man's language that has made him distinct as a being as well as unique among his own kind. Mario Pei, the esteemed linguist, considers language to be indispensable to man and describes it as a "tool of paramount performance in human civilization" and as a multifunctioning possession of all people: "Language enters into all human coordinate activities--religion, war, politics, law, amusement. Language serves as the vehicle of exalted thought--oratory, literature, poetry, philosophy, science, all of which have to be expressed in terms of language."³ Literate men exchange these thoughts through time, through space. Civilization, as we know it, has been made possible by this communication of minds.

It is, therefore, a curious anomaly that language, so essential to civilized man, should be so unappreciated by him. On the whole, he accepts his power to verbalize along with other natural functions of his body, oblivious of its complex machinery and virtually ignorant of its energy and potential. As a result, he usually makes little conscious

²Mel Yalik, cartoon in World, 5 June 1973, p. 11.

effort to refine his language or to cultivate literacy.

With the increasing prevalence of non-verbal media, this apathy might become so widespread as to threaten seriously the vitality of our language. Until recently only the enlightened or frightened few agitated for a more literate public. Today, however, more and more are speaking out, as professional educators and pretenders from the ranks express discontent with the educational status quo and, particularly, with the teaching of reading and writing. Traditionally, of course, the responsibility for developing literacy in the people has resided in the schools; now the schools, public and nonpublic, elementary through college and university, must answer the critics and cope with a literacy crisis which has become a veritable cause célèbre. United States Commissioner of Education James E. Allen appraises the situation frankly and states that "There is no excuse for the scandalous record of reading failures in American schools."4 There is "no excuse" and, so far, there is no remedy. But the search is on to find one, and none too soon; for as H. G. Wells warns, "Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe."5

---


Unfortunately, as Alice discovered, rules for a contest do not always exist. Education is organized, however, and seems determined to win, even though many of its schools are hedged by apparently insurmountable problems. News of education's general status, and of its progress with literacy in particular, is channeled through a number of official voices. For example, the National School Public Relations Association published "Reading Crisis: The Problems and Suggested Solutions" on behalf of the American Association of School Administrators, the American Association of School Librarians, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Acting as spokesman and interpreter, the NSPRA collected and digested current educational research on the literacy problem. After condensing a variety of reports, scholarly publications, letters, speeches, convention notes, and articles attributed to anonymous "authorities," the editors prefaced their publication of their results with the following statement: "This report is not designed to be a definitive study on reading. It has set narrow goals: to provide the nation's education community with an up-to-date report of the most significant recent studies on reading problems in concise, understandable language." Yet, by the very act of selecting and editing "the most significant

6"Reading Crisis," p. 4.
recent studies," the editors suggest definite attitudes. Seven major topics appear throughout the report. Their headings, along with their subtopics, appear below. The number of pages comprised by each section is noted to suggest the relative emphasis given to each discussion:

OVERVIEW [four pages]
WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO [fourteen and a half pages]

- Diagnosing the Problem
- How to Test Pupils' Reading
- Watching for Telltale Signs
- Looking Beyond the Classroom
- What to Expect
- Choosing the "Right" Technique
- Selecting Materials and Equipment
- Organizing the Classroom
- Building Reading Skills
- Special Problems
- Avoiding Common Pitfalls
- Checking on the Results

WHAT ADMINISTRATORS CAN DO [fourteen pages]

- Surveying the School's Needs
- Planning the Program
- Bringing in the Community
- Building the Staff
- Getting Outside Help
- Locating the Facilities
- Buying Materials and Equipment
- Training Teachers and Specialists
- Building a Balanced Program
- Handling Problem Cases
- Following Through

WHAT HIGH SCHOOLS CAN DO [five pages]

- The Developmental Program
- The Remedial Program
- The Reading Center

SUCCESSFUL INNOVATIONS [seven and a half pages]

- Bringing in the Community
- Getting Outside Help
- Training Teachers
No radical solution appears in the fifty-one page paper, but, on the other hand, no one cause for the crisis is found. Despite this cheerless report, the educational community has not retired defeated but continues its self-study. Perhaps Commissioner Allen expresses the views of many teachers and school administrators when he says, "Continued toleration of the failure to give everyone the ability to read breaks faith with the commitment of equality of opportunity which is the foundation of our public education system."  

Interested women in Louisiana demonstrated the same concerns for literacy as did this upper-echelon professional when the Alexandria branches of The American Association of University Women and the League of Women Voters conducted a survey of the Rapides Parish School System in 1971. The statement of sixteen goals concludes the extensive report, and one, in particular, underscores the concern voiced by

7Ibid., pp. 1-51.
8Ibid., p. 3.
Commissioner Allen: "That increased emphasis be placed on reading at all grade levels in all subject fields." The researchers pinpointed poor reading achievement as the source of many of the ills of their school system:

Beginning in elementary school, the fundamental basis of teaching has been reading. A large proportion of students are failing to reach their potential in school because of their inability to read. In spite of concerted efforts to improve teaching, statistics show that pupil achievements are falling.10

After even the briefest perusal of current newspapers or magazines, one realizes that 'achievements are falling' throughout the country. For example, The New York Times repeated the refrain in March of 1973 when reading scores again declined in the schools of that city:

Moreover, according to the citywide reading report issued yesterday by Dr. Harvey B. Scribner, the City School Chancellor, all of the grades tested last April--second through ninth--were lagging behind the national norm. The deficit was greatest in the upper grades.11

Resultant effects of low performance levels have been cited for some time by teachers and administrators in colleges and universities of the educational hinterlands. In a recent article, "Teaching Writing Skills," published in the

---


10 Ibid., p. 2.

Louisiana English Journal, Donald O. Rogers discusses Louisiana's recognition of the problem:

The close relationship between communication skills and academic performance was recently emphasized in the Coordinating Council's Proposed Master Plan for Higher Education in Louisiana, which suggests that the high freshman attrition rate in the state (current studies place it at about fifty percent) may be directly related to deficiencies in basic communication skills.\(^{12}\)

In a related article, a Louisiana colleague of Rogers, Karen P. Poirrier, in "A Study of Certain Rhetorical Aspects of Written Composition," concurs with him on the existence of low performance levels in the skills of communication among Louisiana students, but she states further that "The problem of improving the quality of written expression is a nationwide educational problem."\(^{13}\)

One teacher who has seized a corner of this nationwide problem and made it her own is Lillian Weber, of New York City. Inspired by innovative British educational experiments, she has been largely responsible for the adoption of informal, open-corridor classrooms in New York City and "in such cities as Washington, Detroit, New Haven, Newark and Berkeley, as well as such states as North Dakota, Vermont, New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Missouri, Montana, and Louisiana."\(^{12}\)

\(^{12}\)Donald O. Rogers, "Teaching Writing Skills," Louisiana English Journal, 12 (Fall 1972), 37.

Maine and Arizona. But it was in the seemingly formidable schools of New York City that her ideas were tried out in 1968 on a tentative basis. The approach to learning was new to the United States, but reflected precisely the intent and form of the British models. A study made in 1967 by a British parliamentary commission describes the philosophy of the informal schools:

"The school sets out deliberately to devise the right environment for children, to allow them to be themselves and to develop in the way and at the pace appropriate to them. It tries to equalize opportunities and to compensate for handicaps. It lays special stress on individual discovery, on first-hand experience and on opportunities for creative work. It insists that knowledge does not fall into neatly separate compartments and that work and play are not opposite but complementary."

As the above statement from the Plowden Report indicates, it is the simplicity of the educational structure which is innovative. Again, nothing radical appears, nothing revolutionary. Rather, it is an attitude that revitalizes the learning situations and stimulates the skills of communication:

The British teachers made clear that no material they used was as crucial to their program as simple talk—spontaneous and companionable conversation, storytelling, playacting, communication with interested adults. From such experiences, both reading and writing skills

---


15 Ibid., pp. 80 and 92.
grow—an insight which clashes sharply with the traditional restrictions on talking in the classroom.\textsuperscript{16}

Despite the unqualified success of this new approach in England, parental support in Harlem and Manhattan, professional encouragement from critics such as Charles Silberman, and favorable prognoses for the reading program, there were opponents of the informal classroom who expressed their misgivings about the changes. Some parents and educators feared the consequences of a classroom which operated without strict controls. For them, learning problems would not be resolved automatically in an open classroom, and they remained proponents of the formal classroom. However, whether they were informal or controlled, classrooms were still unsuccessful; for, regardless of the approach, many students remain illiterate in the midst of literacy. In April of 1971, Harvey B. Scribner described the predicament that he found:

"The fundamental trouble today . . . is that for large numbers of students the schools do not appear to work. . . . For every youngster who gains intellectually and psychologically as he passes through our schools, there is another who is pushed out, turned off or scarred as a result of his school experience."\textsuperscript{17}

Other educational experiments continue in New York and elsewhere. But testing results appear more and more dismal. When Scribner released his city-wide reading report in March, 1973, no mention was made of philosophical approaches,

\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 80.
\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 98.
formal or informal, nor was there any attempt to isolate the learning situations of the students. At best, the conclusions to be drawn about the controversy must be inconclusive.

Other movements to break free from tradition and to continue the search for ideal learning situations can be seen, for it was also in March of 1973 that the sixty-six elementary schools of Minneapolis announced a major shift in the policies of their educational structures:

The Minneapolis school board has decided to try to convert its entire elementary school system by 1976 to an "alternatives" setup in which all students and parents would have their choice of educational styles. The choices are expected to range from structured schools to radical free schools.18

In one educational pocket after another, new attitudes about individual educational growth can be discovered, such as the recommendation of the National Council of Teachers of English that a new grading policy should be considered which would eliminate the grade of F in English: "The council's new grading policy stresses the student's personal and social growth, his learning exploration, his study habits, and states that a student's progress be measured through methods other than the assignment of a letter or a numerical grade."19

In line, perhaps, with the public's interest in shifting educational stances, the Saturday Review optimistically


19"New Grading Policy/ No F's in English," The Shreveport Times, 4 April 1972, Sec. C, p. 3.
converted its publication format to allow for a monthly issue to be devoted entirely to matters of education, particularly to articles which discuss the implementation of new philosophical approaches and practical experiments. In the issue of December 18, 1971, a one-page statistical table, "The Magnitude of the American Educational Establishment (1971–1972)," has three items worth noting, because they give an idea of the relative sizes of the school populations:

Students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Public and Nonpublic</th>
<th>Total:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary (kindergarten through eighth grade)</td>
<td></td>
<td>36,700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td>15,150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College and university full-time and part-time students enrolled for credit toward degrees.</td>
<td></td>
<td>8,390,00020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is readily apparent that considerable attrition takes place in enrollment as children continue through school. Over one-half of those who begin school quit by the end of the eighth grade. Of the rest who enroll in secondary grades, slightly more than half will advance to the college level. Unfortunately, few of these will graduate. Discovering why children do not stay in school is one route to discovering how children learn. Both of these

---

factors, of course, are basic to the problems of literacy in general.

The students who do graduate from high school and enroll in college vary enormously in ambition, intellect, and training. Now, serious efforts are being made by some schools to evaluate the educational potential of these beginning college students. By studying their backgrounds and following them through school, administrators hope to produce a better profile of the college freshman and to predict more accurately his potential success in school. For example, the American Council on Education finds that "While 78 per cent of the students in four-year institutions return for their sophomore year, 66 per cent do so in two-year colleges..."\textsuperscript{21} One of the newer two-year colleges found that "Indeed, 70 per cent of Bronx Community's entering students cannot read, write and compute figures on a college level..."\textsuperscript{22} Several questions arise from these two sets of findings: If 70 per cent of the entering class at Bronx Community is below par, but 66 per cent of the class return for the sophomore year, what proportion of those returning are of that original 70 per cent who entered below par? Can Bronx Community College be considered a fair example of two-year colleges? If so, is it possible that 70 per cent of all junior college


\textsuperscript{22}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 13.
freshmen are not reading and writing at generally accepted college levels? When, or how, do these students achieve these skills? Do they ever achieve them?

It is strange that poor performance in the basic communication skills does not deter students from academic ambitions. True, students who hold high-school diplomas, or the equivalent, have the right to enroll in, literally, thousands of colleges. Yet, in many cases, the academic demands of these very colleges far exceed the academic preparation students receive in the diploma-granting high schools. Although their prospects for success in higher education are dim, unprecedented numbers of ill-prepared people are enrolling in our colleges, fully intending to graduate. Gene Maeroff, writing in *The New York Times*, calls the large majority of the two-year college students "academic leftovers": "Though its students are of varying abilities, it is, especially in the urban setting, the last refuge of the educational down-and-outer, the haven of the scholastic ne'er-do-well."²³ And, as more and more irregular students are accepted into regular academic disciplines, it becomes increasingly difficult to further categorize these "academic leftovers." Labels grow less distinct, and academic groupings become more inclusive. For example, "in Michigan 'disadvantaged' is not a euphemism only for black or Chicano or Puerto Rican. At Michigan State a large proportion of the

'educationally disadvantaged' are white students from rural high schools."\(^\text{24}\)

Inequalities in preparation and differences in goals are being recognized, many for the first time. One result has been to see increased educational demands from the "disadvantaged." These, in turn, are forcing many institutions to redefine their purposes and their functions. Michigan State University, a megauniversity of 41,000 students and over 3,000 faculty members, is one school undergoing self-evaluation pains. Discussing the contemporary needs that are shaping anew Michigan State's mission, Susan Jacoby quotes the president of the school, Clifton Wharton, Jr.:

"When you talk about people who have been by-passed, you are talking about blacks and other minorities. . . . In many instances you also are talking about rural whites. These unmet needs definitely involve older people--women in their thirties who want something more, highly trained professionals whose skills have become obsolete. Universal access to higher education and lifelong education are going to be realities, whether professors and university presidents like it or not."\(^\text{25}\)

College and university administrators who are sensitive to these demands for "universal access to higher education and life-long education" are lifting many traditional restrictions and broadening long established academic boundaries:


\(^{25}\)Ibid., p. 63.
In the late Fifties, long before there was any significant black enrollment at MSU, the university dealt with the problems of the disadvantaged by flunking out half of its freshman class each year (as did so many other universities). . . . Because blacks are a more visible, and often more militant, group, it would be poor politics for the university to flunk them out at the same rate it flunked out white students in the past. And political reality demands that, if it is going to help black students, the university must provide the same services to whites as well.26

Although many universities seem to be concentrating on the needs of students at the bottom of the skills scale, a variety of programs for the especially advantaged student are being instigated. But even among these students, all is not well. In the avant-garde Justin Morrill residential college of Michigan State, where the interest in literacy would seem to be a source of inspiration to all, the intellectual atmosphere seems completely inconsistent with the intellectual potential represented there:

With a few memorable exceptions, the students' opinions were expressed in almost identically worded clichés. "We want practical learning, not book learning. . . . History just doesn't seem relevant to me. After all, it's in the past and you can't change it. . . . Even if a course requirement does make sense, I don't want it shoved down my throat."27

And going further on to the ultimate, perhaps, in mature educational group study, the Free University, one finds that there is disappointment here for at least one student, who finds his peers too indolent: "'They just didn't want to be bothered with the reading,' he said, 'and success of the

26 Ibid., p. 64.
27 Ibid., p. 67.
Free University idea depended on voluntary work by everyone. 28

Reading is a bother, a hurdle, and a hang-up. But, since it is also the key to the reservoir of man's recorded thoughts and actions, it must be mastered. Without doubt, a dilemma has evolved, and there it sits, like a Sandburg fog, refusing to move on.

Trying to dispel tensions and to minimize deficiencies, some schools are quietly using a track system for the various achievement levels in required, standard classes. Others have established non-credit courses that special students may take, or in some cases must take. In several institutions a preparatory year dedicated to educational uplift has been instigated. Private funds and government grants pay for extra books, senior tutors, and freedom from work. Tested, counseled, and fed, those whose "achievements are falling," the "disadvantaged," and the "academic leftovers" fight their way upstream, while the cheering and the groaning and the head-scratching continue on all sides.

In an attempt to grapple with the learning dilemma, members of the faculty at Northern Illinois University are experimenting with unusual textbooks to improve the performance of those with learning difficulties. It is hoped that supplementary materials, such as the magazine Intellectual Digest, will stimulate interest and achievement in the new

28 Ibid.
Communication Skills Program which

. . . provides intensive academic training for students with skill deficiencies in English composition, discussion, and communication theory, and study skills. Though approximately forty per cent of the program's enrollment serves non-minority students, sixty per cent of the students come from ethnic or cultural minorities.29

Not only the academics are cognizant of low literacy levels; even the popular press is responding. The Chicago Tribune currently is running a comic strip in the Sunday edition called "Short Cuts to Reading," subtitled "You Can Teach Your Child." Based on Listen and Learn with Phonics by Dorothy Taft Watson, it has been adapted for the comic section by two people identified only as Joan Beck and Becky. Because the series is directed at parents who can read, it would be quite useless for semi-literate adults, even though the instructions are very simple and even quite facetious, as the first frame indicates:

DIRECTIONS TO PARENT:
TODAY WE'RE GOING TO LEARN
A SPECIAL KIND OF LETTER CALLED
A VOWEL. SOMETIMES WE CALL
VOWELS FAIRY LETTERS BECAUSE THEY
ARE SO IMPORTANT. EVERY WORD
MUST HAVE AT LEAST ONE VOWEL. ONCE
YOU HAVE LEARNED A VOWEL, YOU CAN BEGIN
PUTTING SOUNDS TOGETHER TO MAKE WORDS.30

The Shreveport Times, avoiding this fey approach to adult

29Information in a form letter from Stephen Arnold, Director of Communication Skills Program, Northern Illinois University, to Dr. E. Robert Black, Head of Speech and Journalism Department, Northwestern State University of Louisiana, 12 April 1972.

education, ran a syndicated column for several weeks called "Roadblocks to Learning," written by Leslie J. Nason, Ed. D. (and available for "$1, from ROADLO ROADBLOCKS, The Shreveport Times, Box G4, Teaneck, N. J. 07666"). The series of ten columns appeared in "The Women's Times," one of the divisions of the daily paper, and was punctuated by an assortment of provocative headlines: "THINK IN YOUR LANGUAGE WHEN YOU READ IDEAS," "HANDWRITING IS IMPORTANT IN GAINING AN EDUCATION," and "LEARNING CAN BE FAST, ACCURATE AT SAME TIME." Frequent use of exclamation points, capitalized phrases, short sentences, short paragraphs, copious lists and rules, and a sympathetic, paternalistic attitude contrived to convince the reader that Nason knew the true story behind reading. However, from time to time, certain dubious, even spurious assertions appeared, such as the opening sentences for the seventh column: "Slow learners were not born slow! They just fell into the habit." Each day the column was strategically placed in the paper and eventually was supported by a companion article:

Editor's Note: Inspired by Dr. Leslie J. Nason's series, The Times Women's Department has made a study of local facilities for children with learning disabilities. This story briefly outlines what is provided by the Caddo Parish School System, and other area facilities will be discussed in subsequent articles.  

Helpful hints and study guides for self-improvement dot the popular magazines and Sunday supplements. Utilizing a common set of psychological principles, plus a controlled honor system, reading laboratories in the schools strive to improve the reading skills of children. Ideally self-teaching, the programs are not always self-improving, as Joyce Maynard, an articulate eighteen-year-old freshman at Yale, candidly indicates:

The folders were called Power Builders and they were leveled according to color--red, blue, yellow, orange, brown--all the way up to the dreamed-for, cheated-for purple. Power Builders came with their own answer keys, the idea being that you moved at your own rate and--we heard it a hundred times--that when you cheated, you only cheated yourself. The whole program was called SRA.

I--and most of the others in the Purple group--solved the problem by tucking an answer key into my Power Builder and writing down the answers (making an occasional error for credibility) without reading the story or the questions. By sixth grade, a whole group of us had been promoted to a special reading group and sent to an independent study-conference unit (nothing was a room any more) where we copied answer keys, five at a time, and then told dirty jokes.  

Maynard's jaundiced view of educational effort grows more disillusioning as she twists the irony tighter: "There were no books in the Developmental Reading room--the lab. Even in English class we escaped books easily."  

---

33Ibid., p. 78.
There is one teacher, at least, who relies absolutely upon books to persuade reluctant readers to read. Daniel N. Fader, exponent of the all-school use of books, has inspired and encouraged many students who are barely literate and many teachers who are floundering for lack of sensible guidance. His extended philosophy is explained in a fascinating paperback called Hooked on Books: "No student is likely to learn to write if he believes that writing is an affliction visited upon defenseless students solely by English teachers; nor is he likely to learn to read unless reading is made a part of his entire curricular environment."\textsuperscript{34} It ought to be absurdly easy to bring books and young people together. Fader knows that, like building the better mousetrap or solving the Chinese puzzle, it is absurdly difficult. However, not content to be theoretical about books or their potential readers, Fader concentrates on the actual, physical process of putting books where they belong—in the hands of those who will read them. It is his contention that "The poorest man in the world is the man limited to his own experience, the man who does not read."\textsuperscript{35}

Another program that might be tangential to Fader's is operating within some schools and as adjuncts of others. RIF, or Reading is Fundamental, is "a non-profit program for


\textsuperscript{35}Ibid., p. 4.
distributing high-quality, low cost paperback books to children who most need them. . . ."36 Private contributions and government funds support RIF; and thousands of children have been benefiting in the last six years from the free, or nearly free, books that come to them because of another "absurdly simple" piece of logic:

Children who want to read manage somehow to learn. Children who grow up surrounded by books--and a family that reads them--also want to read. Too many children lack both of these. If one were to give such children books of their very own and transmit to them the message that reading is fun as well as useful, maybe they would get into the habit of reading.37

Does the message travel through Power Builders and reading labs? Does it depend upon methods of "look-say" or phonics? Does it dwell with the analyzers like Charles Sauls of Louisiana State University, who made an academic study of "The Relationship of Selected Factors to the Recreational Reading of Sixth Grade Students" but came up with the same answer as extra-curricular RIF?

Teachers and writers in the area of reading agree that a balanced reading program gives attention to developmental, functional, and recreational reading. For the recreational reading program the ultimate goal is to develop students who read willingly and who use reading as part of their lives.38

---


37 Ibid.

38 Charles Sauls, "The Relationship of Selected Factors to the Recreational Reading of Sixth Grade Students," Louisiana Schools, 49 (March 1972), 32.
Parents and teachers, moved by cultural changes about them, have begun to re-examine familiar educational values and conventional scholastic concepts. Behavioral patterns are no longer set for every classroom. No longer are only a few labeled "disadvantaged." Simple words like "fun" and "useful" are no longer dismissed as simplistic, but are recognized as symbols for more complex thoughts. In an overgrown, diversified world, old ideas and methods are being scrutinized anew by those who feel a concern for the future education of man.

Avant-garde educators often generate great interest in general educational evaluations, even though their revolutionary works may not be fully understood or accepted at the time. For example, the Brazilian professor Paulo Freire is sought after as an educational guru today. Yet, when he is asked to prescribe formulas for schools of the future, Freire often confounds his listeners. Few of them are able to apply to their educational predicaments the philosophy that he expresses in words like these:

You are concentrating on a crisis in education, when it is really the whole system that is dominating you. . . . You have to organize, be clear who it is you are against, and know who the enemy is. . . . I don't have too many hopes that within your local school system you will be able to do a great deal. But do what you can. And beyond that there are a great many things you can do outside. . . . What we must do is organize, get a broader view, not just of education but of the entire social, economic, political, and ideological superstructure. . . .

Politically wary American educators, urged to "organize" in a fight against the "system," hesitate to follow Freire. They are as uncertain of his concepts as they are of their own position. To a select few, however, Freire is not an enigma but an educational prophet.

Other educators besides Freire have become famous for their futuristic concepts of schools. Jonathan Kozol, recognized by Freire as having "one of the greatest perceptions of education today," was one of the first to advocate free schools. John Holt's astute observations from the classroom have prompted him and his readers to question the purpose of education and to investigate how it works and if it works. And Milton Friedman, a professor of economics at the University of Chicago, has addressed himself to the financing of schools and has developed an extensive voucher plan that would encompass all kinds of schools.

Another member of this world-wide coterie of innovative, even radical educators is Ivan Illich. Unlike United States Commissioner Allen, Illich holds that "Universal education through schooling is not feasible." In fact, both Illich and Holt have serious reservations about the positive influence of schools. As Illich states, "the right to learn is

---

40 Ibid., p. 35.
curtailed by the obligation to attend school." Both Illich and Holt, then, would eliminate compulsory education, a proposal that would be an anathema to most educators. Illich, however, is not only disenchanted with the status quo of education but with its perpetuation by the status quo of the state, and he sees no relief or enlightenment in institutionalized schooling:

We cannot begin a reform of education unless we first understand that neither individual learning nor social equality can be enhanced by the ritual of schooling. We cannot go beyond the consumer society unless we first understand that obligatory public schools inevitably produce such a society, no matter what is taught in them.44

Like Freire, Illich views immediate problems as examples of conditions that exist on a global scale. While Freire battles the "system," Illich fights institutionalization, which, he feels, both feeds the "system" and feeds upon it. Hence his call for a "deschooling of a schooled society."45

Parents and educators who understand that "fun" and "useful" are no longer simplistic ideas realize that a refinement of definition follows the recognition of multiple concepts. As they seek a greater understanding of the schools in their society they are likely to discover that learning may no longer be equated with teaching and that

43 Ibid., p. iv.
44 Ibid., p. 55.
45 Ibid., p. 3.
schools, as we know them, may not be the beginning or the end of education.

In much the same manner, looking at literacy directly does focus the attention, but it tends to exclude peripheral developments which may influence our concept of literacy. Literacy seems to depend upon language, as civilized man depends upon words. However, outside the field of vision, there may be new ways to communicate thoughts that will enlarge our concepts of language and literacy and extend our definition of the literate, civilized man. For example, a French composer, Oliver Messiaen, has developed a musical alphabet to enable him to communicate thoughts to his listeners. An hour-and-a-half-long composition of his for the organ, *Meditations on the Mystery of the Holy Trinity*, premiered recently at London's Royal Festival Hall. Mrs. Elton Warren of the Bronx has combined pedagogical approaches to melody and rhythm, first devised by Zoltan Kodaly and Carl Orff, to teach language to the children of Community School District Twelve:

One of P. S. 57's music teachers, Miss Judy Rothschild, said the system helped children achieve not only a feel for music, but also, from the study of meter, the mathematical relationship of parts to a whole. In language study, she added, learning vocabulary is facilitated by breaking down words into syllables and accenting them rhythmically.


47 Rudy Johnson, "Rhythm is Used to Teach Pupils to Find Their Own Beat in Life," *The New York Times*, 2 May 1971, Sec. 1, p. 54.
The work of an extraordinary cartoonist from Canada, George Dunning, is based upon the oral and visual aspects of language. Famous as the director of *The Yellow Submarine*, Dunning's new film of symbols was discussed and given an abbreviated television showing on *Camera Three* on May 20, 1973. Unfolding the meaning of Andrew Marvell's poem "Damon, the Mower," Dunning has created an animated film with sound and music, but no words. Yet, the pictures and the sounds serve as substitutes for the words. They are, in effect, pre-language methods of expression.

Translating the pre-language expressions of symbols into organized and recognizable sounds should conform to an accepted definition of language, such as that found in *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*: "... the body of words and systems for their use common to a people who are of the same community or nation, the same geographical area, or the same cultural traditions. ..." However, that definition is hardly practical for English usage today. Those people whose major language is English are not from one community or one nation, but many. And within the English-speaking communities or nations, there are many bodies of words and systems for their use. Natural barriers that once confined language have been eliminated or overcome by technology. Cultural traditions that once were bonds

---

have become less and less clearly defined. Language has exploded, and all previous concepts of literacy have become amplified and magnified.

The illiterate person today is not necessarily the uncivilized person. The illiterate, or near-illiterate, is likely to be a variant of the common group; but he is expected to perform communicative feats within the group, regardless of the obstacles he may have to overcome. However, in a society of cultural pluralism, a minority student may experience communication difficulties that hinder his social adjustment and academic progress. Suspecting that college courses in applied communication might be "narrowly monocultural [sic] in perspective," Richard L. Conville and Richard W. Story analyzed two semesters of such a course taught at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. Their suspicions were confirmed when they discovered that "college courses in applied communication may be confusing difference with deficiency to the detriment of many students." Recognizing that students do not learn easily or well under these conditions, the professors concluded that "The vital future of speech communication education is in programs in


50 Ibid., p. 253.
which learning takes place 'independent of social origin and family background.'"51

Clearly, resolving the myriad conflicts of literacy has become more than a problem for the individual. In general, the struggle remains within the schools; and, although they have picked up the gauntlet, few battles have been actually won. However, one tiny experimental foray in New York City does offer a fresh approach to the field of challenges and may promise an answer that will prove to be workable. Researchers at New York University, under the direction of Bernice Cullinan, incorporated the oral and visual aspects of language into dramatic activities based on children's literature in an effort to expand the language skills of young children. The experiment was based on the premise that the street dialect of the five hundred slum children being tested was linguistically different but not deficient. Acutely aware of the "cultural pluralism" and anxious to avoid "narrow monocultural perspectives," Cullinan and her staff trained the school teachers to respond to the content, not the form of the children's speech. The children were read to daily from books that "had to contain favorable representations of minority groups and be generally accepted as good children's literature."52 Although half of the

51 Ibid., p. 254.

children watched film strips relating to the stories, or
drew pictures suggested by them, the rest were involved in
more active illustrative work.

[The] teachers in the other 10 classes--the experimental
group--stressed related oral activities, having their
pupils act out portions of the story, perform a puppet
show or discuss the action. The hope was that through
oral practice the children would adopt the story's
standard vocabulary and speech patterns without having
to "unlearn" the dialect they hear spoken at home.

The success of this program was remarkable. From kinder-
garten through the next three grades, gains in language
skills were much greater in the experimental classes than in
the control groups: "Over-all, those in the experimental
classes improved 2.73 points on the 20-point tests while
their colleagues gained 1.18 points." 54

Something unique in the teaching of language takes
place when written symbols become oral, or visual, or both.
The poignant charm of a Chaplin or a Marcel Marceau lies in
what is seen. Symbols, voiced silently by pre-language ex-
pression, become messages to be received and interpreted by
the audience as a whole, and in fine and private ways by
individuals. Words, the oral expression of symbols, are
received by all and by each one, in both general and specific
ways.

Man's language moves cyclically from thoughts to speech,
from speech to writing, from writing to reading, from reading

53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
to speech, and from speech to thoughts. To understand the thoughts of another mind, fixed in print, to read beyond one's own experience, means to identify with that mind, to learn the physical satisfactions or frustrations behind it, and to understand the ideas and emotions that have evolved from it.

Perhaps the cause of literacy would be served better if students of language experienced written symbols in a dual manner presented by specialists in the language arts of writing and oral reading. Alexander Pope made a simple but profound statement about the art of writing: "The sound must seem an echo to the sense." Could it be true for the art of reading that sense must seem an echo to the sound? If a literary commune for the study of literature could be developed from the academic areas of English and oral interpretation, a new interest in the creation of language might be stimulated and, even in some small measure, the status of literacy and literature might be improved.

CHAPTER II

EXPLORING THE MEDIA

The mind of man is remarkable. Its full powers remain unknown to man, yet must be discovered by man, by the mind itself. Unlike the body—gross, resilient and tough, the mind is geared for fine tuning; communication is its device. It is not enough to grunt displeasure, not enough to dance for joy. Man must express with precision; language is his tool. To study that language recorded is to study the history of man. To study the best of the language is to know the mind of man. This, in its essence, is literature.

How, then, to explain man, the reluctant reader? It is all very well to say along with Pei that "Language serves as the vehicle of exalted thought"\footnote{Mario Pei, Invitation to Linguistics (Chicago: Regnery Co., 1971), p. 8.} or to quote loftily from Milton: "a good Booke is the preitious life-blood of a master spirit, imbalm'd and treasur'd up on purpose to a life beyond life."\footnote{John Milton, Areopagitica. Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Milton, ed. Cleanth Brooks (New York: Random House, Inc., 1950), p. 681.} Indeed, one may agree wholeheartedly with Bacon that "Studies serve for delight, for ornament and
ability,"³ but in college today, undergraduate students tend to ignore these classical traditions and rarefied definitions and are apt to ask bluntly, "Why do we have to read that?" Although at first inclined to see this questioning of specific reading assignments as an expression of fashionable non-conformity, teachers have now begun to recognize it as one symptom of a growing alienation from books in general. It is acknowledged that many of these rebellious students are intellectually immature, unable to appreciate literature for its own sake. But teachers complain that even gifted and advantaged students have become apathetic toward books. Obviously, the reluctant reader cannot be explained here, but as a potential reader he offers us a challenge: Can we make "that" germane?

Unfortunately, in our complex society there are no simple solutions to educational problems. Here, we can only partially investigate a few aspects of those educational environments that sometimes discourage, sometimes inspire, the potential readers of literature. In these pages, therefore, observations will be made about the study of literature, particularly British, by students in college, mainly non-majors. Today, British literature may be taught in a class known traditionally as the English class or in one called oral interpretation. Both of these academic areas

have developed particular methods and philosophies which have culminated in textbooks to form the frame and body of the college course.

When college students do not respond positively to their literary legacy, the fault may lie, not in themselves alone, but in the method of study and the presentation itself. In the typical English class, literature is approached silently. Although the teacher may read passages aloud in explication and lecture on background material, the student, by and large, reads his assignment silently, privately. The responsibility for learning rests ultimately with the individual student, but the teaching begins in the texts themselves. The editors of the Norton Anthology of English Literature, aware of their responsibility, state through M. H. Abrams that "In both format and editorial procedure, the editors' primary aim has been to enhance the intelligent delight of students in literature as literature."4 It is impossible to quarrel with such a motive, although the ars gratia artis concept can slip by students who are often more worldly than they are sophisticated. Still, the Norton text is surely one of the best; it has been adopted by leading universities throughout the country. On the other hand, it is a formidable book. Abrams, conscious of its monumental size and scope, explains that "its contents are reduced to

---

the bulk and weight of one of the longer modern novels." However, a book of 2,000 pages, plus notes and index, is a bit staggering to the contemporary college student who is more tuned to instant replays and musical vibrations than to all those words.

A similar, standard text, Major British Writers, is 1,071 pages long in the shorter edition. G. B. Harrison, general editor of the book, states the unequivocable position of the editors in the Preface: "We assume maturity alike in the reader and the teacher. . . ." However, this confidence is either misplaced or premature, for it is evident today that unseasoned, shaky readers sit in every school, unable to enjoy or to comprehend the literature assignments before them. According to Anna Steward, a reading specialist in Philadelphia, "A reader has to bring something to the page. If he doesn't, he's limited to what he can take away." When the reading reservoirs of today's eighteen- and nineteen-year-olds hold mainly Walt Disney, SRA and Love Story, there is not much to bring to Major British Writers.

Laurence Perrine's Sound and Sense does recognize the intellectual frailities present in many of today's college

---

5 Ibid.


students; for, as the author states in the Preface, "The purpose has always been to give the beginning student something he can understand and use."\(^8\) The third edition of this clearly written and well-organized college text contains less than four hundred pages and is available as a paperback. Subtitled *An Introduction to Poetry*, the text might be seen as a re-introduction to poetry, since it teaches again many ideas that have been presented to students for many years. For instance, freshmen in college who studied *Counterpoint in Literature* in the eighth grade should find *Sound and Sense* to be redundant. Of course, the poems are different and the questions are more detailed in *Sound and Sense*, but the fundamental material of analysis is remarkably evocative of junior-high work. A brief comparison of these two texts may illustrate the repetition that occurs in the teaching of literature. Chapter headings from *Sound and Sense* are listed below in Column A. Headings from a "Handbook of Literary Terms" (in *Counterpoint in Literature*) are listed in Column B. Terms used primarily to analyze other literary types present in the junior-high anthology have been bracketed.

The college text, *Sound and Sense*: Column A\(^9\)


\(^9\)Ibid., pp. xi-xvii.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART ONE</th>
<th>THE ELEMENTS OF POETRY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One</td>
<td>What is Poetry?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two</td>
<td>Reading the Poem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three</td>
<td>Denotation and Connotation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Four</td>
<td>Imagery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Five</td>
<td>Figurative Language 1: metaphor, personification, metonymy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Six</td>
<td>Figurative Language 2: symbol, allegory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Seven</td>
<td>Figurative Language 3: paradox, overstatement, understatement, irony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Eight</td>
<td>Allusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Nine</td>
<td>Meaning and Idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Ten</td>
<td>Tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Eleven</td>
<td>Musical Devices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Twelve</td>
<td>Rhythm and Meter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Thirteen</td>
<td>Sound and Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Fourteen</td>
<td>Pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Fifteen</td>
<td>Bad Poetry and Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Sixteen</td>
<td>Good Poetry and Great</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The eighth-grade text, *Counterpoint in Literature*: Column B

ALLITERATION

[CHARACTERIZATION]

[DIALOGUE]

---

Interesting enough, both texts use excerpts from Tennyson's "The Eagle" to help explain figurative language, which is identified in *Counterpoint in Literature* as "any language which deviates from literal language so as to furnish novel effects or fresh insights into the subject
being discussed."\textsuperscript{11} A similar definition appears in \textit{Sound and Sense}: "FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE--language using figures of speech--is language that cannot be taken literally."\textsuperscript{12} Further, both texts selected Robert Frost's poem "A Hillside Thaw" to illustrate more fully the dimensions of figurative language. The editors of the junior-high book added a picture to the poem, and both books added questions and comments to direct literary analyses. Because these discussion guides are so similar in the two texts, they are included here for comparison. The "Questions" which immediately follow are from the college text, \textit{Sound and Sense}:

1. The literal equivalents of the silver lizards and the lizards turned to rock are never named in the poem. What are they?

2. A poet may use a variety of metaphors or similes in developing a subject, or may, as Frost does here, develop a single metaphor at length (this poem is an excellent example of an \textit{EXTENDED} or \textit{SUSTAINED METAPHOR}). What are the advantages of each type of development?

3. Though primarily descriptive of nature, this poem also reveals a good deal about the nature of the speaker and of the poet. What is his relationship to nature? Is he serious in ascribing to the moon the transformation effected in the second half of the poem? If not, what quality of mind is here displayed, and how is it seen elsewhere in the poem?\textsuperscript{13}

The "Discussion" below appears in the eighth-grade text, \textit{Counterpoint in Literature}:

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 544.
\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Perrine}, p. 65.
\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 66-67.
1. (a) What are the "Ten million silver lizards" mentioned in line 3? (b) Explain lines 6-8 in literal terms. (c) Do you think the comparisons made in the first eight lines of the poem are effective? Why or why not?

2. (a) In the first stanza, what does the speaker imagine himself doing? (b) What does he think would happen if he actually tried to do this?

3. (a) What is meant by "this" in line 18? (b) In reality, what is the moon's "spell" (line 22)?

4. (a) What actually happens in lines 26-29? (b) Explain the meaning of lines 30-32. (c) If this poem were rewritten as a weather report, how might it read?

5. (a) What impression does "Hillside Thaw" give you of the speaker? (b) Does the last line add to or detract from your impression? Explain.¹⁴

Obviously, the methods and goals of the two critical analyses are nearly the same, although Perrine's book does urge one idea that the more elementary book barely suggests--the concept of the extended metaphor. Even that, of course, might be discussed in junior high.

The irony here originates not in the use of common material by junior-high and college classes, but in the similarity of approach and resolution of the work. There is an age span of at least five years between these two groups; yet, frequently in eighth-grade classes there are children who are capable of doing college work, and conversely, there are students enrolled in college who work at the eighth-grade level. Regardless of the range of scholastic abilities, all students in the English class approach the study of

¹⁴ Pooley et al., p. 244.
literature in essentially the same way—silent reading. Direct oral expression of the literature is extremely limited and barely encouraged at best. For example, the following suggestion is found at the end of copious notes designed to help the neophyte teacher in junior high with her presentation of "A Hillside Thaw": "Then read or have a student read the poem aloud."  

Teacher aids and classroom texts, though admittedly imperfect, are not the sole causes for the repetitive, one-level teaching that is so prevalent and so boring in all levels of school. The few books that have been cited above are merely isolated examples from an enormous varietal field that is constantly being replenished. And, although individual teachers and their methods have not been examined in these pages, they are not meant to be indicted, either. Still, as Stephen Dunning says, "We have failed, by and large, to convince our students to be readers of poetry."  

It is possible that silent reading demands too much from students who either cannot or will not learn in this manner. Perhaps intellects could be stimulated in some other way. It may be profitable, then, to study another

---


academic discipline which also exists because literature exists: oral interpretation.

Oral interpretation depends upon two arts to make it one, for those who would practice the art of oral interpretation must be able to understand literary art, intellectually and emotionally, and be able to recreate it through the art of performance. As early as 1927, Charles Woolbert and Severina Nelson visualized the responsibilities inherent in creating such an art and described the implications in their book *The Art of Interpretative Speech*:

Now if we use the term interpretation we assume an obligation, for he who genuinely interprets must represent—that is, must present again—the thought of the author as he supposed it was meant to be interpreted. Anything less than a full charge of meaning, rich and varied, comes short of the standard involved in the term *INTERPRETATION.*

Forty years later, Jéré Veilleux's textbook echoes these early tenets of Woolbert and Nelson, even though "represent" becomes "re-create" for Veilleux. In his book, *Oral Interpretation: The Re-Creation of Literature,* this definition appears: "Oral interpretation is the art of re-creating a literary work (prose fiction, poetry, or drama) through the medium of oral reading by an interpreter to an audience."  


For Wallace A. Bacon, "re-creating a literary work" is the "study" of such a work. He, of course, accepts the concept that interpretation is an art. Indeed, one of his books is entitled The Art of Interpretation. His definition is succinct, but, by implication, it encompasses the two arts that produce it: "It is our point of view that interpretation may best be defined as the study of literature through the medium of oral performance."¹⁹

That interpretation can be defined as an art, and accepted as an art, is due in large part to the work of Cornelius C. Cunningham, a predecessor of Wallace Bacon at Northwestern University, who contended "that great literature could not be fully appreciated as an art or as a cultural force until it was heard from the lips of one who had been trained to read it artistically."²⁰ Cunningham's book, Literature as a Fine Art, was a major philosophical statement for oral interpretation when it was published in 1941. Since that time some of Cunningham's concepts of oral interpretation have been modified; but, as a whole, the discipline still reflects the fundamental ideas that were expressed by him in his early manifesto:

The call, then, is for two things: first a method of studying literature as a fine art—a means for discovering the ways in which it conforms to the principles and


manifests the characteristics of art; and, second, an understanding of the way by which the oral reader can realize for himself and project to his audience the degree of artistic attainment represented by the literature which he interprets.\textsuperscript{21}

These two creative pursuits, literary analysis and performance, have become the main concerns of instructors, philosophers, and performing artists of oral interpretation. Though emphasis may vary and the unanimity of purpose waver, these ideas dominate the discipline. Recently, a statement from the Interpretation Division of the Speech Communications Association reiterated the strength of the oral interpretation position: "... in interpretation performance is intrinsically a part of the theoretical and intellectual study."\textsuperscript{22}

There has been a gradual but perceptible change in the purpose of oral interpretation and consequently in its instruction. Although Cunningham had conceived of oral interpretation as "a method of studying literature as a fine art," Bacon sees it simply as "the study of literature through the medium of oral performance." The concept of oral interpretation being a "handmaiden to one of the genuine fine arts--literature" has all but disappeared now, and undergraduates in oral interpretation classes today spend far less time studying the common principles of the

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., p. 17.

arts than they do practicing the performing art of oral interpretation.  

Whereas Cunningham's book of nearly three hundred pages is devoted mainly to examining the art of literature, most texts now explain basic analysis in a chapter or two, include sample analyses for several literary genres, then provide an anthology of literature for illustration and individual practice. Charlotte Lee's *Oral Interpretation*, first published thirty years ago and now in its fourth edition, is a book of over five hundred pages. Approximately two hundred of these are explanatory; literary selections and bibliographies make up the rest. Analysis is there, but it has undergone a tightening of procedures and descriptions. Although Cunningham takes four chapters to discuss "Unity and Harmony in Literary Art," "Variety and Contrast in Literary Art," "Balance and Proportion in Literary Art," and "Rhythm in Literary Art," his former student, Charlotte Lee, can cover "Unity and Harmony," "Variety and Contrast," "Balance and Proportion" and "Rhythm" in five pages. However, despite this apparent abbreviation, concern for the art of literature still remains central to the art of interpretation. "The modern interpreter . . .," Lee says, ". . . knows precisely where his first dependence lies--on the elements present in the work of literature he has chosen."

---

23 Cunningham, p. 16.

But, if detailed analysis in the old tradition has yielded somewhat to performance in the college classroom, studies of analysis, criticism, history, and theory have not lost favor with the scholars. On the contrary, many lively and erudite articles exploring these interests have been appearing for years in such professional publications as The Educational Theatre Journal, The Quarterly Journal of Speech, The Southern Speech Journal, and the Newsletter of the Interpretation Division of the Speech Communications Association. And from time to time, essays, basically theoretical, appear in collections such as The Oral Study of Literature, the work of five oral interpretation critics. Quite recently, an unusual compilation of critical essays which demonstrate the range and depth of research in interpretation today was published in Amsterdam. Edited by Esther M. Doyle of Juniata College and Virginia Hastings Floyd of the University of Arizona, Studies in Interpretation "... resulted from the impact of a unique experience shared by all the contributors, our association with Wallace A. Bacon. ..."25 Each of the authors earned the doctorate in interpretation at the School of Speech, Northwestern University, and they have dedicated the volume to their mentor, the venerable Wallace Bacon.

The undergraduate student in oral interpretation is not likely to explore (or to understand) the technicalities of hermeneutics. However, he can respond to the heart of literary analysis in interpretation which rests on the identification (and understanding) of literature as a work of art. Cunningham says that because literature "... is an art, not a science, its appeal is to the emotions principally." Charlotte Lee agrees with this concept and teaches, as Cunningham does, that knowledge and appreciation of the "intrinsic factors" of art are essential to the foundation of literary analysis. Wallace Bacon, reaching even further toward the limits of emotional and intellectual involvement with art, sees an organic relationship existing between the reader and literature. He emphasizes this experience in his book for beginning classes in interpretation: "It begins with the feel of literature, not apart from meaning but congruent with meaning, and with the feel of oral reading, focusing first upon the essence of the art rather than its parts." The student who understands literature as an art, who even becomes an interpreter who "embodies the poem," is the student who "comes to realize,

---

28Wallace Bacon, p. v.
in a unique way, the relation of literature to his own life. . . ."30

It is an illuminating exercise to compare the analyses made by critics from the fields of interpretation and English, not because their end evaluations differ greatly, but because of the routes they take and the implications they draw. For example, Wallace Bacon's analysis of D. H. Lawrence's "The Snake" can be placed alongside a similar analysis from the Teacher's Resource Book for Counterpoint in Literature. Both discussions point out the extensive use of alliteration in "The Snake." But the interpretation analysis goes beyond identifying repeated sounds that "create melody, establish mood, call attention to important words, and point out similarities and contrast."31 Bacon categorizes alliteration as one of "the various devices of language which enter into the experience of the poem."32 He goes on to say that

The significant thing is not that there are patterns and figures here . . . but that the patterns and figures all operate to give the poem tensiveness--to call attention, by varying the language from its usual nonfigurative nature, or from its looser arrangement of figures, to the experience which the language embodies. What the poet cares about is not some meaning derived from the words (as is the case in expository

30Veilleux, p. 3.
31Pooley et al., Counterpoint, p. 537.
32Wallace Bacon, The Art of Interpretation, p. 223.
writing) but the meaning in the words themselves. We are meant to savor the sounds of these signs.\textsuperscript{33}

The interpreter searches behind every literary detail for those sensual qualities which help the reader to understand and to project the distinctiveness of an author's art.

Jere'Veilleux analyzes D. H. Lawrence's "The Rocking-Horse Winner" to illustrate the application of interpretation analysis to the short story. Laurence Perrine chooses the same story to illustrate the element of fantasy that is found in fiction. "Our interest is in the art of fiction, in understanding and enjoying it and making judgments about it," writes Perrine.\textsuperscript{34} Veilleux, though not in disagreement with this philosophy, predicates his analysis upon the assumption that his reader is preparing to interpret the story aloud: "Each story, poem, and play has its own unique patterns and the interpreter should abstract from each one whatever is the most important or most striking. Only then will he be able to achieve the proper balance of tone, tension, and rhythm inherent in each selection."\textsuperscript{35}

In both analyses, the elements of plot, characterization, theme, motivation, symbolism, and setting are examined. In addition, in the Perrine text the story is preceded by a discussion of fantasy, slightly more than a thousand words

\textsuperscript{33}Ibid., p. 224.


\textsuperscript{35}Veilleux, p. 63.
long, and is followed by nine brief paragraphs of comments and questions designed to stimulate individual or class discussions. There is also a one-page analysis in the teacher's manual that accompanies this text, *Story and Structure*. The sample analysis in *Oral Interpretation: The Re-Creation of Literature* is roughly five thousand words long and is designed to be self-explanatory for students and teachers. Veilleux, too, draws comparisons between the real and the unreal aspects of the story, but in contrast to Perrine's preliminary essay, only once does he describe the story as a fantasy. Perrine prompts his readers to examine the verbal irony, dramatic irony, and situational irony that are evident in the story, but Veilleux does not use these literary terms at all. He discusses fully the multiple meanings in the language and action of the story, but he calls them "ironic" only once.\(^{36}\) In his text Perrine asks, "In what way is the boy's furious riding on the rocking horse an appropriate symbol for materialistic pursuits?"\(^{37}\) and in his manual he answers: "Riding the rocking horse is an effective symbol for materialistic pursuits, for it is a furious activity that gets one nowhere."\(^{38}\) Veilleux, like Perrine, sees futility in the family's tragic struggles for

---


love and money; however, he is also interested in the sensual nuances that lie behind the words of D. H. Lawrence. For example, Veilleux suggests that Lawrence may have meant "this furious activity that gets one nowhere" to symbolize the sexual frustrations that are implied in the story. Veilleux relates his entire analysis to the emotional tones, tensions, and rhythms of the story, for he believes that "... with all interpretation, the key is in the successful transmission of emotional states...". Perrine, on the other hand, tries to clarify meanings and stimulate enjoyment for the individual reader by concentrating his analysis on the structural development of the story.

Given that similar goals are held in common by those who teach literature, it seems reasonable to assume that students might benefit from studying literature in more than one way. If students could be introduced to literature, learn to read it, and become involved with it "through the medium of oral performance," perhaps they would become more enthusiastic and be better prepared to study it from other standpoints. Bacon suggests that such experiments with interpretation may prove to be both efficacious and exciting:

In interpretation, the performer is led through one of the most profoundly civilizing of all processes--the education of the senses, in the richest sense of the

---

39Veilleux, p. 82.
40Wallace Bacon, The Art of Interpretation, p. 6. Italics are Bacon's.
phrase, through the experience of literature. By "education of the senses" we do not mean indulgence in emotion. The senses are educated when they are made not only finely operative but also perceptive, and coordinated with taste and judgment.

Interpretation is an excellent way of studying literature because it demands that the student perceive. The oralizing process involves active participation in the perceptions of the poem. Passivity is a completely impossible state for the oral reader.41

The study of interpretation will not make artists of us all, as Woolbert and Nelson demand. And there are few purists who will still contend, with Cunningham, that literature becomes a fine art only through oral interpretation. However, it is a "well-known thing," as Horace phrases it, that the cultivation of language and the appreciation of literature remain in jeopardy. If the true minds of two disciplines could be brought together in a composite of talents, become supportive of each other, yet retain their individual strengths, then the challenge might be met; and "Why do we have to read that?" would no longer be a threat or a groan but a leading question into the mind of man.

41 Ibid.
CHAPTER III

LITERATURE IN CONCERT

An oral performance of literary works may be called a concert of literature. Similarly, those who study and perform literary works as a group may be said to do so in concert. Further, literary works that are studied through the media of oral performance, creative writing, and silent reading may be viewed as literature studied in concert. Literature in Concert, then, would be a multiple approach to literary study, designed to create satisfying and illuminating experiences for those undergraduate students of British Literature who tend to remain aloof from literature and deprived of its pleasures; who are, in effect, deaf to the history of man.

A program of literary study that is multiple in its approach and execution demands a flexible format. It must provide for plans and arrangements from more than one teaching position, and it should adjust easily to revisions of content or approach. A prospectus for such a program will be presented in these pages. Although suggestions are made for the study of literature through creative writing and private reading, the emphasis, at this time, falls upon literature that is studied through the medium of oral performance. Here, in what might be called a Writers Theatre,
the performers will be readers, and writers themselves to some degree, but the function of their concert work will be to understand the concepts of great writers through oral realizations of their words.

Although a given piece of literature will sometimes require adaptation for inexperienced groups to read in concert, the intent of the original work will, of course, dominate the purpose of the Writers Theatre. The Writers Theatre would be something of a departure from the usual methods of studying writing; it would also be a variation on the usual concepts of theatre. However, its emphasis on the text in performance is not new. Indeed, the American theatre per se is rooted in a philosophy that sees the text as the heart of its theatre. Robert Edmond Jones, in 1915, was one of the first to express this concept:

The theatre of today is alive. It is full of a new spirit in which there is ever present the desire for the fullest, widest expression of the author. The modern producer uses every means in his power to convey the message as completely as possible to the sensibilities of his audience.¹

Such artistic appreciation for the centrality of text to performance has continued to influence various forms of the theatre and the philosophies they espouse. For example, Joanna Hawkins Maclay discusses the significance of the text as she sees it in Readers Theatre:

Almost since its inception, Readers Theatre has been committed to the principle of featuring, with a special kind of clarity, literary texts. This clarity is sometimes obscured in conventional theatrical productions. By "featuring the text," I mean that the purpose of the production is to clarify, illuminate, extend or provide insights into the particular literary text being presented.

Woodie King and Ron Milner state unequivocally that the vitality of Black Theatre depends upon the life of its texts: "Recognizing all of this, and understanding if we blacks are to have a theatre in our own image, according to our own views, then we blacks will have to say which plays are in those images and of those views. . . ."³

Jerzy Grotowski, who might be cited for his departures from the written script, uses great literary texts as catalysts for his work with the Polish Laboratory Theatre, saying that

. . . they open doors for us, set in motion the machinery of our self-awareness. My encounter with the text resembles my encounter with the actor and his with me. For both the producer and actor, the author's text is a sort of scalpel enabling us to open ourselves, to transcend ourselves, to find what is hidden within us and to make the act of encountering the others; in other words, to transcend our solitude.⁴

The urge to communicate the great ideas and actions of mankind in artistic and meaningful ways seems concomitant with the need to understand the literary text which dramatizes

---

them. For example, Maclay describes textual analysis as it is understood by those in Readers Theatre:

Words are means through which the action or experience within the text is expressed; they serve as a means of presenting to the mind and senses of the auditor the total experience (realistic and imaginative, explicit and implicit, detailed and suggestive) of a text. The text's words are neither its action nor its experience; its vitality and life are dependent upon the sensitive reader, who can make the necessary extensions and perceive the necessary manifestations of paralanguage, nonverbal language, gesture, and so forth, which are inherent in the text, but which the words in themselves cannot express.  

Grotowski also recognizes these multi-dimensional challenges in the text, which he sees as "an artistic reality existing in the objective sense." Thus, as he investigates the nature of communication in the theatre, he also probes beyond the "objective" words of the text: "For me, a creator of theatre, the important thing is not the words but what we do with the words, what gives life to the inanimate words of the text, what transforms them into 'the Word.'"  

Full textual analysis is part of the artistic foundation of the contemporary theatre, even though the methods of expression which delineate the "total experience of the text" and which give "life to the inanimate words" are apt to be quite different in form and style.

5Maclay, p. 4.
7Ibid., p. 58.
Analysis of the literary text would dominate a Writers Theatre also, but, unlike familiar forms of the theatre, Writers Theatre would virtually eliminate the audience as it is traditionally known. It may be argued that the audience is essential for all performance work. Certainly oral interpretation, intrinsic to Writers Theatre, seems to require an audience; for according to Charlotte Lee, "Interpretation is the art of communicating to an audience a work of literary art in its intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic entirety."8 The same is true to Readers Theatre: Leslie Irene Coger and Melvin White write that "Basically, Readers Theatre is a medium in which two or more oral interpreters through their oral reading cause an audience to experience literature."9 Even the so-called improvisational theatre consciously creates for others. For instance, Peter Brook admonishes his troupe to "Keep the audience in mind at all times; you are making it happen for them."10 Or, as Kenneth Macgowan and Robert Edmond Jones concluded, from their worldwide tour of theatres: "The greatest and the healthiest of the theaters have always plunged their actors into the midst of the audience . . . the art of the theater is a


masculine art... it is assertive and not receptive. Its business is to imbue the audience."¹¹

Whether audiences are the raison d'être of theatre or not, their influence is readily acknowledged. Historically, audiences have affected the theatre's course, and the theatre, by reflection, has affected the people of the audience. Of course, this dramatic exchange has thrived especially when the theatre has been at its greatest. Today, however, this kind of vigorous give-and-take appears to be threatened. Indeed, Walter Kerr's statement that the "theatre has virtually lost its power to command an audience" not only suggests the ineptitude of the contemporary theatre, but it implies that the audience has become an immutable force.¹² Artists and critics alike search for the sine qua non for a healthy, dramatic relationship; but, somehow, it remains unknown.

In the Writers Theatre, the traditional audience would be supplanted by one that is personally involved in the performances and intimately attached to the texts, or scripts. In fact, in a Writers Theatre there would not be two groups, one to perform and one to respond; instead, the performers and the audience would comprise one theatrical unit that would perform for itself and respond to itself. In a way, the group would be re-creating theatre in its most primitive


¹²Kerr, p. 1.
form. At the same time, the performing group would be creating theatre of the most sophisticated variety; for the Writers Theatre would be a Theatre of the Mind, dedicated to understanding the thoughts and emotions of other men by realizing their words.13

Although Readers and Writers Theatre have emerged from the art of interpretation, they do not serve identical functions. Coger describes Interpreters Theatre (Readers Theatre) as "a medium in which two or more oral interpreters through their oral reading cause an audience to experience the literature."14 In a definition that is parallel except for "cause an audience to," Writers Theatre can be described as "a medium in which the participants, through their oral reading, experience literature." In Writers Theatre the participants literally become the medium for the written performances of great authors. And, as the words are performed orally, an audience is created by and from the performers themselves. The minds of the performers have become the audience for the thoughts from the writers' minds. This is the audience that is essential to literature and is, perhaps, the raison d'être of theatre itself.

The experimental Writers Theatre program for this paper will be based on a limited selection of literature, especially

14Ibid.
adapted from readings that are representative of those studied in many college sophomore-level English classes that survey British literature. *Major British Writers*, Shorter Edition, will serve as the source book for the interpretation class and will be considered as the text for the English class.

Six scripts are included here. The first, "The Essence of Audience," is an introductory reading that gives an overview of the semester's literary selections. The other five scripts encompass one unit of the literature and are to be studied, at first, one at a time, and then, for a culminating effect, to be performed as a whole.

The visual form of the scripts is patterned after the work of Norman Corwin, especially his script *On a Note of Triumph*. Lines and phrases have been divided, sometimes repeated, to help the readers control the sense through their phrasing and breath control, and to indicate possible variations of pace and emphasis. "What may seem antic variations" in line placements, size of type, use of spacings, underlinings, dashes, dots, and the like are the adapter's clues to the oral reader. They are not to be construed as the usual literary signals. Unlike Archy's work by Don Marquis, the question is not "whether the stuff is literature or not," but whether this is an efficacious way to transform unfamiliar

---

written language into oral patterns of language that can be grasped at once by uninitiated students.\textsuperscript{16}

It may be prosaic to begin a discussion of a literature course with its logistics; but several given elements must be considered at the outset, for they influence the content and flow of the literary material to be studied. The length and number of the class periods must be counted, and these figures, in turn, must be balanced against the estimated amount of work planned for the course.

\textbf{Major British Writers} is a textbook of 1,071 pages, adopted by many colleges for their one-semester survey course in British Literature. The book begins with a section on Chaucer and ends with one on T. S. Eliot. Twenty authors are represented, and the work of each author is preceded by rather extensive notes. There are approximately 800 to 1,000 words on each page of prose, arranged in double columns.

Although college calendars vary, a hypothetical but typical one may be examined. Assuming that the semester begins August 31 and ends December 21, thirty-six days will be available for instruction if one day is reserved for examination at mid-term; four days are set aside for introductory work and reviewing, and three are discounted for the Thanksgiving holidays. Classes fifty minutes long would meet every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

\textsuperscript{16}Don Marquis, \textit{Archy and Mehitable} (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1930), p. 17.
In order to discuss the lives and the works of twenty authors in thirty-six days, it is clear at the outset that background information must be compressed and, unfortunately, much of the available literature eliminated. It is obvious that the material must be organized into parts which lend themselves to orderly presentations of the material. One such compartmentalization based on the contents of the *Major British Writers* text might be largely chronological in nature and resemble the following division:

- **Literary Part I:** Backgrounds of English and Chaucer
- **Literary Part II:** Shakespeare
- **Literary Part III:** Bacon, Donne, and the young Milton
- **Literary Part IV:** Milton (*Paradise Lost*), Swift, Pope, Johnson and Boswell
- **Literary Part V:** Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats
- **Literary Part VI:** Tennyson, Browning, and Shaw
- **Literary Part VII:** Conrad, Yeats, and Eliot

When the thirty-six available class days are apportioned among these parts, each Literary Part can be allotted five days. (Obviously, there is one extra day, but as Part IV encompasses particularly long works by five authors, that extra day will be assigned here.) Students would be required to register for the English class and the interpretation class during the same semester. Consequently, they would
actually attend ten classes, in five meeting days, all devoted to the same Literary Part.

It is imperative, of course, that the two classes complement each other in both content and intent; there must therefore be a mutual understanding of purpose between the participating teachers. Adjustments in the course can be made at almost any time, if care is taken to see that the students are always first introduced to a given piece of literature in the interpretation class. Because of this priority in the presentation of material, and because silent reading must be assigned after the oral performance but before the creative writing, the two classes, English and interpretation, will follow a staggered schedule. One semester's work might be allocated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CALENDAR</th>
<th>CONTENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUGUST</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 31</td>
<td>Background and Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation Techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEPTEMBER</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 3</td>
<td>Background and Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The Essence of Audience&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation c.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Wed. 5    | Background and Introduction |
|           | PART I: BACKGROUNDS OF ENGLISH AND CHAUCER |
|           | English |
|           | Interpretation |
|           | Interpretation e. |
|           | 1        |


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CALENDAR</th>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>MEETING NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 7</td>
<td></td>
<td>English Interpretation</td>
<td>2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 10</td>
<td></td>
<td>English Interpretation</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. 12</td>
<td></td>
<td>English Interpretation</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 14</td>
<td></td>
<td>English Interpretation</td>
<td>8 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 17</td>
<td><strong>PART II: SHAKESPEARE</strong></td>
<td>English Interpretation</td>
<td>10 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. 19</td>
<td></td>
<td>English Interpretation</td>
<td>2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 21</td>
<td></td>
<td>English Interpretation</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 24</td>
<td></td>
<td>English Interpretation</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. 26</td>
<td></td>
<td>English Interpretation</td>
<td>8 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 28</td>
<td><strong>PART III: BACON, DONNE</strong> and the young MILTON</td>
<td>English Interpretation</td>
<td>10 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCTOBER</td>
<td></td>
<td>English Interpretation</td>
<td>2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>English Interpretation</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>English Interpretation</td>
<td>6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>English Interpretation</td>
<td>8 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 8</td>
<td></td>
<td>English Interpretation</td>
<td>10 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. 10</td>
<td><strong>Mid-term Examination</strong></td>
<td>English Interpretation</td>
<td>10 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALENDAR</td>
<td>CONTENT</td>
<td>CLASS</td>
<td>MEETING NUMBER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 12</td>
<td><strong>Mid-term Examination</strong></td>
<td>English Interpretation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PART IV: MILTON, SWIFT, POPE, JOHNSON, AND BOSWELL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 15</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. 17</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 19</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 22</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. 24</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 26</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PART V: WORDSWORTH, COLERIDGE, BYRON, SHELLEY, KEATS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 29</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. 31</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 2</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 5</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. 7</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PART VI: TENNYSON, BROWNING, SHAW</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 9</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 12</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALENDAR</td>
<td>CONTENT</td>
<td>CLASS</td>
<td>MEETING NUMBER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. 14</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 16</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 19</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Vacation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. 21</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Vacation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 23</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Vacation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 26</td>
<td>PART VII: CONRAD, YEATS, ELIOT</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. 28</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 30</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECEMBER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 7</td>
<td>Culminating Script</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 10</td>
<td>Review Culminating Script</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-14</td>
<td>Examination Week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 21</td>
<td>Semester ends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An examination of the Experimental Schedule for Part IV (which follows below) shows specific emphases that might appear in the structure and contents of the cooperating classes. In the interpretation class, Writers Theatre
scripts suggest a series of dramatized approaches to the literature. Assignments for silent reading are made after the oral performance but before the English class which follows. In the English class schedule, lecture and discussion topics indicate how materials can be correlated. Here, creative writing assignments stress the formalistic approach to literary criticism to help students "find the key to the structure and meaning of the literary work."\(^\text{17}\)

Experimental Schedule

for

LITERARY PART IV

Milton (Paradise Lost), Swift, Pope, Johnson, and Boswell

Class Meetings, Content, Assignments

Number 1: Friday afternoon
Interpretation Class
Writers Theatre Script: "The Truth Is"
Silent Reading Assignment: from the Bible

Number 2: Monday morning
English Class
Lecture/Discussion: Overview of writing styles and forms in

PART IV. Assign topics found in reading from PART IV: pride, love, war, greed, gods, anger, travel, et cetera.

Creative Writing Assignment: truth in writing

Number 3: Monday afternoon
Interpretation Class
Writers Theatre Script: "Prince of Poets"
Silent Reading Assignment: from Paradise Lost

Number 4: Wednesday morning
English Class
Lecture/Discussion: Paradise Lost and the epic
Creative Writing Assignment: based on the epic

Number 5: Wednesday afternoon
Interpretation Class
Writers Theatre Script: "The Anatomy of Swift"
Silent Reading Assignment: from Gulliver's Travels

Number 6: Friday morning
English Class
Lecture/Discussion: The Satire of Swift
Creative Writing Assignment: satire

Number 7: Friday afternoon
Interpretation Class
Writers Theatre Script: "Heroic Couplets Reach their Apogee in Pope with Sound and Sense in Harmony."
Silent Reading Assignment: *The Rape of the Lock*

Number 8: Monday morning
English Class
Lecture/Discussion: the mock-epic and *The Rape of the Lock*
Creative Writing Assignment: heroic couplets

Number 9: Monday afternoon
Interpretation Class
Writers Theatre Script: "Vis-à-vis Posterity"
Silent Reading Assignment: from Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*

Number 10: Wednesday morning
English Class
Lecture/Discussion: Boswell and Johnson
Creative Writing Assignment: the journal

Number 11: Wednesday afternoon
Interpretation Class
Number 12: Friday morning

English Class

Creative Writing Assignment in class: Develop assigned topic according to one of the forms or styles studied during PART IV.

The scripts which follow here represent introductory material, as seen in "The Essence of Audience," and more advanced work, as demonstrated by the script for Literary Part IV, After the Silence. An effort has been made to arrange the literature accordingly. Therefore, the most elementary forms of group interpretation work are represented in "The Essence of Audience." More sophisticated reading techniques from more individual readers are required in the later scripts.

In addition, there has been an effort to demonstrate how the visual patterns of the literature would gradually change in the scripts. For example, the quotation from T. S. Eliot's "Burnt Norton" at the end of the introductory script is separated visually into thought-word patterns. By the end of the After the Silence script, the lines are printed intact. These changes from the original lineation have been made arbitrarily by the adapter. They might be changed by others; indeed, in practice, they might be further adapted. Whatever the alterations, there has been "ever
present the desire for the fullest, widest expression of the author."¹⁸

All of the scripts have been written with a classroom situation in mind. Approximately the same number of solo voices appear in each script, and there are from two to three groups of voices to accommodate the variations that are always present in class enrollments and attendance.

"The Essence of Audience" has been read by a group of college students as an experiment.¹⁹ It has a reading time of about ten minutes, which should allow for two or three readings in its class period. After the Silence, a script in five interrelated parts, has a total of thirty-four pages. Each part should have one class period for rehearsal. All five parts should be performed, in concert, on the last day.

Footnotes have been included for "The Essence of Audience" for the benefit of the performers. After the Silence also has a set of footnotes for each script for reference by the student readers.

¹⁸Gottholdt, p. 249.

¹⁹In July, 1973, twenty-five students enrolled in the Speech and Journalism Department of Northwestern State University of Louisiana, Natchitoches, La., read "Essence of Audience" under the direction of E. Robert Black in an effort to simulate a Writers Theatre situation and to test the premise that such material could be practiced and performed in a fifty-minute period.
"The Essence of Audience"

Introductory Writers Theatre Script

for

Sample Course Outline

Monday, September 3
"The Essence of Audience"

Cast:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interlocutor (I.)</th>
<th>Group B (five voices)</th>
<th>Group C (five voices)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voice 1</td>
<td>voice a</td>
<td>voice f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice 2</td>
<td>voice b</td>
<td>voice g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice 3</td>
<td>voice c</td>
<td>voice h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice 4</td>
<td>voice d</td>
<td>voice i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>voice e</td>
<td>voice j</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group A (any available number of voices)

All: refers to Groups A, B, and C.

All cast members face center stage.

---

Possible Staging

```
GROUP A

GROUP B
(a, b, c, d, e)

GROUP C
(f, g, h, i, j)

1 2  I.  3 4
```
INTERLOCUTOR: Ladies and gentlemen, members of the Audience.... Be seated!

Today, ladies and gentlemen, members of the Audience,

Today, we are One.

GROUP A: One? One what?

INTERLOCUTOR: As a Whole, we are One. We speak. Right?

GROUP B: Right.

INTERLOCUTOR: We read. Right?

GROUP C: Right.

INTERLOCUTOR: And we listen.

GROUP A: Right.

INTERLOCUTOR: But not to ourselves.

GROUP B: Oh?

INTERLOCUTOR: And the words are not ours.

GROUP C: Ah.

INTERLOCUTOR: We must listen.

VOICE 1: Inside the mind.

VOICE 2: Inside the soul.

VOICE 3: To another voice.

VOICE 4: From another time.

GROUP B: I'm waiting.

INTERLOCUTOR: Shhhhhhh.
GROUP B: (HALF VOICE) I don't hear anything.
GROUP C: (HALF VOICE) Neither do I.
INTERLOCUTOR: Shhhhhhh.

VOICE 1: Shut out.
VOICE 2: Close off.
VOICE 3: Seal up.
VOICE 4: Insulate.
GROUP A: Concentrate!
ALL: Shhhhhhh. Listen!

VOICE 1: Listen! To John Milton.
VOICE 2: Milton's an old man now, an old poet. He's writing an epic....even for us.
Imagining for us, the Garden and Temptation.
Imagining for us, love, of Adam for Eve.
Giving to them, the words of our language.
Giving to them, a bit of ourselves.

VOICE 3: "What thou art is mine;
Our state cannot be sever'd, we are one,
One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself."¹

VOICE 4: (ECHOING) "To lose thee were to lose myself."

INTERLOCUTOR: The words are John Milton's. The words become ours. We listen.

GROUP A: Ah.

GROUP B: Listen! To Keats.

voice a: Young, romantic...
voice b: Realistic, dying.

voice c: Beauty. Keats records beauty.

VOICE 1: "A thing of beauty is a joy forever;
Its loveliness increases....

VOICE 2: It will never pass into nothingness; but
Still will keep a bower quiet for us....

VOICE 3: And a sleep full of sweet dreams
VOICE 4: And health
VOICE 3: And quiet breathing."²

INTERLOCUTOR: "A thing of beauty." Some thing? Any thing?
Every thing....of beauty. Keats, yes.

GROUP A: Yes.

GROUP B: Keats, yes, Yeats, too.

voice d: Though an Irishman

voice e: Two generations later.

VOICE 1: "I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and
wattles made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for
the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

VOICE 2: And I shall have some peace there, for peace
comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to
where the cricket sings."³
VOICE 3: "Sweet dreams....
VOICE 4: Health.
VOICE 3: Quiet breathing.
VOICE 2: For peace comes dropping slow."

INTERLOCUTOR: They write the thoughts.
GROUP A: They could be mine.
    voice f: I've known such days.
    voice g: Had dreams like those....though I've never been to Innisfree.
    voice h: Or to England.
    voice i: Still, I miss the home that once I had.
    voice j: In the spring, every year.
VOICE C: "Oh, to be in England
        Now that April's there."4

INTERLOCUTOR: Robert Browning's voice.
    Another voice
    From another time.
    And we listen, as a Whole, one to one.
    Do you feel it?

GROUP B: (TENTATIVELY) I think so. The words are mine.
GROUP C: I think so. The thoughts are mine.

VOICE 1: Forget
VOICE 2: Everything new.
VOICE 3: Everything now.
VOICE 4: Every thing.
GROUP B: Empty the mind.
GROUP C: Open the mind.
GROUP A: Receive....
GROUP B: And be, an Audience
GROUP C: An Audience.

INTERLOCUTOR: 'Tis good, ladies and gentlemen, members of the Audience. 'Tis good.

GROUP A: Where does this end, or begin?
When does it end and begin?
INTERLOCUTOR: In Time, ladies and gentlemen, in good time!

VOICE 1: (SMARTLY) "When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past......"5

GROUP B: That won't do it.

VOICE 2: How long is your memory of things past?
VOICE 3: That won't do it. Try again.

VOICE 1: Once upon a time.....

GROUP A: (MOCKING) Once upon a time....
VOICE 1: Long, long ago!

GROUP A: (MOCKING) Long, long, ago......

GROUP C: Look back in time.
Look long ago.
Look back. Back.

voice f: Back to the middle of things.
In medias res.....in the middle of things.

Back to the earliest of Englands and a language being born.

Back to the Middle years of English....to "thee" and "thou" and "hem" and "ye."

To the fourteenth century, a Medieval England.....

Changing, emerging, issuing forth:

From this England comes our language.

From this time, our English tongue.

"This royal throne of kings
This scepter'd isle
This earth of majesty
This seat of Mars
This other Eden, demi-paradise
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war
This happy breed of men....this little world
This precious stone set in the silver sea.....
Which serves it in the office of a wall
Or as a moat defensive to a house, against the envy of less happier lands
This blessed plot.
This earth.
This realm...
This England."
GROUP A: (ECHOING) "This England."

INTERLOCUTOR: The world of Richard, the Second.
The time of Chaucer, the great.
Leaving behind medieval...
Pushing on to the modern.
The worlds of men are evolving.
The writing continues on.

GROUP B: Six hundred years of writing
From men who made English their own:

voice a: From Chaucer to Shakespeare, Bacon and Donne.
voice b: From Milton, Swift, and Pope.
voice c: Boswell and Johnson, Wordsworth and Coleridge,
voice d: Byron, Shelley, and Keats.
voice e: Tennyson and Browning,
voice g: To the present, now gone,
voice h: To the future, still here.....
voice i: To the English-American-Englishman,
voice j: Thomas Stearns Eliot.

INTERLOCUTOR: Six hundred years of writing to scan. To peruse. To read.

VOICE 1: "The everlasting universe of things
VOICE 2: Flows through the mind." 7
INTERLOCUTOR: Shelley wrote that.
VOICE 1: "The everlasting
VOICE 2: Universe of things
VOICE 3: Flows
VOICE 4: Through the mind."

GROUP A: What does that mean?

voice a: That it's all....up here.
voice b: In the mind.
voice c: A complete world.
voice d: Of ideas?
voice e: And thoughts. Maybe feelings.

GROUP B: Imagination! Understood.....by Imagination.

GROUP C: Ah.

voice f: I think that's the way to the heart of the
matter.
voice g: To the art of the matter.
voice h: To the essence.
voice i: "The everlasting universe of things
voice j: Flows through the mind."

INTERLOCUTOR: For six hundred years. Through the mind.

Imagination...to be understood, by imagination.

VOICE 1: "The poet's aim is teaching or delight.
VOICE 2: Or to speak both with charm and benefit.
VOICE 3: He who mixes usefulness with charm

By teaching and delighting equally....
VOICE 4: Wins every vote:"
INTERLOCUTOR: So Horace wrote, in Italy, nearly two thousand years ago. Still true?

GROUP A: Still true.

INTERLOCUTOR: For a touch of reality, two hundred years old, read Dr. Johnson:

VOICE 1: "No man
VOICE 2: But a blockhead
VOICE 3: Ever wrote
VOICE 4: Except for money."9

GROUP B: True.
GROUP C: True.
GROUP A: True.

INTERLOCUTOR: Ladies and gentlemen, members of the Audience, we have reached the ultima Thule. You can read. There is no turning back.

VOICE 1: "We shall not cease from exploration.
VOICE 2: And the end of all our exploring will be
VOICE 3: To arrive where we started
VOICE 4: And know the place for the first time."10

ALL: The essence of audience extends.

INTERLOCUTOR: "Time present
And time past
Are both, perhaps,
Present in time future.
And time future
Contained
In time past. 

ALL: The essence of audience is One.
FOOTNOTES

"The Essence of Audience"


After the Silence

"Words, after speech, reach
Into the silence."¹

A Writers Theatre Script in Five Parts:

"The Truth Is"
"Prince of Poets"
"An Anatomy of Swift"
"Heroic Couplets Reach their Apogee
in Pope with Sound and Sense in Harmony"
"Vis-à-vis Posterity"
"The Truth Is"

Voice A: Milton
Voice B: Swift
Voice C: Pope
Voice D: Johnson
Boswell

A Chorus of at least six people. Solo voices from the chorus:

1
2
3

A minimum cast of fifteen.

4
5

All cast members face center stage.

---

Possible Staging

Chorus

X X X X X

A B C D

Milton Swift Pope Johnson Boswell
CHORUS: Not who, but what.

VOICE A: Then the when.

VOICE D: Then the where. Then the who... from the what.

CHORUS: Now the how and the what.

VOICE A: "How it is what it is

VOICE D: Even

VOICE A: That it is what it is."^2

CHORUS: That is the why.

1: From the what and the how comes the why.

2: The words.

3: The poem.

4: The book.

5: The paper.

6: The art.

VOICE C: What it is. The art of the matter.

VOICE B: The heart of the matter.

VOICE A: Above all, the mind of the matter.

VOICE C: "Let us go then, you and I

VOICE D: Let us go and make our visit."^3

6: To the first-class words of our tradition^4

5: From the English, the Irish, the Scots.

4: To the first-class words of their tradition

3: To that classical tradition

2: "To the glory that was Greece

1: And the grandeur that was Rome."^5
VOICE A: To Milton, Swift, and Pope

VOICE B: To Dr. Johnson and to Boswell.

CHORUS: Symbols of an Age.

(AS THE NAMES OF THE AUTHORS ARE REPEATED, THE FIVE MEN WHO HAVE BEEN STANDING IN FRONT OF THEIR CHAIRS SIT NOW, ONE BY ONE.)

VOICE A: John Milton.

VOICE B: Jonathan Swift.

VOICE C: Alexander Pope.

VOICE D: Dr. Johnson.

VOICE C: James Boswell.

CHORUS: Symbols of an Age.

1: That's quite a span of time there.

2: That's a lot of words.

3: Poetic, didactic, satiric, emphatic. All with reason to be.

4: These are "artists who work for the public....and not merely for themselves." 6

5: Artists who want to communicate.....something of themselves.

6: A direct perception of truth.

5: Immediate apprehension.

4: Insight, pure knowledge.

6: Truth.

VOICE D: "To communicate their intuitions." 7

VOICE A: To say "How it is what it is
VOICE D: Even

VOICE A: That it is what it is.™

1: In 1665...

MILTON: The truth is... Paradise Lost. A Christian epic in ten thousand, five hundred and fifty-eight lines.

2: Age: fifty-seven.

1: In 1726....


3: Age: fifty-nine.

1: In 1712....

POPE: Truth may be found in no truth at all: witness The Rape of the Lock, an Heroi-comical Poem, dedicated to Mrs. Arabella Fermor: "Madam, Your Most Obedient Humble Servant, A. Pope.™

4: Age: twenty-four!

1: The year, 1755....

JOHNSON: "The purpose of a writer is to be read." Try, sir, A Dictionary of the English Language, by this "lexicographer, a writer of dictionaries, a harmless drudge."™

5: Age: forty-six.

1: And, thirty-six years later, in 1791....

BOSWELL: The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D., Comprehending AN ACCOUNT OF HIS STUDIES AND VARIOUS WORKS, in
chronological order; A SERIES OF HIS EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE...and conversations with many eminent persons; and various original pieces of his composition, never before published: THE WHOLE EXHIBITING A VIEW OF LITERATURE AND LITERARY MEN IN GREAT-BRITAIN, FOR NEAR HALF A CENTURY, DURING WHICH HE FLOURISHED."12

6: Age: fifty-one.

1: "The chief glory of every people arises from its authors."13

2: Sometimes "unacknowledged legislators of the world."14

3: Nevertheless, they must "communicate Their intuitions"15

4: To the world.

5: Then, and Now.

CHORUS: Now.......How:

MILTON: "Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties."16

VOICE A: Milton?

VOICE C: After Shakespeare, comes Milton. 1608.

VOICE D: A little boy when Shakespeare wrote, when Shakespeare died.

VOICE B: Yet he knew him....knew his work.
Knew not Shakespeare, but knew his "immortal verse." ¹⁷

MILTON: "Sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child." ¹⁸

VOICE D: Emulated his dramatic verse.

VOICE C: Like Homer.

VOICE A: Like Virgil.

VOICE B: Without rhyme.

VOICE D: Unlike the times. Unlike other men. The poet of an Age.

VOICE B: "Ages elaps'd ere Homer's lamp appear'd
And ages ere the Mantuan swan was heard:
To carry nature lengths unknown before,
To give a Milton birth, ask'd ages more." ¹⁹

VOICE C: All writers of epics, impressively great.

VOICE D: In language.....sonorous, grand.

VOICE A: Listen to Homer, thought to be blind: Listen--
the Iliad--first chanted in Greek:

1: "Sing, goddess, the anger of Peleus' son Achilleus
and its devastation, which put pains thousandfold
upon the Achaians,
hurled in their multitudes to the house of Hades
strong souls
of heroes, but gave their bodies to be the delicate feasting
of dogs, of all birds, and the will of Zeus was accomplished
since that time when first there stood in division of conflict
Atreus' son the lord of men and brilliant
Achilleus.\textsuperscript{20}

\textbf{CHORUS:} He sings the siege of Troy.

\begin{itemize}
\item[4:] Virgil continues.....heroic in Latin.
\item[5:] Again, \textit{in medias res}.
\item[6:] For Troy is destroyed; a new nation must be born.
\item[2:] "My song is arms and a man, the first of Troy to come to Italy and Lavinian shores, a fated fugitive, harried on land and sea by heaven's huge might and Juno's endless hate, pommeled by wars, till he could found the City and bring his gods to Latium, whence the race of Latins, our Alban sires, and towering Rome."\textsuperscript{21}
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item[4:] The building of a people.
\item[5:] The ethos of a people.
\item[6:] The story and the grandeur of Rome.
\end{itemize}

\textbf{VOICE A:} Milton, now known to be blind, continues in English classical verse.

\textbf{VOICE B:} Evocative, sonorous, grand.

\textbf{MILTON:} "Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste brought death into the world, and all our woe

\begin{itemize}
\item[2:] With loss of Eden
\item[3:] Till one greater Man restore us, and regain the blissful seat."
1: Sing, Heavenly Muse!

3: And chiefly thou, O Spirit, what in me is dark,

2: Illumine.

3: What is low,

2: Raise and support...

MILTON: That to the highth of this great argument I may assert Eternal Providence, and justify the ways of God to men."22

JOHNSON: "The highest praise of genius is original invention ....his work is not the greatest of heroic poems.... only because it is not the first."23

CHORUS: Now, draw the line.

VOICE A: Slowly, surely. The Renaissance has been accomplished.

VOICE B: The medieval time is past.

VOICE A: A modern world has emerged. Is emerging.

VOICE B: A new century is here for the writings of Swift and Pope, of Johnson and Boswell, too.

VOICE C: A new tension exists for more men today....a tension exists in life.

VOICE D: And art. A tension exists in art.24

VOICE A: Passionate feelings, but restraining thoughts.

VOICE B: Considered feelings, but revolutionary thoughts.

VOICE C: A tension exists.

VOICE D: Yet....everything's cool.

CHORUS: Everything's cool, so far.
1: Now the language of prose sweeps across England, and action nouns abound.

2: Intellectualism, classicism, criticism

3: Witticism

4: Journalism

5: Realism

6: In art, combined.

VOICE B: And, suddenly, satire is here. Again.

VOICE C: The looking glass, satire, is here.

VOICE B: Behind it, within it, Jonathan Swift is here.

SWIFT: "The chief end I propose to myself in all my labours is to vex the world rather than divert it."25

VOICE C: Jonathan Swift, in *Gulliver's Travels* is here.


VOICE C: A serious joke, then, about life itself.

VOICE B: An analysis, a dissection, of attitudes men hold.

An *anatomy*, if you please.26

SWIFT: "As Rochefoucault his Maxims drew From Nature, I believe 'em true:

They argue no corrupted Mind

In him; the *Fault* is in *Mankind.*"27

VOICE C: Through forty years of writing, he "jested in earnest" to man.28

VOICE B: Two hundred years of reading. *Still* he vexes man.
"He was buried at midnight on October 22, 1745, in the great aisle of St. Patrick's in Dublin on the south side. Seven feet above the ground the black marble tablet was fixed, bearing a Latin inscription 'in large letters deeply cut and strongly gilded,' as he had commanded: of which this is the English:

SWIFT: The body of Jonathan Swift, Doctor of Divinity, Dean of this Cathedral Church, is buried here, where fierce indignation can lacerate his heart no more. Go, traveller, and imitate if you can one who strove his utmost to champion liberty."29

CHORUS: Now see the line on the poetry chart jump and swell with Pope!

4: Poetic symbol of this Augustan Age.

5: Leading half the century with poetic skill and art.

6: Strange little man, with a body deformed

5: Stunted and twisted, pained.

4: Afflicted with sensitive nerves.

5: A mind with sensitive nerves.

1: The physical, psychical Pope, a "jest in earnest" alive.30

2: Shut off from normality by sickness.

3: Excluded from school by religion.

CHORUS: (STAGE WHISPER, GOSSIPY) Catholics are not allowed at Oxford or Cambridge.

3: Politically shut out, too.
CHORUS: (STAGE WHISPER, GOSSIPY) Catholics can't vote, or hold office of course.
2: But they can reason
3: And write
1: And he did.

POPE: "Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
The proper study of mankind is man." 31

VOICE A: The Wasp of Twickenham studied his world
VOICE B: And the fitful ones around him.
VOICE A: Then he stung them with wit and with art.
VOICE C: He valued order....
VOICE D: Cosmic, political, social, aesthetic.
VOICE C: He valued reason. And yet, he had a faith.
VOICE D: Read, in the order of his couplets, in the caesuras of his lines, how Pope speaks to us:

POPE: "All nature is but art.....unknown to thee;
All chance.....direction.....which thou canst not see;
All discord.....harmony.....not understood;
All partial evil.....universal good:
And.....spite of pride.....in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear.....Whatever is.....is right." 32

VOICE A: Succinct, yet expressive.
Expressive, yet restrained.
VOICE B: Stinging, but seldom low.
VOICE C: He challenges us to know.....to compare.

VOICE D: To remember.....so we understand.

CHORUS: (SONOROUS TONES) The Rape of the Lock!

4: It sets the tone...we should know that a spoof has begun.

POPE: "What dire offense from amorous causes springs, What mighty contests rise from trivial things, I sing--This verse to Caryll, Muse! is due:"

4: Remember Homer?

1: "Sing, goddess, the anger of Peleus' son Achilleus and its devastation, which put pains thousandfold upon the Achaians....."33

4: And Virgil?

2: "My song is arms and a man, the first of Troy to come to Italy and Lavinian shores, a fated fugitive, harried on land and sea....."35

4: John Milton.

MILTON: "Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste Brought death into the world, and all our woe."36

4: The mock-epic cries....

CHORUS: (HIGH TONES) "'Restore the lock'

4: She cries;

5: And all around

CHORUS: (FULL VOICE) 'Restore the lock!'

6: The vaulted roofs rebound."37
JOHNSON: How shall we read him? "With perpetual delight." 

VOICE A: Shall we read him? 
VOICE D: Shall we remember him? 
VOICE B: "How it is what it is?" 
CHORUS: Why? 

VOICE C: Maybe because of Johnson, and by extension, Boswell, too. 
VOICE D: Each made greater by the other, together remembering, appraising, preserving, Great Britain's literary great. 
VOICE A: From within that active reactor, London, in the books, on the stage, in the press... 
VOICE B: With the chocolate, coffee, and conversation, careers and criticism grew. 

1: Before radio, film, t.v., records or tapes 
2: Before archives, Time and the Man of the Year 
3: Before HAL, Reader's Digest, the Book-of-the-Month. 
4: They fixed a century in writing. 
5: Intuitions revealed 
6: Recorded in writing. 

CHORUS: "That it is what it is" is there. 

BOSWELL: We talked of biography. 

JOHNSON: "It is rarely well executed. They only who live with a man can write his life with any genuine exactness and discrimination; and few people who have lived with a man know what to remark about him."
BOSWELL: But he wrote in the *Rambler*:

JOHNSON: "No species of writing seems more worthy of cultivation than Biography, since none can be more delightful, or more useful." 42

VOICE A: *The Lives of the Poets*, ten volumes, by Samuel Johnson, LL.D.

VOICE B: An edition of Shakespeare, eight volumes.

VOICE C: Then *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, himself, by James Boswell.

VOICE D: Becoming a word, a verb, a concept himself.

VOICE C: The triumph of Johnson, our diary of thoughts, his *Dictionary of the English Language*.

VOICE B: His choosing, his shaping, his saving our words.

CHORUS: For an audience who reads for truth.
"The Truth Is"


7Ibid.

8Sontag, p. 1229.


12Ibid., p. 1.

13Samuel Johnson, Preface to A Dictionary of the English Language, in MBW, p. 506.


18 Ibid., p. 212, l. 133.


22 John Milton, Paradise Lost I:1-26, in MBW, pp. 224-25. (Adapted for special interpretation.)


24 Highet, p. 289.


28 Highet, p. 305.


30 Highet, p. 305.


34 Homer, I.1-2, p. 59.

35 Virgil, I.1-3, p. 3.


39 Sontag, p. 1229.

40 *Ibid*.

41 Boswell, *LSJE*, p. 279.

"The Prince of Poets"

Chorus should be divided into two groups:

Group I:
- Voice 1
- Voice 2
- Voice 3
- All others

Add: Swift, Pope

Group II:
- Voice 4
- Voice 5
- Voice 6
- All others

Add: Boswell

Minimum cast of twelve.

Cast members face center stage.

Possible Staging

A B

C D
VOICE A: "Milton's the prince of poets--so we say;

VOICE B: A little heavy, but no less divine:

VOICE C: An independent being in his day--

VOICE D: Learn'd, pious, temperate in love and wine.¹

1: Alone and secluded in London, John Milton is an
   old man now.
2: An old poet, famous, yet fearful still.
3: Blind, poor, out of step with the times.

GROUP II: John Milton is old now. An old poet.
1: He's fifty-seven, you know.
4: With a twenty-six-year-old wife?
1: Yes. She's his third. Elizabeth.
2: First Mary, then Katherine.
5: And his daughters? What of them?
2: In their teens....the third, nearly so.
6: I hear they are not happy....Anne, Mary, and
   Deborah.
2: The old man is demanding.

VOICE A: His work is hard these days.
2: Well, he is at times, difficult.

VOICE B: The times, themselves, are difficult. The
   Restoration....and the destruction. Reformation.
   Restoration. Now, Destruction?

VOICE C: Reaction to things Puritanical.

VOICE D: Reaction, and over-reaction! A backlash has been
   unleashed.
I AND II: Restore the king and gain your liberty!

VOICE D: Correction! Your libertines.

4: The king and his court? Libertines?

VOICE D: King Charles and his Court.....Libertines.

VOICE B: "It was the gayest and most rotten society in history."²

5: Hardly the climate for high poetry.

6: Religious poetry, at that.

GROUP I: The plague has struck throughout London!

MILTON: A plague, within and without.

GROUP II: A fire is raging in London!

MILTON: In London, within and without.

I AND II: London lies here panting. It's 1665.

VOICE A: Not Milton! He's written an epic! A poem, a tale for all time. For England, for God, and for man.

VOICE B: An epic? Like Virgil's Aeneid? The Iliad of Homer? His Odyssey, too? An epic, in poetic form?


VOICE C: Is it long?

VOICE D: Yes, it's long.

JOHNSON: "None ever wished it longer than it is."³

VOICE D: Ten thousand, five hundred and fifty-eight lines. Lines without any rhyme.
VOICE C: Ridiculous! Basic to poems are some lines that rhyme.

VOICE A: Milton has written this one without.

MILTON: *Paradise Lost.* A Poem in Twelve Books. "The Verse: The measure is in English heroic verse, without rhyme... as that of Homer in Greek, and of Virgil in Latin... rhyme being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse, in longer works especially, but the invention of a barbarous age, to set off wretched matter and lame meter!"[^4]

VOICE C: Is it well-received? Is it popular? Is it a success?

VOICE D: Perhaps it's the times. Or the subject. Few seem to care for the subject, as yet.

VOICE C: The subject?


VOICE C: Belief in that myth is fading, they say.

VOICE A: You're wrong. This one exists.

VOICE B: It's not about sex, but knowledge. What is good and evil on earth. The need to know, the free will of man, hubris, and the Fall.

VOICE D: Man loses his ignorance, his innocence. His paradise is lost.

I AND II: Man's paradise, lost:

MILTON: "Of man's first disobedience
1: And the fruit of that forbidden tree
2: Whose mortal taste brought Death into the world

GROUP I: And all our woe.
3: With loss of Eden

VOICE A: Till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat.

I AND II: Sing, Heavenly Muse

VOICE B: That on the secret top of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst
Inspire that shepherd,
Who first taught the chosen seed in the beginning
How the Heavens and Earth rose out of Chaos....

VOICE C: Or if Sion hill delight thee more, and Siloa's
brook that flowed fast by the oracle of God,

MILTON: I thence invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,

VOICE D: That with no middle flight intends to soar above
the Aonian mount
While it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.

MILTON: And chiefly thou, O Spirit,

VOICE A: That dost prefer before all temples the upright
heart and pure,

MILTON: Instruct me,

VOICE B: For thou know'st;

VOICE C: Thou from the first was present, and with mighty
wings
Outspread dove-like
Sat'st brooding on the vast abyss and
Mad'st it pregnant;

**MILTON:** What in me is dark,

**I AND II:** Illumine.

**MILTON:** What is low,

**I AND II:** Raise and support.

**VOICE D:** That to the highth of this great argument

**MILTON:** I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men."5

**VOICE A:** "Time present
And time past
Are both

**VOICE B:** Perhaps
Present in time future.

**VOICE A:** And time future
Contained
In time past."6

**VOICE C:** The words are there.

**VOICE D:** For the audience who reads for the truth.

**VOICE C:** It may be the truth is there. If we can see it.

**VOICE D:** If we can read it....today.

**VOICE A:** From yesterday.

**VOICE B:** For the future.

**VOICE D:** If we can read it....with imagination.

**VOICE C:** Know creative imagination.

**VOICE A:** Know the mind of the poet.
VOICE B: To enter the mind of the poet....to become with him, for the moment, what Milton called..... "Fancy's child."  

JOHNSON: "To paint things as they are requires a minute attention, and employs the memory rather than the fancy. Milton's delight was to sport in the wide regions of possibility; reality was a scene too narrow for his mind. He sent his faculties out upon discovery, into worlds where only imagination can travel, and delighted to form new modes of existence, and furnish sentiment and action to superior beings, to trace the counsels of hell, or accompany the choirs of heaven."  

GROUP II: "And justify the ways of God to men." 

4: The ways of God to men were first recorded in Hebrew and Greek, and then in the Vulgate, popular Latin. 

5: Over a thousand years elapsed, till an English translation appeared....the first of many revisions. 

6: Then the standard, the Bible of bibles was authorized by an English king. 

1: Here, in the King James version, published in 1611, Genesis Three comes to a close, describing a paradise lost: 

2: "So he drove out the man;"
And he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, Cherubims,
And a flaming sword Which turned every way To keep the way of the tree of life."

Then Milton "sent his faculties out upon discovery, into worlds where only imagination can travel," and he describes the scene anew:

"High in front advanced The brandished sword of God before them blazed
Fierce as a comet Which, with torrid heat and vapor, As the Libyan air adust, Began to parch that temperate clime.
Wherat, in either hand, the hastening Angel caught Our lingering parents, and to the eastern gate Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast To the subjected plain;
Then disappeared.
They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld of Paradise, so late their happy seat.
Waved over by that flaming brand, the gate with dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.
Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
The world was all before them, where to choose their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
VOICE A: They,

VOICE B: Hand in hand,

VOICE C: With wandering steps

VOICE D: And slow,

MILTON: Through Eden took their solitary way."¹²

I AND II: "Through Eden took their solitary way."¹³
FOOTNOTES

"The Prince of Poets"

1 George Gordon, Lord Byron, Don Juan III.xci.1-4, in MBW, p. 666.


5 Milton, Paradise Lost I.1-26, in MBW, pp. 224-25.


10 Gen. iii.24.


13 Ibid., l. 649.
"An Anatomy of Swift"

Voice A
Voice B
Voice C
Voice D
Swift

Chorus should be divided into two groups:

Group I:
  voice 1
  voice 2
  voice 3
  all others

Add: Pope
    Milton

Group II:
  voice 4
  voice 5
  voice 6
  all others

Add: Johnson
    Boswell

Minimum cast of eleven.
Cast members face center stage.

Possible Staging

A B
  Swift

C D
Symbolically, our quest for knowledge begins.

Which we pursue without end.

Of course, for some it doesn't exist.

They couldn't care less about truth.

Others, however, a chosen few, seek truth endlessly here.

Not pessimists who see only evil.

No. Optimists we often destroy.

Optimistic iconoclasts appear now and then and remind us of

What we are

What we aren't

What we could be.

Yet, such spirits are more than conscience.

These are movers of men.

Such was Jonathan Swift.

The alien, Jonathan Swift.

An Englishman, born in Dublin,

Irish and English, both.

Alienated, he belonged to one, and the other, and neither.

Spiritually, he belonged to both.

A reluctant Dean of the Church...of England, in Ireland.

Spoke not for the Church, but himself.
VOICE C: Yet, he belonged to both...to the Church and to himself.

VOICE A: Denied his private ambitions...

VOICE B: Making do with this and with that...

1: Constantly thrown off balance by an inner ear malady

4: And his mind.

2: He suffered from vertigo and veracity;

3: Neither affliction would let go.

VOICE A: Jonathan Swift was beloved by three women...Jane, Vanessa, and Stella. With each, a strange kind of love.

VOICE B: Our questions hang without answers. An aura of charisma remains.

5: Born to a mother who left him with others

6: Born to a father already dead

5: Born at the time of the English traumas:

Restoration, plagues, the great fire.

6: Born when Milton was glowing

4: Born to a world unsteady.

5: Determined to speak the truth.

6: Somehow persuade the people....

4: Somehow, change the world.

VOICE A: And humor was his host.
VOICE B: He could ridicule, parody, play practical jokes, and jest.

VOICE C: Nothing was sacrosanct. Nothing escaped.

VOICE D: His humors...used humor...to delight and startle and stir around complacent, satisfied crowds.

1: Sometimes savagely slashing at vice
2: Or plucking at foibles obscene,
3: Swift, with black wit, fought for morality

GROUP I: "Strove his utmost to champion liberty."¹

GROUP II: Master of Satire, Jonathan Swift.

SWIFT: "Perhaps I may allow, the Dean
Had too much Satyr in his Vein;
And seem'd determin'd not to starve it.
Because no Age could more deserve it.
Yet Malice never was his Aim;
He lash'd the Vice but spar'd the Name.
No Individual could resent,
Where Thousands equally were meant.
His Satyr points at no Defect,
But what all Mortals may correct."²

4: "The future will find no worse morals to add,
No new follies to try;
5: Our descendants will desire and do
The same things we've done.
6: All vice is now at its height;
Sail into it, Satirist, run with canvas unfurled."³
VOICE A: So wrote Juvenal, the Roman enigma, in the year one hundred and ten...perhaps.

VOICE B: In London, in 1726, when Swift was fifty-nine, He ran...."with canvas unfurled!"4

VOICE C: Behind the name Lemuel Gulliver, He seemed to be playing a hoax...

Outdoing Robinson Crusoe, by Defoe, published a few years before.

VOICE D: Were these tales of a World Geographic? Was this history true?

1: His motives appear ulterior.

2: There's more here than meets the eye!

3: Satire seems to be the device.

VOICE A: Satire has sailed into vice!

VOICE B: Yet, "His Satyr points at no Defect, But what all Mortals may correct."5

VOICE C: Read, if you will, the title page--of the first volume of the first edition of Gulliver's book:

VOICE D: "Travels into several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and then a Captain of several ships. Vol. I. London. Printed for Benj. Motte, at the Middle Temple-Gate in Fleet-street. 1726."6

VOICE C: We know it's by Swift. Who is Gulliver? Is he speaking for Jonathan Swift? Are they one and
the same? Is Gulliver serving a purpose, beyond being a name?

VOICE D: Some call him Swift's eidolon....a mask that disguises the voice that's behind it.

GROUP I: Not quite.

GROUP II: Not quite.

VOICE A: Northrop Frye calls the book a Menippean satire. It "deals less with people as such than with mental attitudes."7

VOICE B: Swift is intellectually analyzing "institutions which man has created for himself...their wisdom or unwisdom, their efficacy, their decay."8

VOICE C: It would seem that he wants Utopia....a state of perfection to exist for man.

VOICE D: The satirist demands Utopia....and expects the best from man.

VOICE A: Conceiving, creating Utopia depends on the mind of man.

VOICE B: Gulliver, along with the reader, examines closely his mind....examines carefully man.

1: On the first voyage he goes to Lilliput.
2: The second to Brobdingnag.
3: On his third he visits Laputa, Balnabarbi, Blubbdubdrib, Luggnagg, and Japan.
1: His last voyage, which ends in treachery, takes him to the land of the marvelous beasts....the country of the Houyhnhnms.

VOICE C: Life in these "Remote Nations of the World" is distorted each time, in some way....forcing Gulliver to adjust each time....allowing him to change.9

VOICE D: He finds, in a bittersweet climax, Utopia, the perfect state.

4: But a Utopia created by Houyhnhnms, superior to Yahoos, to men.

VOICE C: Now Gulliver has known perfection. He can reason. Can he understand?

VOICE D: To feel futility is not reason, but passion.

GROUP II: "Fierce indignation" couples them both:10

SWIFT: "My reconcilement to the yahoo-kind in general might not be so difficult if they would be content with those vices and follies only which nature hath intitled them to.

1: I am not in the least provoked at the sight of a lawyer, a pickpocket, a colonel, a fool, a lord, a gamester, a politician, a whoremaster, a physician, an evidence, a suborner, an attorney, a traitor, or the like; this is all according to the due course of things:
2: But when I behold a lump of deformity and diseases in body and mind, smitten with pride, it immediately breaks all the measures of my patience;

3: Neither shall I be ever able to comprehend how such an animal and such a vice could tally together."\(^{11}\)

SWIFT: "The body of Jonathan Swift, Doctor of Divinity, Dean of this Cathedral Church, is buried here, where fierce indignation can lacerate his heart no more. Go, traveller, and imitate if you can one who strove his utmost to champion liberty."\(^{12}\)
FOOTNOTES

"An Anatomy of Swift"


2 Swift, "Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift," in ECEL, p. 388, ll. 455-64.


4 Ibid.

5 Swift, "Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift," in ECEL, p. 388, ll. 463-64.

6 Swift, Gulliver's Travels, in GTAC, p. v.


9 Swift, Gulliver's Travels, in GTAC, p. v.

10 Murry, p. 484.


12 Murry, p. 484.
"Heroic Couplets Reach their Apogee in Pope with Sound and Sense in Harmony."

Voice A
Voice B
Voice C
Voice D
Pope
Johnson
Milton

Chorus should be divided into two groups:

Group I:
voice 1
voice 2
voice 3
all others

Group II:
voice 4
voice 5
voice 6
all others

Add: Swift
Add: Boswell

Minimum cast of thirteen.
Cast members face center stage.

Possible Staging

\[ \begin{array}{ccc}
\text{X} \\
\text{Johnson} \\
\text{Pope} \\
\text{Milton} \\
\text{A} & \text{B} & \text{C} & \text{D} \\
\end{array} \]
POPE: "Of all the causes which conspire to blind
Man's erring judgment, and misguide his mind,
What the weak head with strongest bias rules,
Is pride, the never-failing vice of fools.
Whatever Nature has in worth denied,
She gives in large recruits of needful pride;
For as in bodies, thus in souls, we find
What wants in blood and spirits, swelled with wind:
Pride, where wit fails, steps in to our defense,
And fills up all the mighty void of sense.
If once right reason drives that cloud away,
Truth breaks upon us with resistless day.
Trust not yourself; but your defects to know,
Make use of every friend--and every foe.

A little learning is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring."¹

1: The Pierian spring, sacred to the Muses...nine
goddesses thought to direct the arts
2: And inspire the struggling artists.
3: Call upon Calliope!--goddess of epic poetry--
   Call, along with Homer:
2: "Sing, goddess, the anger of Peleus' son Achilleus..."²
3: And with Virgil:
2: "Muse, tell me the causes...."³
1: And with Milton...but add Urania, Muse of
   astronomy, now Muse of sacred poetry:
MILTON: "Sing, Heavenly Muse."\(^4\)

1: And, in his invocation, Milton prays to the creative spirit of God:

MILTON: "And chiefly thou, O Spirit...."\(^5\)

GROUP I: Sing! The epic's begun.

4: There is also the tongue-in-cheek epic that teases and jibes in high style.

5: The Rape of the Lock, a mock-epic, imitates and parodies the richness and strength of the epic.

6: The rape is not of Helen, but of a lock of hair.

4: The battles take place at the card table.

5: The feasts are cups of tea.

6: It is not "one great heroic adventure" out of Troy, or Rome, or Heaven.\(^6\)

5: But it may have a "profound moral truth" if good humor be basic to man.\(^7\)

4: A ridiculous pseudo-disaster

5: Achieves insignificance with brilliance

6: Through a reversal of epic purpose

GROUP II: In The Rape of the Lock by Pope.

4: We begin with tradition, in medias res, in London, early in the seventeen hundreds:

POPE: "What dire offense from amorous causes springs, What mighty contests rise from trivial things, I sing--This verse to Caryll, Muse! is due:
This, even Belinda may vouchsafe to view:
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise,
If she inspire, and he approve my lays.

VOICE A: Say what strange motive, goddess! could compel
A well-bred lord t' assault a gentle belle?
O say what stranger cause, yet unexplored,
Could make a gentle belle reject a lord?
In tasks so bold, can little men engage,
And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty rage?"8

JOHNSON: "He saw immediately, of his own conceptions, what
was to be chosen, and what was to be rejected;
and, in the works of others, what was to be
shunned, and what was to be copied."9

1: Epics, according to our tradition, are peopled
with Other Beings. Gods and goddesses, angels
and spirits maneuver magically throughout the
stories.

2: So it is in The Rape of the Lock, though the
Beings are "slight of subject,"10 they are
important "machinery" nevertheless.11

POPE: "The gnomes, or demons of earth, delight in
mischief; but the sylphs, whose habitation is in
the air, are the best-conditioned creatures
imaginable."12
3: When Milton imagined the legions of Satan, he gave them marvelous physical, or non-physical, powers:

MILTON: "For spirits when they please
Can either sex assume, or both; so soft
And uncompounded is their essence pure,
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
Like cumbersome flesh; but in what shape they choose....."\textsuperscript{13}

3: So does Pope fashion his "light militia of the lower sky;"\textsuperscript{14}

POPE: "For spirits, freed from mortal laws, with ease Assume what sexes and what shapes they please."\textsuperscript{15}

4: Protected by her airy sylphs,

5: Like Aeneas who moves in glory up the Tiber to found the city of Rome,

6: Belinda floats up the River Thames to Hampton Court, the site of a card game and the impending disaster:

VOICE B: "Not with more glories, in th' ethereal plain,
The sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams
Launched on the bosom of the silver Thames."\textsuperscript{16}

GROUP II: "Belinda smiled and all the world was gay."\textsuperscript{17}

4: However...
VOICE C: "Th' adventurous Baron the bright locks admired; He saw, he wished, and to the prize aspired. Resolved to win, he meditates the way, By force to ravish, or by fraud betray; For when success a lover's toil attends, Few ask, if fraud or force attained his ends." 18

MILTON: The sword of Satan, with steep force to smite Descending, and in half cut sheer, nor stayed, But with swift wheel reverse, deep entering sheared All his right side; then Satan first knew pain, And writhed him to and fro convolved; so sore The griding sword with discontinuous wound Passed through him; but the ethereal substance closed Not long divisible....." 19

POPE: "The peer now spreads the glittering forfex wide, T' enclose the lock; now joins it, to divide. Even then, before the fatal engine closed, A wretched Sylph too fondly interposed; Fate urged the shears, and cut the Sylph in twain, (But airy substance soon unites again) The meeting points the sacred hair dissever From the fair head, forever, and forever." 20
4: Despite prayers and laments, sacrifices and copious tears, the infamous rape is but partially successful.

5: And no one is thoroughly satisfied.

6: There is a moral to the story, besides its obvious spoof...a speech by the nymph Clarissa.... prevails upon us all. After the manner of Sarpedon, during a fearsome battle in the Iliad, first sung in Greek:

VOICE D: "'Man, supposing you and I, escaping this battle, would be able to live on forever, ageless, immortal, so neither would I myself go on fighting in the foremost nor would I urge you into the fighting where men win glory. But now, seeing that the spirits of death stand close about us in their thousands, no man can turn aside nor escape them, let us go on and win glory for ourselves, or yield it to others.'" 

1: Pope was translating the Iliad, even as he was still editing the Rape. His speech for Sarpedon is in heroic couplets...t'was thus he translated the Greek:

POPE: "'Could all our care elude the gloomy grave, Which claims no less the fearful than the brave, For lust of fame I should not vainly dare In fighting fields, nor urge thy soul to war."
2: But since, alas! ignoble age must come, Disease, and death's inexorable doom;  
3: The life, which others pay, let us bestow, And give to fame what we to nature owe;  

POPE: Brave tho' we fall, and honour'd if we live,  
Or let us glory gain, or glory give!'"^22  

1: Clarissa's speech followed easily, and was added to the original Rape:  

POPE: "'Oh! if to dance all night, and dress all day, Charmed the smallpox, or chased old age away; Who would not scorn what housewife's cares produce, Or who would learn one earthly thing of use?  

4: To patch, nay ogle, might become a saint, Nor could it sure be such a sin to paint. But since, alas! frail beauty must decay, Curled or uncurled, since locks will turn to gray; And she who scorns a man, must die a maid;  

5: What then remains but well our power to use, And keep good humor still whate'er we lose?  

POPE: And trust me, dear! good humor can prevail, When airs, and flights, and screams, and scolding fail.  

6: Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll; Charms strike the sight, I AND II: But merit wins the soul.'"^23
POPE:  "Why did I write? what sin to me unknown
Dipped me in ink, my parents', or my own?
As yet a child, not yet a fool to fame,
I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came.
I left no calling for this idle trade,
No duty broke, no father disobeyed.
The Muse but served to ease some friend, not wife,
To help me thro' this long disease, my life." 24
"Heroic Couplets Reach their Apogee in Pope with Sound and Sense in Harmony."

1Alexander Pope, Essay on Criticism, in MBW, p. 402, 11. 210-16.


4Milton, Paradise Lost I.6, in MBW, p. 224.

5Ibid. I.17, p. 225.


7Ibid.

8Pope, The Rape of the Lock I.12, in MBW, p. 309.


10Pope, The Rape of the Lock I.5, in MBW, p. 409. (Abbreviated reference to I.5.)

11Ibid., from the Dedication.

12Ibid.


15Ibid. I.69-70.

16Ibid. II.1-4, p. 411.

17Ibid. II.52.

18Ibid. II.29-34.


"Vis-à-vis Posterity"

Chorus should be divided into two groups:

**Group I:**
- voice 1
- voice 2
- voice 3
- all others

**Group II:**
- voice 4
- voice 5
- voice 6
- all others

Add: Milton
Swift

Add: Pope

Minimum cast of twelve.

Cast members face center stage.

---

**Possible Staging**

```
M S X
X X X
GROUP I

X
Johnson

X
Boswell

A    B    C    D
```
I AND II: My life. My life.
    My life.

BOSWELL: Dr. Johnson "used frequently to observe, that there was more to be endured than enjoyed, in the general condition of human life; and frequently quoted those lines of Dryden:

JOHNSON: 'Strange cozenage: none would live past years again, Yet all hope pleasure from what still remain.'

VOICE A: So it was with Dr. Johnson. Seventy-five years of physical pain...scrofulous, asthmatic, afflicted with dropsy, and partially blind.

VOICE B: There were untold years of mental aberrations...

l: Melancholia, hypochondria, and the fear of death.

VOICE B: He was never free from anguish.

VOICE A: Though he suffered as any man, every man, might... mentally and physically...he became, through his life, a most eminent man.

I AND II: The source of his reputation, then and now.... words, words, words.

VOICE C: He came up to London from the country, before he was thirty, with a poem.

VOICE D: The poem, named "London," impressed Alexander Pope...the brilliant, the polished, successful Pope.
VOICE C: His life-long devotion to letters, to London, began at that time for young Sam.

VOICE D: Johnson recognized early in his career that writing was arduous and poorly paid. He would ever endeavor to see the practical in his later writing critiques:

JOHNSON: "The purpose of a writer is to be read."²

VOICE C: And he wrote!....at one time or another...

1: Tragedy, biography, periodical essays,

2: Oriental tales, a travel book and political articles.

3: Critical essays, book reviews...orations, sermons, letters.

1: Prayers, dedications, legal briefs, and royal petitions.

2: He ventured into poetic satires, Horatian odes, and the elegy.

3: Theatrical prologues and epilogues, songs and Anacreontic lyrics.

1: He was known for his epitaphs and epigrams.

VOICE C: However, he did not write a realistic novel or a stage comedy...nor did he try the Pindaric ode.

VOICE D: It was not his prodigious outpourings that have made him so great and revered. In fact, some of his writing is amazingly difficult to read:
4: (READ RATHER SWIFTLY) "There are some vices and errors which, though often fatal to those in whom they are found, have yet, by the universal consent of mankind, been considered as entitled to some degree of respect, or have, at least, been exempted from contemptuous infamy, and condemned by the severest moralists with pity rather than detestation.

A constant and invariable example of this general partiality will be found in the different regard which has always been shown to rashness and cowardice, two vices, of which, though......"³

VOICE D: And so on!

5: One might guess he had been working on his Dictionary.

6: No doubt, at this time, he was surfeited with words.

4: He had tuned his mind to the great English writers up to the Restoration. Drew from them the sense and the value of the people's tongue. From them he learned all those words.

VOICE A: The 1750's were financially hazardous for artists in London, then. Like most of his fellow writers, Johnson often went without. When the Dictionary was finally published (in April, 1755), Samuel Johnson wrote with bitter pride to the Honorable Earl of Chesterfield, his erstwhile, supposed patron:
JOHNSON: "Seven years, my Lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door, during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favor.... The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labors, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it."  

VOICE A: He was not only known....

He knew. At forty-six he had become accomplished in evaluating the best of the English writing. He had programmed his mind with a richness of learning that could not be depleted, for it could only self-restore.

VOICE B: In an issue of one of his papers, the Idler, Johnson considers with realism and humor one view of one aspect of his work:

JOHNSON: "Criticism is a study by which men grow important and formidable at a very small expense.

1: The power of invention has been conferred by nature upon few, and the labor of learning those
sciences which may by mere labor be obtained is too great to be willingly endured;

2: But every man can exert such judgment as he has upon the works of others; and he whom nature has made weak, and idleness keeps ignorant, may yet support his vanity by the name of a critic."\(^5\)

3: But Johnson, never mentally idle, did analyze and pass judgment on the works and the talents of men. In 1750, he wrote for the *Rambler*:

**JOHNSON:** "All Joy or Sorrow for the Happiness or Calamities of others is produced by an Act of the Imagination....

**VOICE A:** An Act of the Imagination, that *realizes* the Event however fictitious, or approximates it however remote, by placing us, for a Time, in the Condition of him whose fortune we contemplate;

**VOICE B:** So that we *feel*,

**VOICE A:** While the Deception lasts,

**VOICE B:** Whatever Motions would be excited by the same Good or Evil happening to ourselves.

**VOICE C:** Our Passions are therefore more strongly moved, in proportion as we can more readily adopt the Pains or Pleasures proposed to our Minds, by recognizing them as once our own, or considering them as naturally incident to our State of Life.
VOICE D: It is not easy for the most artful Writer to give us an Interest in Happiness or Misery, which we think ourselves never likely to feel, and with which we have never yet been made acquainted.

VOICE C: Histories of the Downfall of Kingdoms, and Revolutions of Empires are read with great Tranquillity;

VOICE B: And the Man whose Heart never fluttered but at the Rise or Fall of Stocks, wonders how the attention can be seized, or the Affections agitated by a Tale of Love.

VOICE A: Those parallel Circumstances, and kindred Images to which we readily conform our Minds, are, above all other Writings, to be found in Narratives of the Lives of particular Persons; and therefore no Species of Writing seems more worthy of Cultivation than Biography, since none can be more delightful, or more useful. 6

4: He wrote about Shakespeare, and published an eight-volume edition.

5: At seventy, he published his Prefaces, Biographical and Critical, to the Works of the English Poets. In ten volumes.

6: He was never to read his own biography.

4: That was published seven years after his death, in 1791....a remarkable work by a singular talent,
James Boswell, a Scot, and young enough to be Johnson's son...twenty-two when they met.

JOHNSON: "Give me your hand; I have taken a liking to you." 7

And James Boswell began to prod, take notes, remember, and plan...so that he might

BOSWELL: "Write the Life of him who excelled all mankind in writing the lives of others." 8

"He proposed to make Johnson show himself; he would not only describe the man and relate the events of his life, but he would interleave with this his letters and his conversations and show him to us under a hundred varied circumstances." 9

"No one has ever read The Life of Johnson without feeling that he has been in the company of a very great man. Actually, he has been in the company of two." 10

BOSWELL: "Samuel Johnson, a man whose talents, acquirements, and virtues, were so extraordinary, that the more his character is considered, the more he will be regarded by the present age, and by posterity, with admiration and reverence." 11

"The chief glory of every people arises from its authors; whether I shall add anything by my own writings to the reputation of English literature must be left to time; much of my life has been lost under the pressures of disease, much has
been trifled away, and much has always been spent in provision for the day that was passing over me; but I shall not think my employment useless or ignoble, if by my assistance foreign nations, and distant ages, gain access to the propagators of knowledge, and understand the teachers of truth."  

VOICE A: "The chief glory of every people arises from its authors.

VOICE B: Propagators of knowledge...

VOICE C: The teachers of truth."  

VOICE D: From 1608 to 1674...

MILTON: John Milton.

VOICE D: 1667 to 1745...

SWIFT: Jonathan Swift.

VOICE D: 1688 to 1744...

POPE: Alexander Pope.

VOICE D: 1709 to 1784...

JOHNSON: Samuel Johnson.

VOICE D: 1740 to 1795...

BOSWELL: James Boswell.

I AND II: "Time present and time past

Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past."  

GROUP I: "Words, after speech, reach

Into the silence."
GROUP II: After the silence,
    The audience.
I AND II: The essence of silence is now.
FOOTNOTES

"Vis-à-vis Posterity"


4 Samuel Johnson, "Letter to the Right Honorable The Earl of Chesterfield," in MBW, p. 490. (Letter is abridged.)

5 Samuel Johnson, The Idler, No. 60, in MBW, pp. 497-98.

6 Johnson, The Rambler, No. 60, in ECEL, pp. 985-86.


8 Boswell, LSJE, p. 13.

9 Ibid., p. x.

10 Ibid., p. xv.

11 Ibid., p. 548.

12 Johnson, Preface to A Dictionary of the English Language, in MBW, p. 506.

13 Ibid. (Quotation is abridged.)


15 Ibid., p. 180, 11. 3-4.
CHAPTER IV

ORGANIC LEARNING

Throughout history some form of communication has accompanied man in his efforts to prevail. Communication has been part of man's cultural achievement, becoming perfected as man advanced. However, in today's technologically complex world there are many observers who fear that man's developing arts of communication will be overwhelmed by the burgeoning number of his tools. These critics believe that modern man evinces less and less interest in the exchange of thoughts through language, and they see him relying more and more on machines for extensive communication and on the most elementary forms of expression for his immediate needs and responses. Portents of the skeptics are dire: literacy and literature alike are threatened. They further conclude that the science of communication will eventually destroy the very intellect which created it. This, of course, would not only be a reversal of progress; it would mock the concept of progress itself, for catastrophe would be the ultimate end.

Despite these gloomy predictions, an ironic twist may have occurred to render them groundless and, indeed, to push literacy ahead. The science of communication may be performing a service for the ultimate good of mankind, for there are those who recognize that modern technology is largely
responsible for the unprecedented influx of unconventional students into our schools. It has been said that the history of man will be decided by the victory of either "education or catastrophe."¹ Neophyte students in college, unskilled in reading and writing, have created educational problems that are, as Horace has said, a "well-known thing."² But the science of communication by ushering these students into formal language-learning situations may be seen as serving the arts of communication, not mocking them, and perpetuating the mind of man.

In the beginning of the educational process, students and teachers are generally expectant and hopeful. Free choice has brought them together to examine some body of knowledge. If the subject is literature, however, frequently the students feel unable to cope with it, and, before long, despair sets in. The English language that they think they know seems to have turned on them. They become frustrated and cannot learn. In fact, their language has failed them because they have come unarmed for literature; for, all too often, words and ideas at their command fall into what Frye calls "a 'low,' a colloquial or familiar style" of speech which limits accordingly their abilities to understand language and to


express themselves in writing. "This is often thought of as merely substandard or illiterate speech, but perhaps it should be regarded simply as a separate rhetorical style, appropriate for some situations and not for others."³

Further, many of the students, Frye indicates, are equipped with merely some version of "bastard speech," as opposed to "genuine speech":

Genuine speech is the expression of a genuine personality. Because it takes pains to make itself intelligible, it assumes that the hearer is a genuine personality too—in other words, wherever it is spoken it creates a community. Bastard speech is not the voice of the genuine self: it is more typically the voice of what I shall here call the ego. The ego has no interest in communication, but only in expression. . . . It can express only the generic: food, sex, possessions, gossip, aggressiveness and resentments. Its natural affinity is for the ready-made phrase, the cliché, because it tends to address itself to the reflexes of its hearer, not to his intelligence or emotions.⁴

Literature, on the other hand, uses the language of high style and addresses "the world man exists in and participates in through his imagination. It is the world in which our imaginations move and have their being while we are also living in the 'real' world, where our imaginations find the ideals that they try to pass on to belief and action, where they find the vision which is the source of both the dignity and the joy of life."⁵


⁴Ibid., pp. 41-42.

⁵Ibid., p. 156.
There is, then, an organic interdependence between the language that is naturally used and the depth and quality of ideas that can be understood or expressed by the speakers of that language. Unconventional students with "low" or "bastard" speech vary considerably in their educational and cultural backgrounds; but as Kenneth Koch remarks about the "so-called deprived or disadvantaged children" he has taught to write poetry, "The tragedy . . . is not that these children lack imagination, but that it has been repressed and depressed. . . ."\(^6\) Koch feels that "the power to see the world in a strong, fresh and beautiful way is a possession of all children," but he also recognizes that their "desire to express that vision" can be lost if it is not encouraged to perform.\(^7\) "The great and terrible onset of self-consciousness," Koch writes, "seems to begin around the fifth grade, and if children haven't written before that they may at first be a bit diffident about it. By the sixth grade they are more so, and by then some students have already decided that poetry is not for them. . . ."\(^8\) Obviously, the creativity of the adult world can be seriously affected when natural sensuous expression is repressed in the young. Indeed, Susan Sontag, in criticizing our contemporary culture, finds


\(^7\)Ibid.

\(^8\)Ibid., p. 43.
that there has been "a steady loss of sharpness in our sensory experience. . . . What is important now is to recover our senses. We must learn to see more, to hear more, to feel more."9 The "genuine self" of humanity is easily submerged.10 Somehow, it must be led forth, raised up--educated; language is the means man must use to realize the potentiality of his present and future life.

If language, which is inherent to man, is the device through which he learns, both oral and written language must be involved in a method of learning which would serve to stimulate the creative understanding of words and strive to release the imagination. It must allow for natural growth and change in the attitudes and skills of the students. It must be fundamental to their needs. There must be structure and organization in the material and the process, for learning must evolve as a unified, organic whole.

The Literary Commune proposed in this thesis would use language in three distinct ways. Scripts for the Writers Theatre would adapt the written language of literature for oral performance to encourage the acquisition of unfamiliar, high styles of speech. English classes would stress creative writing to stimulate the active practice of literature by students unused to communicating their thoughts. Private, 


10Frye, p. 41.
silent reading, the peak of educational achievement, would be emphasized the least. More personal than speaking or writing, its natural growth occurs as language is acquired; silent reading assignments would therefore suggest the scope of material available rather than require a set amount. Assignments would consider the developing achievement of individuals, not demand the same knowledge from all.

Interpretation scripts for the Writers Theatre would incorporate both group and individual performance work. The scripts would progress in complexity and demands, but they would continually strive for clarification of the written language of literature through the oral performances. As Don Geiger observes in *The Sound, Sense, and Performance of Literature*, "oral interpretation is especially useful, then, in improving the 'art of reading.'" And, although he agrees that oral interpretation is but one aspect of literary study, he outlines the unique qualities of the art:

Perhaps, rather than referring to Oral Interpretation, we would more accurately think of it as Primary Interpretation of literature, for it is based on a faith that the words in which they are written can explain much of what poems and stories are and mean. Thus, while the textual critic can isolate and describe the "tone" of the poem, the oral interpreter, as primary critic, can give the tone itself, in all its modifications. If close reading can recognize, let us say, the "massive weight of the line," interpretation can reproduce the full, particular effect. If the author's words alone may fully put his images before our inner eye, the interpreter, in sounding them, may nevertheless articulate their emotional correlatives.  

---

By familiarizing themselves with the high language of literature through oral practice, students would assume, by adoption, rhetorical styles other than their own. It is hoped that when they communicate in writing, they could assimilate into their own practice the language and ideas of those styles. The students—first readers, then writers—would use analysis and imitation in the classical tradition to develop organically their language and their thought.

Because the scope of this thesis is exploratory and suggestive, stressing the possible role of oral interpretation in English classes, it has not attempted a detailed discussion of the creative writing assignments that would accompany the oral performance work. However, a separate study of this area, based upon the practices and philosophies of teachers of creative writing in numerous colleges and universities, could prove a valuable adjunct to the present study in the planning of a practicable literary commune.

It is hoped that the proposal presented in these pages might contribute to the development and understanding of "the language of humanity itself";\textsuperscript{12} for as the mind that wrote "the young Dawn showed again with her rosy fingers"\textsuperscript{13} is echoed by the mind who writes "Dawn's rose is melting an

\textsuperscript{12}Frye, p. 156.

old frost moon, so endless imaginations "reach into the silence" after the words that express the ever-recurring thoughts and feelings of mankind.


A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


Arnold, Stephen. Director of Communication Skills Program, Northern Illinois University. Unpublished form letter to Dr. E. Robert Black, Head of Speech and Journalism Department, Northwestern State University of Louisiana, 12 April 1972.


Johnson, Rudy, "Rhythm is Used to Teach Pupils to Find Their Own Beat in Life." The New York Times, 2 May 1971, Sec. 1, p. 54.


"New Grading Policy/No F's in English." *The Shreveport Times,* 4 April 1972, Sec. C, p. 3.


Robers, Donald O. "Teaching Writing Skills." *Louisiana English Journal*, 12 (Fall 1972), 36-40.

Sauls, Charles, "The Relationship of Selected Factors to the Recreational Reading of Sixth Grade Students." *Louisiana Schools*, 49 (March 1972), 32-34.


