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A study of the teaching of literature and the place of the literature of Iowa in the secondary English curriculum

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Abstract

To a teacher of English in an Iowa high school, it is amazing to find the literature of Iowa is not included in the English curriculum. Anthologies may include a short story by Hamlin Garland or one by Ruth Suckow, but often students are unaware these are Iowa authors. Even the history of Iowa is mandated in the Iowa curriculum. The omission of Iowa literature is disturbing, especially when a wide variety of other literary works are used.

A STUDY OF THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE AND THE PLACE OF THE LITERATURE OF IOWA IN THE SECONDARY ENGLISH CURRICULUM

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CONTENTS

Page

Chapter

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

To a teacher of English in an Iowa high school, it is amazing to find the literature of Iowa is not included in the English curriculum. Anthologies may include a short story by Hamlin Garland or one by Ruth Suckow, but often students are unaware these are Iowa authors. Even the history of Iowa is mandated in the Iowa curriculum. The omission of Iowa literature is disturbing, especially when a wide variety of other literary works are used.

Works ranging from Greek myths to Camus' The Stranger represent world literature. Works of American authors range from Emerson to Vonnegut, and from Phyllis Wheatley to James Baldwin; but there is no Herbert Quick or James Hearst. Works representative of the ethnic and regional diversity of America are in our texts, but the literature of Iowa is absent from our classrooms.

Teachers of English have traditionally had a difficult job balancing components of a curriculum which must include instruction in language, literature, and composition. In fact, the teacher of English has been compared to a juggler, trying to balance the three traditional elements of the English curriculum. Traditionally, English has been considered to be a language-centered subject, but there continue to be differences of opinion on what this implies.

Reinforcement of the concept of English as a language-centered subject grew out of the Woods Hole Conference (1960). Jerome Bruner,

chairman of the conference, envisioned a spiral curriculum centered around basic structuring principles in each school subject. In English, the basic structuring principle was language (34:34). At first it was thought this meant linguistics would be the center of a modern language-centered discipline. To many teachers, however, this seemed merely a new name for an old-style study of grammar. In addition, since language study and composition are not content centered, both often turn to literature for their content. Linguistics lacked the philosophical and psychological rationale to place it in the center of the English curriculum (34:34).

A broadened concept of "language-centered" places literature at the center of the language sequence. Language theory based on the symbolic nature of language made the development of the imagination an educational imperative. As language shapes and symbolizes experience, imagination shapes language, and literature shapes or liberates the imagination (30:29). Through literature a reader shares experience and is presented a variety of value systems, and these experiences with literature become a part of the reader's experience which she/he brings to future encounters with literature and life (41:21). In these ways, literature helps the reader discover his role in the world and form his relations to others. In the process, linguistic imagination helps a human being come to terms with his world, and to a large extent, form his own identity. Language, imagination, and literature are central to both the human being and to the educational process (30:37).

In spite of the fundamental role of literature in education, it is in danger of losing its central position in the English curriculum.

In a period of restricted budgets and increased emphasis on students' standardized test scores, "back-to-basics" pressures mount to return English to a skill-oriented subject, relegating the study of literature to a minor position as a frivolous activity. Dr. Northup Frye assures us, however, literary education is not a frill:

> There's nothing more basic in education than entering into the general stream of articulateness in the English language which has become encapsulated in English literature. I'm very suspicious of any program that begins with "Back to . . ." It seems to be based on a pastoral myth in which people think of a little red school house in hazily ideal terms. Literary education is not a frill and not just a subject to be studied. It's the central part of what attaches an individual to his or her society (9:202).

Historically, literary instruction has been marked with controversy over what should be included in the curriculum. Periods of strict academic discipline in studying a body of literature, restricted to works having intrinsic value, have alternated with periods of student-centered instruction in which a wide range of literature was used to meet "life-adjustment" goals, or for literature appreciation. In spite of these extremes, the criteria for selecting works appropriate for classroom use has broadened considerably, in effect, democratizing the choice of selections.

The revolution in literary materials has resulted, to a great extent, because classroom teachers are aware that choice of selections often determines the success or failure of literary study. An increasing awareness of the symbolic nature of language and the central part literary imagination plays in identity formation--both for an individual and for ethnic consciousness--also helped widen the range of selections to include literature reflecting our multi-cultural society.

Still another factor influencing the increased variety of literary selections was the accelerated urbanization of America. As population shifted to the cities, traditional literature, often with rural settings and experiences, became increasingly difficult to teach to students whose personal experiences were far removed from the farm. Teachers searched for stories, poems, and novels reflecting the lives of the changing student population with growing interests in literature representing their own ethnic and racial groups and city life.

The search for selections to meet the widening scope of literary study has revealed whole fields of literature previously untapped as classroom resources. Perhaps the most obvious omission had been the writing of black authors, a rich source ignored for decades by white publishers and educators, without regard for its literary merits. This segment of American literature provides an important resource to the black student searching for cultural identification and to the white student often unaware of the true black experience in America. The inclusion of "black lit" has become such an integral part of the study of American literature that now few teachers would ignore such authors as Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, and Langston Hughes. The addition of literature written by black Americans proved to be so successful that literature reflecting other ethnic and racial groups soon followed (44:45).

A curious reversal occurs in the current focus on literature to provide urban settings for urban students; now the rural and small town minority finds its personal experiences ignored in literature texts prepared primarily for urban students. This situation is disturbing for

an English teacher in Iowa because it is difficult to build literary experiences upon students' everyday lives when the settings and symbols of their personal experience are missing from the literature. Just as women, or urban, black, and Chicano students need to read selections with which they can identify for personal development and for cultural identity, so do rural and small town students.

While some critics may consider literature with local settings too limiting in scope, one investigating the wide body of American literature as a whole would find almost all of it representative of a particular region or locality. Hamlin Garland, the only Iowan to write a book of literary criticism (1:58), strongly defended literature with local settings. Garland believed it was a true, local expression which gave life and literature infinite variety (17:26).

It seemed wise to conduct an investigation to determine whether the inclusion of the literature of Iowa in the secondary English curriculum could be made to further the traditional goals of literary instruction while following sound pedagogical principles.

In order to gain the necessary perspective on the problem and discover the basic issues involved in selecting works for literary study, a review of the historical trends in the teaching of literature was conducted. A summary of this review is presented in Chapter Two.

The history of literary instruction has been marked with controversy centering around the struggle between two opposing approaches to literature. One group viewed literature as a cultural tradition of artistic works to be mastered by the student through disciplined study. Their opponents viewed literary instruction as learning to use literature

to foster the personal growth of the student, usually resulting in reading for appreciation, or enjoyment. Their struggle provides insights into ways in which the criteria for selecting works for literary instruction broadened to include a wide variety of works.

A different side of the problem is presented by reviewing learning theories and empirical research to ascertain if the broadening of the curriculum to include the literature of Iowa is based on sound pedagogical principles. This review is presented in Chapter Three.

This review indicates selections of literature based on students' backgrounds can aid in the developmental process by building literary experiences necessary before advancing to works of increasing complexity more distant from the readers' everyday lives. Narrowing the distance between the reader and the text aids in improving reading comprehension and developing inference-making skills. Implications of the research indicate the importance of providing students with literature to provide the link between personal experience and literary experience.

Having established a justification for the inclusion of literature close to the readers' experience, the inclusion of the literature of Iowa is also justified. Chapter Four illustrates some of the ways in which Iowa literature can enhance literary study. After finding experiences from their everyday lives expressed in literary forms, students begin to realize all literature is a symbolic representation of life. This realization is the foundation for genuine literary experiences. With a developed linguistic imagination fostered through these experiences, students can find a significance in their lives otherwise often overlooked, and be led to contemplative, richer living.

In Chapter Five, recommendations are made for the addition of the literature of Iowa into the English curriculum with general suggestions for writing and speech activities as well as for literary study. Teachers of Iowa in disciplines other than English could also build on these principles and find ways to include creative works by Iowans in their curriculum. Critical studies on major Iowa authors and their works have only begun, and further work in this field is needed.

Chapter 2

THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE IN AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOLS- AN HISTORICAL REVIEW

An historical review of the teaching of literature in American secondary schools reveals that two major, opposing conceptions of literature affecting the selection of literary works for classroom study have competed for dominance. At any given time, one orientation has prevailed, only to be replaced by the other, and then returned to favor. The overall result of this struggle has been a broadening of the criteria for the selection of materials considered legitimate for classroom study.

One orientation views literature as an art form, a body of works to be mastered through disciplined study. With this view of literature, the text or body of literature receives primary consideration in the classroom. Literature is valued as a priceless heritage from the past, and the student's task is to learn about it through critical analysis of form and content. This conception limits the selections for study to classics which have been recognized over a period of time as outstanding examples of literature.

The opposing conception has the study of literature centering on the student, and selections of literary works for the classroom are matched as closely as possible with students' abilities and interests. Literature is not viewed as a body of works to be "mastered." The learning of literature shifts from learning <u>about</u> literature to learning to <u>use</u> literature as a source of experience and as a resource for personal growth (14:39). This second approach, for example, broadens the body of

literary works appropriate for study to include forms such as contemporary literature, ethnic literature, and the adolescnet novel, in addition to traditional literature.

Although the main purpose of this chapter is to trace trends influencing selection of literature in American secondary schools in the twentieth century, it is important first to consider the etymology of the term "literature," since how it is defined will have implications for how it ought to be studied.

The Conception of Literature as Art

In its broadest sense, "literature" can mean anything in print. In many modern theories of what literary scholarhsip is about, this assumption justifies a use of anything in print (45:16). Used in its broad meaning, "literature" also is used to refer to advertising literature or campaign literature. Historically, however, "literature" has been used to define writings in which some criterion of quality or value has been implied, regardless of subject material.

The use of two Latin root words has created confusion in tracing the early use of the word "literature." Although some scholars believed the term was first used in the nineteenth century, Wellek traced the use of the term to Cicero, who is claimed to have used it to imply a sense of literary culture and learning, and to writers in the second century A.D. who are said to have first used the term to indicate a body of writing (45:17).

During the Middle Ages the two Latin terms seem to have disappeared, only to reappear during the Renaissance. The resulting word was usually combined with an adjective to distinguish between secular and religious

writing or combined with an adjective of praise. By the seventeenth century, "belles lettres" emerged in France to denote grammar, eloquence, and poetry. The French term quickly spread to England where it emerged as the term "literature," used to denote "culture, erudition, or simply a knowledge of classical languages" (45:18). Boswell referred to "an Italian of considerable literature," indicating its use in the late seventeenth century to describe a person of knowledge. Evidence in writings of the early eighteenth century in France, Germany, and England reveals the shift in meaning to a body of writing. A book by Robert Chambers, published in 1836, was the first to be called A History of English Language and Literature (45:19).

From antiquity and into the Renaissance, literature was understood to include all writing of quality regardless of subject matter. Slowly during the eighteenth century a new view of literature as an art form emerged with the invention of the term "aesthetic" by Baumgarten and Kant's Critique of Judgment (1790), which gave formulas for distinguishing between what was beautiful, good, and true, and what was useful. An increased sense of the aesthetic developed, breaking the traditional link of arts and sciences. Forms of literature were also divided into poetry and imaginative prose, excluding rhetorical persuasion and historical narrative (45:21). The rising prestige of the novel also helped establish a concept of literature that permits judging literature for its artistic merit, parallel to the plastic arts and to music (45:21).

This view of literature as an aesthetic creation--an object to be valued for its intrinsic qualities--forms the traditional definition of literature on which the study of classics and great books is based. It

was used as the basis for the "New Criticism." This conception was later modified when increased understanding of language as fundamentally imaginative, and not prosaic, widened the scope of works considered as "literature."

Establishing English as a Discipline

To gain a basic overview of the history of teaching literature in secondary schools in the United States, Arthur A. Applebee's Tradition and Reform in the Teaching of English--A History (3) surpasses all other studies in its detailed and comprehensive presentation of the development of English as a discipline, and how groups with divergent goals for the teaching of English have taken turns influencing not only what was taught in the classroom, but how it was taught. This section of the present study draws heavily on the work of Applebee.

Three Traditions in English

By the 1890's, English as a major school subject in the United States was based on three traditions with respect to the goals of teaching English: (1) the ethical tradition, based on moral and cultural development; (2) the classical tradition, based on intellectual discipline and close study of the text; (3) the nonacademic tradition, based on enjoyment and appreciation of literary works. The ethical tradition was primarily used in the elementary grades, the classical tradition was emphasized in secondary schools and colleges, and the nonacademic tradition was basically reserved for extracurricular activities. Each of these traditions developed separately, and although they became merged into one discipline, each tradition continues to influence the choice of literary selections for study in contemporary classrooms.

Early developments in the ethical tradition can be traced to the Council of Mainz in 813 and to the "Book of Hours," printed ca.1450. Near the end of the sixteenth century, separate A.B.C. books and primers were combined to lower costs, combining instruction in reading and ethical heritage (3:1).

Three influential American texts continued this trend. The New England Primer, dating from 1686-1690, helped fulfill the needs of American colonists for a common catechism, yet successive editions reflected changing national concerns. Webster's Grammatical Institute, published in 1783 but used until 1900, helped secularize school materials by emphasizing patriotic as well as ethical themes. It reflected the Protestant ethic of thrift, honesty, love of God and country, and dedication to work. McGuffy's Readers, first published in 1836 and used extensively for over fifty years, continued with moral, patriotic, and Protestant ethic themes, but it also introduced selections of literary value in the fifth and sixth levels. These selections were usually fragments, but in spite of their literary value, the emphasis continued to focus on the mechanics of reading. These three texts helped provide, "a common heritage for a nation too young to have any other" (3:5). They also reinforced the sense that transmission of ethical and cultural heritage was one of the major goals of teaching literature.

The classical tradition of literary studies was based on the pedagogical theory of mental disciplines, especially memory and reason. The trouble with English as a language was its lack of rules and theory, making it too easy. Without an organized body of knowledge, it simply lacked the means to promote vigorous mental training. In the period between 1750 and 1865, however, scholars developed an analogy between

English and the study of classical languages. With a methodology inherited from such study of classical languages, English grammar became the first of English studies to emerge, mainly because it now had rules to be memorized. The resulting prescriptive tradition of grammar study led to a shift from studying a foreign language to correcting a native one, and eventually, this prescriptive approach to grammar also became the approach to literature.

Among the first literary selections in English included in the college curriculum were Milton's Paradise Lost and Pope's Essay on Man both of which are basically Latinate forms. Even so, English studies gradually began to appear at the college level, studied mainly as selections for oratory or rhetoric rather than as literary forms. At the time, most colleges were offering no English selections in their curriculum; early courses in English literature were offered by Dartmouth in 1822 and by Amherst in 1827. By the later 1840's, however, literary history had emerged as an important part of English studies. An Outline of English Literature, an early text published in England by Thomas Budge Shaw, was indicative of the classical approach of memorization and study. It contained no selections of literature--only the historical outline of its development.

The tradition of teaching appreciation for literature developed outside the traditional curriculum, giving it a place of secondary importance. Since the classical curriculum ruled out a study of political and philosophical issues or a study of contemporary literature, debate clubs and literary societies were formed, often as extra curricular activities sanctioned by a college. A second class stigma for appreciative studies of literature was also fostered by their use in young ladies'

finishing schools, where the "belles lettres" approach was considered appropriate in the belief young ladies lacked the rigorous academic skills needed to study the classics. By the time Oxford University allowed English in its final examination in 1873, it was for a "pass" degree only, since honors students still did their work in Latin (3:13).

English is Established as a Discipline

Before English was accepted as a major academic discipline, it had to develop a methodology rigorous enough to win academic support, and it had to overcome the suspicion that imaginative literature posed a threat to the moral well-being of readers. According to Applebee, these two major objections were overcome through the "new" techniques of German philologists in the late eighteenth century who believed moral well-being could come from a redefinition of culture. Upheavals in society caused by the scientific and industrial revolutions were viewed as evidence a purely rational approach to society had failed, and corrective measures could be provided by a return to cultural values for moral strength. The creation of this redefinition, then, was seen as the function of the artist who, according to the Romantic concept, had a higher type of knowledge than the average person. Since national culture consisted of the cumulative products of the artistic imagination, "culture" became a body of knowledge and a tradition to be valued and studied. Shelley wrote: "Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb" (3:22).

Philology gave English a justification. The emphasis on tracing the development of literature from Anglo Saxon to Chaucer through the development of modern writings continued the transposition from a study of the

classics to a modern curriculum (3:25). In America, the writings of the New England literary elite--including Emerson, Irving, Hawthorne, Bryant, Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell, and Holmes--lent support to the ethical tradition in the teaching of literature. With the sanction of philology, teaching of literature spread quickly through American colleges and universities. At the same time, nevertheless, a group of influential teachers whose goal was appreciation of literature formed a dissenting tradition which contributed to the later rejection of the collegiate model by American secondary schools.

Tremendous growth in American public education in the period of 1874-1911 was influential in the development of college entrance requirements which emerged when increasing numbers of students presented admission problems for colleges (28:40). Discussions among representatives of secondary schools and colleges on mutual concerns led to two basic approaches for preparing students for college and screening students for college admission.

The "organic" rationale, named by Fred N. Scott, first President of the National Council of Teachers of English, recognized the mutual dependency of colleges and secondary schools. This approach consisted of an accrediting system formualted jointly by colleges and high schools. Then university faculty members visited high schools and examined the faculty, students, and curriculum. Students graduating from accredited schools were admitted to colleges belonging to the accrediting system without further qualifications. This system was widely accepted in the West and Middle West. The "organic" rationale usually allowed considerable freedom in curriculum, methods, and materials--especially in English (28:41).

In the East, however, a second rationale developed which Scott named the "feudal" concept. Instead of using a cooperative effort, this system was based on a more arbitrary set of admission standards set by each university. After 1871, rigid examinations were required of all applicants at Harvard and Yale (28:42). These examinations, and similar exams required by other colleges, proved to be a moving force in the study of literature. At Harvard University, requirements of 1873-74 called for literature to be used as a subject for composition in entrance exams when many candidates did well enough in ancient languages, but wrote poorly in English. Although the subject tested was to be composition and not knowledge of literature, this required the publication of a list of literary selections because previous candidates had complained they were asked to write on topics about which they had no information. After publication of a preparation list by Harvard, eighty leading colleges published lists. It was these lists of books required as preparation for college entrance exams which were attacked at the secondary level (24:7).

The wide diversity found in lists from various colleges resulted in confusion at the secondary level. By 1879 a cry for uniformity of exams at a regional level led to a Conference of New England Colleges, and later, in May of 1894, to the National Conference on Uniform Entrance Requirements in English. Difficulty caused by entrance requirements was not limited to English, and in 1892 the National Education Association appointed a Committee of Ten to study the problem in a series of area conferences, one of which was on English.

The Committee's full report in 1899 announced the position: "the study of the English language and its literature is inferior in importance

to no study in the curriculum: (28:42). To facilitate the college entrance exams, however, the Committee recommended a list of graded and classified books to be studied in high school.

Many teachers of English in secondary schools reacted negatively to the implied domination by the colleges. They charged that high schools were being turned into "mere coaching schools where candidates for college admission receive the lion's share of attention" (28:44). The belief that the chief purpose of secondary school English was to prepare students to enter college was detrimental to the teacher, the pupil, and the course of study, they charged, and a required list of books failed to take into consideration the wide interests of high school students. "The requirements in English are admirably calculated to put a summary end to the love of discursive reading on which intelligence and taste so largely depend" (28:45)

The continuing controversy over college entrance requirements compelled the National Education Association to appoint a national council of teachers of English to report to the 1911 convention. This group officially organized as The National Council of Teachers of English, and English became the first subject to be represented by its own permanent national teachers' organization. Leaders of the new NCTE believed that current approaches to the teaching of English were outdated and tried to persuade teachers throughout the country to consider a larger number of literary works for classroom study than the small group of English classics. In the first volume of the English Journal this series of assertions appeared:

> . . . frank recognition of our fundamental aim in teaching literature will revolutionize our methods. In the first place, our choice of books will be determined, not on the basis of a complete survey of the field of literature, but by the tastes and abilities of the boys and girls at the given stage of their progress. We shall not require them to amble along on Chaucer's palfrey, bored by the Clerk, the Squire, and the Nonne Preeste, when they are at home in the camps of outlaws and the cabins of buccaneers. We shall discard epochs and classifications and seek always the best that will appeal to the interests of the class. We shall conform to the doctrine that education is the process of developing the child from what he is to what he ought to be rather than to our recent practice of leading him from where he isn't to where he doesn't want to go.
>
> On this principle our choice of literature will be much broader than might be supposed, because our method will be so changed that much that has seemed impossible will be found most interesting (26:12).

The battle between colleges and high schools continued, but by 1916 entrance exams were divided into two sections; one intensive literature exam from a list and one comprehensive literature exam for which no list was published. Finally, in 1931, the lists were abandoned (3:54).

The Reorganization of Secondary English

The reorganization movement in the teaching of English was part of the progressive movement broadening the curriculum and tailoring education to the different kinds and classes of students entering United States' schools in the early part of the twentieth century. The movement of secondary English leaders away from college-oriented study of the classics was well-timed, for by 1910, conditions were right for reorganization (13:50). One factor helping bring about progressive education was the large increase in the school population. High school enrollment doubled from 200,000 in 1890 to 400,000 in 1900; and doubled again to 800,000 by 1915 (3:45).

During this period, Jane Addams indicted American schools for isolating themselves from the lives of immigrant children who were part

of this growing student body. With John Dewey's educational philosophy as a molding force, the concern of progressive educators became the social and ethical development of students. Dewey rejected the idea of a cultural elite and advocated vocational, business-like English skills. His belief that all subjects have cultural value hastened the rejection of traditional literature, but in their reforming enthusiasm, according to Robert S. Fay, the progressives failed to see value in the tradition which they attacked. Mental training and self-discipline were slighted in an attempt to make English relevant and fun:

> The Council's enthusiasm for what was American and contemporary produced some unfortunate results in the area of literature. They seldom mentioned the advantages of studying traditional masterpieces. Rather, they stressed American and contemporary literature because they were easy and more obviously and directly relevant. Scribner's Magazine was too readily placed on an equal with Shakespeare, and the speeches of Wilson were often treated with the same careful attention as Burke's Speech on Conciliation and Washington's Farewell Address (13:53).

The tradition of appreciation of literature and focus on the student was also promoted by Dora Smith:

> We can begin by determining to approach literature as it is approached by intelligent, cultured people in everyday life. We can put pleasure in reading first; we can aim constantly at enjoyment and the development of hunger for more. We can test the success of our program by the desire of boys and girls to continue more reading of the same sort under their own direction. We can associate books with ever-widening interests and increased understanding of human nature and experience . . . we can at last begin to break with the traditional program of literary chronology and techniques . . . and relate literature to the limitless interests of life itself (3:132).

This shift in emphasis from themes of literature to themes important to adolescents brought forth the beginning of a new genre, with Dora Smith's course in adolescent literature at the University of Minnesota in the early 1930's (3:156).

With the progressive movement and child-centered curriculum, the focus of literature study in the 1930's, 1940's, and into the 1950's was on

the instrumental value of literature. Literature was lost in units on crime, safety, war and peace, poverty and slums, or farm problems. Imaginative literature, if used at all, was used for solving social and personal problems in "social adjustment" types of guidance programs (31:63).

Two separate studies which illustrate the extremes of the reorganization movement were conducted by Dora Smith (1941) and by Wilford Aikin (1942). The Smith study, Evaluating Instruction in Secondary School English, showed the emphasis of instruction put on quantity of reading rather than quality, and a preference for current materials in the belief a study of classics was "inevitably inappropriate for study in the high school" (31:62). Aikin's In the Story of the Eight-Year Study was a report undertaken by the Progressive Education Association, testing progressive education as preparation for college. Aikin supported an "ideal" curriculum in which the study of literature was not mentioned (31:63).

Wilbur Hatfield was chairman of the National Council of Teachers of English committee for curriculum development in 1935 which stated the philosophy of the progressive movement in English instruction in The Experience Curriculum. In an interview in 1965, Hatfield acknowledged, "We went too far" (13:53).

The excesses of the life adjustment movement brought about a reaction which questioned the basic principles of progressivism. When concern for the child had led to school programs with no clear purpose or structuring principles, critics thought principles could be reestablished by returning to a focus on the subject matter.

Literature as Exploration

Before turning attention to the forces bringing a return to an academic approach to the study of literature, it is important to note the publication in 1938 of Louise Rosenblatt's Literature as Exploration. In her book, which many readers regarded as an attempt to apply to literature the theories of John Dewey (31:61), Rosenblatt drew a distinction between experience through literature and experience of or with literature. She viewed literature as a means of encouraging an intimate, personal response; and although such a response was often difficult to arouse, it was "an absolutely necessary condition for sound literary judgment" (40:87). "It is this response which must be challenged, refined, enlarged--by the process of reflection upon the response and upon the elements in the work which provoked it" (3:124-4). The student would read widely and would learn to deal critically and intellectually with the emotions aroused. Only after the exploration of the initial response would biographical or historical material be introduced (31:61). The goal of the study of literature, in Rosenblatt's view, is to learn to respond maturely and to progressively more complex writings. Eventually, Literature as Exploration would have great influence in focusing literary instruction on student response to literature, but ironically, at the time of its publication the academic reform movement was gaining momentum, bringing a returned focus on literature as art.

The Academic Reform

Literature study shifted away from the student to focus once more on the text during the academic reform. Two of the forces helping

bring about a return to an academic approach to the study of literature were the study of language as a vehicle for conveying meaning (semantics), and the "New Critics" who used semantics to shift the focus of literary study to concentrate on form. Of special importance in the semantic, non-literary aspect of language study was S.I. Hayakawa's Language in Thought and Action, published in 1941. "Teachers of literature immediately grasped the implication that reading is hard work, full of obstacles to be overcome on the way to appreciation and enjoyment" (3:159).

The New Criticism

"The New Criticism"--whose spokesman was Northrup Frye, but which was drawn on writing of Wellek and Warren, I.A. Richards, and T.S. Eliot--gave the basic direction of curriculum reform. The New Criticism was an intensive approach, responding to a literary work solely as an object complete in itself, deliberately ignoring everything but the object. Not the writer's life, the times in which the work was written, or even the subject of the work itself are considered. In approaching literature in this way the question arises, "What features of the work will grip our minds so closely we do not slide off into extraliterary interests? The primary answer to that question is: the structure" (29:27). Literature was to be analyzed through convention and archetypes, giving students conceptual knowledge that would transfer to similar but more complex literature.

The implication of the New Criticism was that literature offered special problems requiring close reading and study before it could be appreciated. The concept of literature as an art form, to be closely scrutinized with great effort on the part of the student, meant much time

was spent in detailed study. Only the "best" works of literature were considered worthy of the time, effort, and skills involved.

Students were usually required to read books from lists of required titles--books everyone should be familiar with in order to be considered "educated." It is interesting to note, however, that in a National Study of High School English directed by James R. Squire and Roger K. Applebee, from a list of fifty "significant" titles, only two were found in all schools studied (3:213). The concept of a standard body of classics studied by all seems to have proven to be impossible to put into practice in the classroom.

The Squire and Applebee study also reported that English instruction varied greatly, governed mainly by the extent to which an individual teacher responded to changing emphases in professional journals and by his colleagues. Development of the curriculum proceeded to the extent teachers felt confident of their professional skills; teachers feeling unsure of these skills continued to cling to familiar methods and materials (3:215).

School Critics

A group of school critics also helped change the direction of American schools back to an academic orientation. Among these scholarly critics was the President of the University of Chicago, Robert M. Hutchins, who prescribed for study a body of knowledge summed up in the "Great Books." Mortimer Adler's How to Read a Book (1941), promoted his belief that books could lead the way to a decent human life and to clear thinking. "Adler in the end differed from the progressives he was criticizing on only one important point: what should be read to achieve these goals" (3:186).

Still another critic proposing the "Great Books" was Mark Van Doren, who believed the progressives had failed. He saw a need for a fixed program "which no child may evade" (3:186). James B. Conant attacked the NCTE, charging that reading was not a leisure time activity but a difficult and disciplined subject. John Dewey became everyone's scapegoat.

Response to Sputnik

The discontent with the progressive movement was the harbinger of the sweeping reassessment of education which followed the October, 1957, launching of Sputnik which was viewed as the successful result of an educational system superior to our own (7:51). The launching of Sputnik stimulated Congress to boost American schools as part of the defense effort. A large outlay of government funds stimulated American education to develop new ideas and new programs. James B. Conant's plan to reorganize American high schools provided for more rigorous programs in basic subjects, including English, where more emphasis was put on composition and less on literary study. In his plan for academic improvement, Vice Admiral Rickover concentrated on mathematics and science and placed English in a secondary position.

The academic reform included recognition of the academically talented by providing accelerated programs of advanced placement and early admission to college. In English, preparation of talented students for early admission to college necessitated that high schools copy the textual analysis and literary criticism modeled after the New Critics, since these were a basic part of the College Entrance Examination. Once more, concern for talented students brought back the influence of college upon high school English programs (3:191).

Dissatisfactions with high school curriculum culminated in the "Basic Issues Conferences" held in New York City in 1958, less than a year after the launching of Sputnik. Here English was viewed again as a body of knowledge to be preserved, not as a set of skills or as a means for individual adjustment or guidance. The participants agreed upon thirty-five basic issues facing English teachers, including curriculum reform. They reinforced the concept of the study of specific works whose sequence would be determined by the subject matter instead of by the needs of the student.

Project English

With the National Defense Education Act concerned basically with improvement of science and mathematics programs, teachers of English attempted to get government and public support for their discipline. Publicity about inadequately prepared English teachers was illustrated with data showing that only 800 English graduate students had received government financial aid while 40,800 science and mathematics teachers had received such help (3:201). In 1961, Congress authorized funds for the development of the English curriculum in a program called "Project English" (22:29).

Rather than a fundamental rethinking of English instruction, Project English centered on organization of the curriculum to give shape to the subject matter. Models of instruction developed at Project English Centers showed an attempt to upgrade tastes in the selection of literature, to model the high school class after college classes in literary criticism, and to implement discovery learning. While only a few schools copied the model completely, the spirit of the reform movement--high academic standards, discipline, excellence, and inductive methodology--

pervaded high schools. With Project English the entire English teaching profession, from grade school through graduate school, was unified for the first time (43:39-40).

While professional leaders formulated academic programs for English, a counter movement began to offer instruction more in keeping with the progressive movement (3:225). "A return to rigid, academic standards was simply not satisfying to the needs of students or to their teachers" (7:52). New studies in language, and political and cultural developments in the nation helped speed the "humanizing" of the classroom and "democratizing" of the literary programs. The counter culture rising out of the tumultous events of the 1960's questioned the materialism of American values and defied its institutions which treated individuals impersonally. While Project English did link theory and practice in some meaningful ways, the counter movement called for relevance and sensitivity to human needs.

The Humanitarian Period

National English leaders did not respond to this counter movement until the mid-1960's. In 1965 the NCTE Taskforce on Teaching English to Disadvantaged reported that literature programs had, indeed, been neglected during the period of emphasis on reading skills and grammar workbooks, and were on a "shaky foundation" (3:226). Applebee assesses the problem as "slavish adherence to inappropriate courses of study" (3:227).

Darwin Turner identified four issues in American society which brought about the change to humanistic education and the inclusion of new literary selections to the English classroom:

> (1) awareness that America denied the American dream to some groups of its citizens; (2) awareness of the contrast between America's violence and its protestations of justice; (3) a quest for new values; and (4) a liberalized policy and practice of morality and language (44:44).

Attention was turned to the literature of black Americans, and interest in this "new" literature was followed by literature from many other groups. Teachers of English began to become keenly aware of the earlier exclusion of the writings of blacks, Chicanos, American Indians, and women from the English curriculum.

The British Model

In the period of change from an academic to a humanitarian orientation in the classroom, American teachers of English turned to British schools which offered a "functioning alternative to the academic model" (3:229). When the president of the British teachers of English attended an NCTE convention, a joint meeting of British and American teachers was planned. This was the Anglo-American Conference, the Dartmouth Seminar of 1966 which proved to be a milestone in the teaching of English.

The British Model focused not on the demands of the discipline, but on the personal and linguistic growth of the child, much as the American Progressive movement had done. In the study of literature, the British schools gave little attention to close critical analysis of the text, to genre, or to literary periods and chronology. Instead, the emphasis was on theme and guided individualized reading to accomodate the development of the personal response to literature. Another obvious contrast to American schools was the use of improvised drama in British schools both as a means of studying literature and of personal development.

American reaction to the British model was that it appeared to be "fragmented, uncritical, antiliterary, yet often explosive, engaging, and exciting" (3:231).

Conferees at the Darmouth Conference proposed three basic ways to revitalize the teaching of literature: to consider the literature and literary traditions which students bring to school, to demand an authentic response, and to include written and oral responses to literature by having students write and tell stories (43:41).

American English programs used the British model to revitalize and humanize American classrooms. A major change in American high schools after the Dartmouth Conference was the growth of elective literature programs. An extensive evaluation of electives in English conducted by George Hillocks in 1972, found them to be the most widely accepted of "recent" changes in the teaching of literature (43:41). Electives were an important innovation in the teaching of literature because they helped make possible the teaching of a wide variety of literary works.

"Literature" is Redefined

Rethinking of the function and meaning of literary study helped reinforce the broadening of the criteria for works suitable for classroom use. A reaction against the narrow concept of literature as defined by the New Critics was partially responsible for these concepts. New insights into language theory also played a role in the rethinking of "literature."

Literature as Memorable Discourse

A modification of the New Critics' definition of literature as an aesthetic creation was proposed by Robert A. Hall, Jr. in 1979. He agrees with the understanding of literature as a work showing excellence in both content and form. He disagrees with the New Critics, however, thinking they went too far in excluding the effect of the work on the hearer or reader, and the work's relationship to the community. In fact, it is the relationship between literature and community which is crucial in his definition of literature as "memorable discourse" (18:94).

Hall's definition of literature originates in concepts of language formulated by Martin Joos. Joos argued that in every society known to history or anthropology, with one exception, there are some discourses which the members of that society evaluate positively and which they insist on having repeated from time to time, basically unchanged (18:93). Hall builds upon this idea by first explaining that the exception is our own Western social order, in which the discourses most valued by the literary specialists tend to be the most despised by the laymen. He also amends Joos' definition by qualifying it to read "at least one or more members" of society agreeing on a positive evaluation of discourse in order to recognize the complexity of modern society in which different groups have varying, and often opposing evaluations. The repetition of a work, or rereading, is not limited to its literal sense in Hall's theory. "Rereading" may also involve rehearing in one's memory. In other words, such a text is, for that person, memorable and constitutes a work of literature.

To Hall, then, the text itself is not a work of art, but "an approximated indication of how the reperforming or respeaking of the work is to be carried out" (18:93). Using Hall's definition of literature, the task of the literary scholar is not to tell people what is memorable (and hence great literature), but to find out what the speakers of a language consider memorable, and why. Unlike the New Critics who prescribed works to be studied, Hall's definition points the way to a greater emphasis on the effect a work has on the reader, broadening the range of works defined as literature.

Literature as a Humanity

Albert William Levi finds neither the New Critics nor the sociological movements of criticism which preceded and followed the new criticism a valid approach to the study of literature. Levi is emphatic in denouncing literature reduced to an indicator of social history or a weapon to secure social justice. He also finds fault in the New Critics' insistence on isolating literature from its social context, reducing the study of a text to its semantic level. He believes these opposing views fragment methodology, and cannot be synthesized. Levi proposes a sense of totality can be achieved only by viewing literature as a humanity, not as a rigid subject matter or a body of information to be learned, but as a civilizing skill--ways of organizing and interpreting experience (25:53). Such a view is consistent with the historical view of the humanities, Levi asserts, for the shift from viewing literary tradition as ways of "doing, feeling, thinking, and valuing" to the transmission of literary artifacts resulted from historical accident (25:51).

Levi divides the humanities into the three divisions of: "the arts of communication (the languages and literatures); the arts of

continuity (history); and the arts of criticism (philosophy)" (25:53). The arts of communication are founded on the belief that language can never be merely private. "The identity of the individual, the realities of social life, and our perceptions of the cosmos as a whole, are reflected in language" (25:53). Communication, therefore, is rooted in the human quest for expression and response in "our determination to be and in our passion to share experience" (25:53). The art of continuity is founded on our search for roots. "One relevant and important human need is to search for and to find roots with which one may identify--to establish or discover a 'tradition' into which one falls" (25:54). The arts of criticism are activities through which we clarify our meanings, identify our values, and provide standards for how we ought to think and reason (logic), act and judge behavior of others (ethics), and how we ought to appreciate (aesthetics).

Levi then uses the three divisions of the humanities as a means of examining a text in a unified strategy; for any method which does not use this full range of the humanistic spectrum "is seriously flawed" (25:55). Applied to a study of literature, the text is viewed as communication, as history, and as philosophy.

In considering literature as communication, questions of language, structure, and style are raised. Levi believes these three categories of communication are interrelated, but they do constitute the dimensions of literature as communication. Literature as continuity raises questions of date, situation, and audience. Literature as philosophy raises questions of attitude, values, and message. According to Levi, these categories have raised the relevant questions required to make the study of literature a valuable experience (25:60).

Literature and Imagination

A significant statement by James E. Miller, Jr. (30), published in 1967, helps explain the basic reconsiderations of the nature of language and literature and the ways they relate to learning. The effect was to help broaden the literary curriculum.

In the traditional way, language was regarded as a "logical system-originated and elaborated primarily by man's rational faculty and learned by him basically for the purpose of communicating thought" (3:127). With such a narrow prosaic view of language, practical courses such as Business Letter Writing were emphasized while "impractical" literature courses were considered as a refined and decorative use of language, but not as essential. This pragmatic view of the nature of language was dispelled by a wide range of scholars: "The genesis of language is not to be sought in the prosaic, but in the poetic side of life " (Otto Jespersen). ". . . language is primarily a vocal actualization of the tendency to see realities symbolically " (Edward Sapir). "The transformation of experience into concepts, not the elaboration of signals and symptoms, is the motive of language " (Susanne K. Langer).

This "new" concept of language places language as the center of human existence and experience and should be the center of "any defensible curriculum, and that imaginative verbal experience (especially literature) should be at the heart of the language sequence" (30:29). Miller agrees with Frye that the major goal of language instruction, with literature at its core, will focus on developing the imagination and the creative process through composition and imaginative reading.

Miller suggests a modern literature teacher in high school will concentrate on two goals. One is to meet each student where she/he is,

and the second is to provide the experiences that will grow into a lasting commitment to literature. To do this, classroom experience must reduce the distance between the students' everyday lives and the printed page. The instructor must know a wide range of types of literature, "infinite variety," and constantly experiment to try new works and to discard those which refuse to come to life. Once the students are imaginatively committed, "drawn to the world of books by a great or even terrible hunger," the teacher's responsibility is to lead them to literature of greater complexity (30:32).

"Efferent" and "Aesthetic" Reading

In her recent book, The Reader, the Text, the Poem (1978), Louise Rosenblatt sidesteps the perennial problem of defining literature. Rather than asking whether a text is an aesthetic or non-aesthetic form, Rosenblatt asks, "What does the reader do in these different kinds of reading?"

In "nonaesthetic reading" the reader focuses on what will remain after the reading. What information will be carried away as a result of the reading? Rosenblatt calls this "efferent reading." In "aesthetic reading," in contrast, the reader's attention is directed on what he is living through as he reads the text. These two stances of the reader determine what is aesthetic and what is nonaesthetic reading. The text itself does not answer the question, for the same text may be nonaesthetic reading for one reader, and aesthetic experience for another, or it may be both simultaneously. Whether a reader is absorbed by The Hardy Boys or King Lear, the text and reader may give rise to a literary work of art. Conversely, if a reader fails to respond to the words of Keats or Shakespeare, aesthetic reading has not been evoked (41:27).

Earlier, Rosenblatt had advocated that a teacher help create situations which foster an active relationship between reader and text. An identical or standard literary diet for all students is rejected in favor of a wide range of instructional texts and works of literature in order to accommodate variations from group to group and individual differences within the group. The choice of works chosen will be guided by an understanding of "pupils" background, level of maturity, major interests, social difficulties and aspirations" (39:69).

The Response-Centered Curriculum

In recent years, the focus of secondary English has moved from the subject to the learner. Through the pioneer work of Louise Rosenblatt, Alan Purves, and Arthur Applebee "we have begun to understand readers' interaction with and responses to literature" (14:39).

In a response-centered approach to the teaching of literature, the text and reader are equally important. Thus, the extremes of earlier approaches are avoided. Although the text is a necessary condition, it remains an object of paper and ink until some reader responds to it. While the reader brings to the text his past experience in the creative act of reading, the reader cannot ignore elements in the verbal patterns and cannot project unrelated elements to an interpretation of the text (41:15). Alan Purves explains the response-centered curriculum in this way:

> At the center of the curriculum are not the works of literature, those collections of words in print or in sound wave, or the individual psyche with its neurological movements and its constantly changing psychological states and constantly modifying sets of images and concepts . . . but all those lines connecting the two. The mind as it meets the book. The response. That is the center of a curriculum in literature. Treat those lines carefully, or the book will become dead and the mind will retreat into itself. But treat those lines and you will have a response-centered curriculum (36:27).

Another pioneer in studying the reader's response to literature is James Britton whose paper, "Response to Literature," was presented at the Dartmouth Conference. His book Growth Through English (1967) helped lay the foundation for a response-centered curriculum.

Britton believes that literature, as a construct of language, gives form to experience, and it is in contemplating this form that a reader gets satisfaction as if looking back on an actual experience. The development of response to literature can best be described, Britton continues, as "an increasing sense of form" (5:4). Naive responses to literature can be developed as the reader learns to appreciate a more complex pattern of events, finds satisfaction in patterns less directly related to expectations, and appreciates forms of language--syntax, rhythm, and images. Through this greater sense of form, one can find satisfaction in a greater range and diversity of works, but an attempt to hurry this process through the use of literary criticism must be delayed at least until a reader is into Piaget's stage of concrete operations, or interaction between the work and the reader is destroyed (5:5).

Britton believed a teacher can encourage a developed sense of form by encouraging satisfaction as an incentive to reading, although he admits that "reading for enjoyment" is somewhat misleading when applied to the most demanding type of reading. A teacher must foster both close

reading and wide reading in which students have freedom of choice whenever possible. For advanced college prep pupils, the views of teacher or literary critic may be useful, providing these judgments may be accepted, disputed, or rejected in open discussion by the students (5:8-9).

The desired role for a teacher in developing the increased sense of form discussed by Britton has not yet been defined. At the Third International Conference on the Teaching of English held in August, 1980, in Sydney, Australia, response to literature was a central issue. A member of the commission on The Place of Literature at that conference views the problem of effective teaching of literature as knowing when or at what times to intervene while encouraging a full range of response from each reader (2:57).

The commission did agree, however, on the importance of satisfaction and enjoyment of literature:

> There is a sense of passion for literature that makes the world of literature different from any other world in the school curriculum. What we are about as literature teachers is to open kids up to that passion, to catch them up in it (2:57).

In Chapter Three of this study, the response-centered curriculum is discussed in greater detail.

Back-to-Basics

As had happened so often in the past, a countercurrent was forming while theorists and classroom teachers were transforming the teaching of English into what Miller called a "Humanitarian" enterprise. Declining test scores and curtailed budgets brought public pressure on schools to turn "back-to-the-basics." As early as 1976, English

professionals were lamenting that outside pressures threatened once more to shift English from a "humanistic" to a "behavioristic" discipline. A fear that spelling, vocabulary, and grammar would become the content of English courses was seen not only as an over-simplification of a complex subject; but counter to evidence in research, to psychology of learning, and to language and literary history (15:21). A call for a return of term papers and a study of grammar, and a call for minimum proficiencies and accountability, were viewed as ominous signs the study of literature might once again become regarded as an educational frill.

Three Language-Arts Curriculum Models for the 1980's

In the 1980 NCTE publication, Three Language Arts Curriculum Models: Pre-Kindergarten Through College, gives the reader a sense that the extreme either-or stances of content-centered or student-centered English classrooms will be avoided in the 1980's. In the introduction, editor Barrett J. Mandel writes:

> If we were to address ourselves to the issue of a national curriculum for the eighties, the focus would have to be on a catholic collection of curriculum models that had been found effective in various regional and educational contexts (27:2).

The three curriculum models are: the process or student-centered model, the heritage or traditional model, and the competencies model. None of these is considered to be an exclusive way of learning, for "no one becomes educated without undergoing personal growth (process), becoming adroit in the manipulation of the symbols of society (competencies) . . . and fulfilling the implications of the past and the promise of the future (heritage)" (27:5). The teacher constantly develops programs, emphasizes certain values, and selects materials to assist the students along their paths (27:5).

Perhaps, rather than swinging through the extremes of the past, the teaching of English rests on a more solid base.

Chapter 3

THE LEARNER AND LITERATURE-- SELECTED READING THEORIES AND RESEARCH

Although the teaching of language and literature are well-established in the English classroom, we know very little about how one "learns literature: and what a good literature student knows and does that a poor student does not (14:39). Through work of modern theorists like Rosenblatt and Britton and researchers like Purves and Squire, however, we are beginning to understand the learning process. A review of both early research and recent articles on approaches to learning literature follows. The concentration upon the response to literature reflects its emphasis in professional journals.

Empirical Studies of Response to Literature

In a 1976 article published in Journal of Aesthetic Education, Charles Cooper draws together the major studies on response to literature which date from the publication of James R. Squire's The Responses of Adolescents While Reading Four Short Stories (1964) and the Dartmouth Conference in 1966. At the time of its publication, Cooper was chairman of the NCTE Committee on Research and wrote for the English Journal the only regularly-published summary of research in this area.

In his introduction, Cooper states the underlying assumption of these studies was the belief the more we know about what readers do, the easier it will be to achieve the "traditional objectives of literary study-willingness to read and insightfulness in reading" (8:77).

Researchers in this field expect a wide variety of response from person to person with the same work, from first to subsequent readings by the same reader, from changes in social and cultural backgrounds of readers, and so on. Their goal is to describe the full range of responses from all kinds of readers and to arrive at some general principles of response.

Early Indications of a Response Hierarchy

While early researchers in the field of response to reading expected to find a wide variety in readers' responses, results of their studies also began to show indications of a possible response hierarchy. The "consistent strategy" of readers in the Beach study, the levels of response identified by Barnes, and the process of moving from one "mental state" to another in similar stages among a varied group of readers in the 1964 Squire study, all presented new insights on how a reader responds to literature.

Literature and the Reader. This review and compilation by Purves and Beach (1972) brings together the results of research studies of response to literature, reading interest, and the teaching of literature. According to Cooper, the Purves-Beach study forms the groundwork for almost all later studies (8:78). Among its rather general findings were: (1) extensive teaching dealing informally with a large number of texts is as effective as intensive teaching with a small number of texts; (2) that teacher intervention is more important for measured achievement in reading fiction than particular texts or sequencing of texts; (3) that school age readers are more interested in content of work than its form and style; and (4) that boys/girls, younger/older children differ in their reading interests.

While these general results have been well-publicized, of special interest to this study was the finding that the studies tend to support the transactional theories of Rosenblatt (37:35).

A comprehensive content-analysis scheme consisting of 120 elements or possible statements about works of literature was devised by Purves in a 1968 study, Elements of Writing About a Literary Work: A Study of Responses to Literature. The elements were derived from a close study of what many critics and students had actually said in response to literature. Critics of the study recommended modifications to permit even clearer distinctions in readers' response; nevertheless, Cooper defends the study as excellent and useful. "We have nothing like it for exhaustively describing the elements in a reader's expressed response to a work of fiction" (8:81).

A study by Beach, using Purves' scheme with refinements, used thirty-six junior and senior English majors at the University of Illinois as subjects. Beach made audio tapes of the students giving their free responses on successive readings of a poem, and later discussing the poem in a small group with other students. Responses were analyzed as a percentage of responses to categories similar to the Purves' categories. Beach reported the following: (1) subjects tended to respond in discussion groups as they had alone, (2) they used a relatively consistent strategy; (3) where students were willing to collaborate, they were able to go beyond their solitary responses; and (4) subjects appeared to require a period of organizing the literal statement of the poem and perceiving personal associations before moving on to interpretation.

Of special interest to secondary teachers is a British study by Douglas Barnes, using fifteen year olds of varying abilities. Students worked in non teacher-directed groups of five who were told their discussions would be recorded and a teacher would later listen to the recording. Barnes used statements formulated from a close study of expressed response of what many critics and students said about various works. After analyzing scripts of the recorded responses, Barnes found two main types which he called "sorting-out" and "reexperiencing." He identified four levels of talking about novels: (1) putting oneself in the character's position; (2) treating character and incident as if they were real; (3) being aware of the novel as artifact; (4) discussing the novel as a "virtual experience."

Barnes concludes: "For adolescent pupils, talk at the more direct and naive levels of response may well be a necessary preliminary to talk at the more 'distancing' levels" (8:84).

The Responses of Adolescents While Reading Four Short Stories is a report of a study conducted by James Squire in 1956 as a doctoral dissertation at the University of California, Berkeley, and published by the NCTE in 1964. Subjects tested were a group of fifty-two fifteen year olds. The two areas of response tested were the nature of the response, and reasons why individuals respond to literature in unique and selective ways. Squire attempted to trace the response of ninth and tenth grade students in the process of reading. He divided short stories into six parts and interrupted student reading at the end of each part to ask for an unstructured verbal response. An important finding was that readers who became personally involved were more likely to discuss the literary qualities of the works.

Squire also used a set of semantic differential scales for subjects to check after each successive pair of lines in a poem. Varied groups of readers, from university teachers to people with only a high school education, arrived at differing final responses; yet, interestingly, each group was reported to have moved from one mental state to another during the response process in a similar fashion.

Cay Dollerup also conducted studies of student response while the subjects were reading short stories. In 1965 she conducted a pilot study using the hypothesis it would not be difficult to establish a basic pattern of response using the terms "intensity" and "tension," since many critics used these qualities to describe reader response as if they existed in all works.

Studies conducted by Dollerup in 1968 and 1969 were based on a questionnaire developed from the free responses of the pilot study. One group of twenty-six year old undergraduate university students in the United States (1968), and a second group of sixteen Danish students of high school age were subjects (1969). Readers did not respond to the pattern suggested by literary theorists. Instead:

> Reading is continued or discontinued as a result of an interplay between the instantaneous perception of a given passage, the reader's evaluation of it, and presumably, a similar cumulated evaluation of what he has read hitherto, the interest he feels, and the interest he expects (10:451).

Cooper believes the process of response is best explained at present with psychoanalytic psychology, and he cites two studies which exemplify its use; those of Norman Holland and David Bleich. Holland has shown the "identity theme or personal myth of modern ego psychology can

be used to explain the characteristic and unique way each reader responds to a work of fiction" (8:88). It is not the text which determines the type of reader, but the ego style of the reader. Holland believes a reader recreates a literary work by trying to compose a literary experience in his own life style, and after admitting a work past his defenses, shapes a fantasy that gives him pleasure, and finally, transforms the fantasy to arrive at an intellectual or moral "point" in what he has read (8:88).

Cooper, apparently accepting this analysis, responds: "If one accepts the psychology--Holland's set of analytic tools--then the theory is capable of explaining everything that happens in the interaction of a reader and a text" (8:88).

Thus, early studies laid the foundation for future research in reader response and suggested the possibility a hierarchy of response may exist.

The Relationship Between Prior Knowledge and Response to Literature

In a recent article, "Studying the Relationship Between Prior Knowledge and Response to Literature" (1980), Richard Beach discusses the complex relationship between knowledge of social and literary conventions and students' response to literature, claiming that students use their knowledge of these conventions in making inferences about literature (4:93). Little research has been done in this area by researchers interested in reader response, he reports, but reading researchers who have studied prior knowledge have found it has a strong influence on reading comprehension (4:94). Since jokes also often center on a violation of norms, Beach interestingly compares students without

the knowledge of norms or conventions to people who are told a joke and miss the point of humor (4:96).

Much of the research on prior knowledge is based on the cognitive and conceptual frameworks of "schema" which help a reader sort out and organize information. Beach believes literary and social conventions also function as schema, and teachers of literature need to examine the effects of these thought processes in order to provide students with relatively precise assessments of their responses (4:96).

Comparisons between the schema-based theory and Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading were formulated and reported by William S. Palmer in "Reading Theories and Research: A Search for Similarities" (1981). Palmer looked for similarities in the two theories, rather than perceiving them as polarized viewpoints, and believes the research of the schema-based theory reinforces the more theoretical transactional approach.

Both theories acknowledge the efferent and aesthetic reading experiences, and both suggest misreadings are often caused by misleading expectations on the part of the reader, rather than by faulty decoding (33:64). Although the two theories use different terminology, Palmer believes the concepts of "immature schema," "schema intrusions," and "recall and inference making" reinforce what Rosenblatt terms "validity of interpretation." Both theories also place importance on inference-making in reading comprehension, which Beach was also investigating.

According to Palmer, Rosenblatt's view of the transaction between reader and text is similar to the schema-study terms "quality of the text" and "story grammar." The study of story grammar, "those

generalized structure useful in comprehending stories," (33:65) indicates that comprehension of readers is higher when readings are patterned on a schema from their own culture.

Beach's study indicates a relationship between prior knowledge of social and literary convention and increased reading comprehension, for it is his view the conventions act as schema to enhance the inference-making ability of readers. A similar connection between inference-making and reading comprehension is drawn by Palmer. If their theories are correct, and reading comprehension is higher when reading is based on the reader's culture, there are implications the literature of Iowa could prove helpful in improving reading comprehension of Iowa students. If the reader could strengthen his/her inference-making skills, this could be a significant help to a student in moving from the literal to inferential level of response.

Reading Interests

In the March, 1981, issue of English Journal, Purves reported on "The State of Research in Teaching Literature." In this article, Purves claims there are four basic questions teachers of literature at all levels will inevitably ask: "How well can my students read a text?" "What do my students think of literature?" "What are their reading interests?" and "How well did I teach them?" (38:82).

Of special interest to this study is Purves' discussion of student reading interests. He cites a study which compared reading interests of two groups of students in 1973 and 1978 from the same selective school in a stable community. The study indicated their reading interests were unrelated (38:83). Purves believes teachers should be

wary about relying on published student interest summaries; ". . . a teacher may be as good at marketing as a large paperback company. One teacher can kindle interest or extinguish it" (38:83). Purves is convinced, however, a teacher must know the current reading interests of students if she or he is to plan an effective literature program. But that is only the starting point, for a teacher should "mold, as well as react to, student taste" (38:84).

Hierarchies of Response and Comprehension

"A Hierarchy of Student Response to Literature," by Gloria Paulik Sampson and Nancy Carlman, suggests teaching procedures to help students develop both cognitive and affective responses to literature. They contend works can be organized and presented in specific ways to help students recognize stages in their own response, and with this knowledge, refine their responses (42:54).

The three stages in the heirarchy of response--based on the earlier Squire study--are identification, dissociation, and evaluation.

Teachers, recognizing the egocentricity of many high school students, can begin by using literary works with adolescents as main characters with whom students can easily identify. The authors illustrate the procedure of eliciting response by asking questions about specific short stories, "probes" which initiate student response and then lead students to reflect upon overt, and later upon inferred characteristics of characters.

The next stage moves beyond stories with main characters with whom students can easily identify. To move beyond identification to the stage of dissociation is often difficult for students because they must

first "identify with a character in order to be drawn emotionally into the story" (42:56). When students are unable to dissociate from the main character, they often miss the point of the story.

As the basis for their discussion of the evaluation stage of the response hierarchy, Sampson and Carlman use the four stages of educational development theorized by Kiernam Egan (11). Secondary students would probably be in either the romantic (ages 8-9 to 14-15), or the philosophic (ages 14-15 to 19-20) stages of development, and students in different stages would respond to literature in different ways. The romantic students, developing relationships with the outside world, would be most interested in "the remote, the bizarre, the emotional, the transcendent," (42:56) while the philosophic students would probably be interested in arguments and ideas.

With an understanding of the response hierarchy and educational development of students, teachers are advised to be careful in judging responses as immature or irrelevant when student response reflects the highest stage of which the student is capable. Selections of literature chosen for classroom use, as well as level of questions asked, must take into consideration the educational development of students and corresponding levels in the hierarchy of response. While this study applies directly to classroom use, one senses an echoing of the Barnes' conclusion as well as that of James Britton cautioning the teacher to build upon naive responses of students rather than to reject them as unsuitable.

A Hierarchy of Comprehension

George Hillocks, Jr., attacks the back-to-basics assumption that teaching structural literary elements (such as character, theme, plot,

conflict) is basic to a study of literature simply because they have been a traditional approach to the study of literature. Instead, Hillocks demonstrates the abstract qualities of these structural elements to show they are sophisticated critical tools high on a hierarchy of skills in comprehension of literature, and far from a "basis" approach.

Formal research by Hillocks, working at first with McCabe in 1971, has indicated a hierarchy which identify levels of comprehension skills relevant to reading literature. Such a hierarchy is seen to have important implications for curriculum and instruction in English (21:55).

The two major categories of question types which were identified are literal and inferential. At the most basic level, questions are asked about basic stated information. Not only is this information needed for students to deal with higher levels of meaning in the text, but an inability to answer would indicate readers who are unequipped to deal with the text in an enjoyable or meaningful way. The second type of questions at the literal level asks for key details which are important to the twists and turns of the plot. This is followed by questions dealing with stated relationships requiring the reader to locate relationships which are directly stated in the text.

The inferential level of simple implied relationships is similar to the stated relationships, only here the reader must deal with denotative and connotative clues in the text and infer a "cued" relationship. A reader advances higher on the hierarchy of skills to infer complex implied relationships which are inferred from many pieces of information involving details which may also advance the plot, reveal personality changes, or imply something about the environment. The next type of question requires the reader to consider the author's generalization which roughly corresponds

to the traditional category of theme. To answer this question, the reader must not only generalize the whole literary work but must deal with ideas implied about human nature and the world outside the text.

The final step in the hierarchy of comprehension, structural generalizations, requires an analysis of structure per se. Hillocks sets two criteria for a question in this category: "First it must require the reader to deal with the arrangement of certain parts of a work. Second, it must require an explanation of how the structure works in supporting certain effects" (21:57).

Hillocks includes statistical reports of research which he claims validate the hierarchy with suggestions for its use by the classroom teacher. He further concludes that it may be used to define and predict comprehension levels of students, thus providing a guide for a literature program. One advantage this hierarchy has over a readability score is that it takes into consideration the inferential load ignored by other scales. The hierarchy of questions should also help a teacher pose questions within the students' levels of comprehension.

Summary of Reading Theories and Research

Assuming the validity of the findings of the research into the cognitive processes of reading and a reader's response to literature, it can lead to the development of classroom procedures and programs supported by empirical evidence. Guided by new insights based on proven educational and psychological data, a classroom English teacher is no longer forced to choose instructional materials by intuition or by the dictates of whatever happens to be the latest educational philosophy.

Broadening the Secondary English Curriculum

Most observers feel the academic model, limited to teaching classics, was not successful. Studies indicating a hierarchy of skills both in reading comprehension and response to literature give us reasons for its failure. With its strong emphasis on a study of form through the use of literary criticism, it began at the highest levels of the learning hierarchy. Not understanding these educational principles, the academics overlooked preliminary learning stages. Most high school students simply lacked fundamental intellectual skills for this sophisticated approach. Instead of fostering the study of literature, it too often became a sterile exercise regardless of the high quality of works studied.

Similarly, most observers also feel the child-centered model was a failure. The child-centered, social-adjustment periods of teaching literature also lacked the stabilizing influence of language and learning theory available to a contemporary teacher. In their rebellion against a college-dictated curriculum they viewed as inappropriate for the majority of high school students, and in their attempt to prepare students for "life," they often lost sight of structuring principles on which to base their choices. In the terms of the comprehension and response hierarchies, instruction during this period seemed geared to the lower levels without a strategy for advancing from the early stages. By using literature for solving social and personal problems, instruction in this period often lost touch with the traditional approaches to literary study.

Since the periods of extreme approaches to the teaching of literature, one emphasizing the text and the other the child, a theoretical base has developed to show the two need not be in opposition to one

another in the study of literature, but may be viewed as major components in a creative enterprise.

The review of historical trends in teaching literature in American high schools and a review of current empirical research and learning theories in Chapters Two and Three of this study, reveal a long tradition of struggle to broaden the literature curriculum, and strong arguments supporting this position. The controversy isn't ended, but this is not the 1920's or 1950's. Since those eras of educational extremes, basic rethinking of the goals of English and increased insight into the function of language and psychology of learning have joined to put the English curriculum on a more even keel. No longer need the focus of the curriculum shift in an either/or, classics and skills vs. child-centered, "anything-goes" approach. With an increased awareness that text and reader are equally important, those who teach literature have widened the criteria for selection of literary works while still teaching "literature." The principal change is the shift in focus from teaching <u>about</u> literature to one of teaching how <u>to use</u> literature.

The criteria for choosing selections for literary study also broadened with the realization that teachers of English no longer need to get caught in the age-old dilemma caused by defining literature as art. This is not to deny such a concept, or to discard the reading of classics in the classroom. It means, instead, selections will be chosen on the basis of what is appropriate for the student, both in content and complexity, with the eventual goal of preparing students to continue study with increasingly complex and artistic forms.

Chapter 4

THE PLACE OF IOWA LITERATURE IN THE SECONDARY CLASSROOM

This study has centered around the selection of literature for the secondary English classroom. At this point, justification has been presented for expanding the choice of selections in such a way as to reflect more closely the world of the reader. So far the conception of broadening the curriculum has been reasoned in general terms, but now that justification for broadening the curriculum has been established, the remainder of the study broadens in a specific direction--towards the inclusion of the literature of Iowa in the secondary English curriculum. This study is an effort to illustrate the benefits such broadening of the curriculum gives a teacher of literature in fostering the goals of literary instruction while avoiding the extremes of the past.

While attention here is directed toward the inclusion of the literature of Iowa for students in Iowa, others may use the justification found in the historical review and implications in the research for broadening the literature curriculum in other directions. The widened scope of literary studies which included works by black authors and works representative of other ethnic groups, may be further widened to include literature of other states or regions, as well as literature reflecting a variety of life-styles. In many respects, the addition of the literature of Iowa to the English curriculum may be parallel to the inclusion of black literature and other works reflecting the cultural diversity of

America. As a successful precedent, these programs provide an incentive to Iowa teachers adding works by Iowa authors. More importantly, this broadening of the curriculum has the potential to heighten Iowa students' awareness of the aspects of their lives which connect them to the world of literature in universal, human ways.

Building Literary Experiences

A body of literature of Iowa exists; its use in the classroom can help foster the developmental process of teaching literature by building a foundation of literary experience based on the students' lives, giving them insights into the way literature and language provide structure and reveal meaning in common events and situation. This "tuning-in" to the power of literature can help enrich their lives by revealing universal truths to which they might otherwise be oblivious. The fact that the settings of Iowa are local may well be a main strength rather than a flaw, because only when an author writes in depth from his/her knowledge can universality be achieved. The literature of Iowa can also provide a sense of cultural identity and heritage for which many Iowans are searching.

Narrowing the Distance Between Text and Reader

Since adolescent readers need to encounter literature for which they possess emotional and experiential readiness, the selections for the classroom must fit into the context of the readers' understanding and interests. So a teacher will be guided by an understanding of students' general backgrounds in choosing appropriate instructional materials. For students in Iowa classrooms, the literature of Iowa can

provide a link between the students' lives and literary experience, narrowing the distance between text and reader by providing situations and settings with which readers are familiar. By creating a situation in which students can develop an intimate, personal response to literature, an instructor will enhance the probability of fostering the developmental process.

The central place of literature in a language-centered curriculum is discussed earlier in this study. This central position is due to the symbolic nature of language and its essential role in giving shape and meaning to one's experience and to the interrelatedness of language, linguistic imagination, and literature. An understanding of this vital function of language and literature helps support the choice of literary selections close to the readers' day-to-day experiences.

Current empirical research indicating learning hierarchies in reader response and in comprehension of literature also provides support for the inclusion of selections based on students' cultural and experiential backgrounds. Of special importance is the development of inference-making skills which have been shown to be enhanced by selections based on social conventions familiar to the student.

Iowa Writers and the Teaching of Literature

To illustrate the ways in which selections of Iowa literature might help foster the development of genuine literary experience, two short poems by James Hearst, "Cleaning the Barn," and "The New Calf" are discussed (20:93) (20:44-45). These selections have been chosen, in part, because of their condensed form, but also because they represent

in topic, language, and universality, examples for classroom study.

Cleaning the Barn

by James Hearst

We put it off, not having to prove
we were Hercules, but the day came
(as it always does with work not done)
when we took our forks, spit on our hands,
hung our coats on a nail and started.
All winter the calves tramped straw bedding
to hard packed manure with a yellow smell,
tied in with straw and two feet thick,
every forkful strained our shoulders,
with every forkful we grew thick grass
on meadows where we spread this waste
from the farm's gut, remains of corn and hay
back to the fields again. It was a place
of odors, incense to bless the land,
we tugged, pulled, swore, joked,
stained with sweat and our slippery loads,
dregs of harvest for another harvest.
A spring day on the wheel of seasons.
When the pen was clean we smelled to high heaven,
lame in our muscles, weary beyond rest,
we picked up our coats, banged the forks
into their racks, made our bed on a
bale of hay, heard for applause
a banging barn door. (20:93)

In "Cleaning the Barn," Hearst used an unpoetic, menial chore as a subject. While the workers face the job with reluctance, they tackle their work without complaining; in fact, a sense of comradeship and a sense of purpose beyond the immediate task lends significance to their labor. The workers are aware of the "wheel of seasons," and the renewal of the land which will result from their work. Hearst gives dignity to this drudgery by referring to the manure as "incense to bless the land" and by alluding to the labors of Hercules. Hercules is an appropriate mythical figure because of his prodigious strength and also because one of his labors was cleaning the Augean stables. While the poem is written in a no-nonsense midwestern tone, this poem is rich in the pattern of carefully-chosen words.

In the classroom, such a poem could certainly help develop an awareness of the significance of ordinary situations which a person often misses without having it shaped by a literary experience. Not only is this subject a familiar one, but its language could lead to an interesting language project on sensory imagery, and possibly to a discussion of euphemisms. The poem can also provide a writing model for choosing a subject of personal experience to develop with appeals to the senses. The allusion to Hercules might lead to an investigation of classical Greek literature and a comparison of the cleaning of the Augean stables to the cleaning of an Iowa barn. This illustrates that once a student has discovered literature can help one shape, interpret, and appreciate actual experiences, she/he is forming the basis for genuine literary experiences. Then literature can provide entry into richer, more contemplative living. It can help readers "free themselves from the obtuseness to the wonder of ordinary life" (32:27). Too often our lives seem to be a mechanical repetition of meaningless events. By removing ordinary events from their customary contexts through literature, they may no longer appear dull and common, but fresh and revealing. Also, by interpreting basic events in a variety of ways, literature helps the reader discover infinite possibilities and diversity in the ordinary. The reader is encouraged to see beyond the surface of life to discover in the simplest experience, "some universal paradox, some timeless tragedy, some bitter irony, some awful comedy" (32:27).

By starting with literature based on common events of which the student has first-hand knowledge, such as the drudgery of cleaning a barn, the reader will begin to realize the ways in which literary experience can

lead beyond the particulars of everyday incidents. Then that reader has begun to develop a literary background and can start to become a participant in situations far removed in time and place.

Local Qualities and Universality

Two noted writers from different generations, whose work of imaginative writing differ widely in subject and form, have discussed the ways in which writers achieve universal qualities in their writing. T. S. Eliot writes from the stance of a literary critic, and Potok as an author of what may be described as "ethnic" literature.

In his book To Criticize the Critic, T. S. Eliot discussed the characteristics he believed were important in a national literature, a ". . . strong local flavor combined with unconscious universality" (12:54). T. S. Eliot continued by relating how, in reading works of Russian authors, one is first fascinated by differences in the way they behave. Then one realizes they are expressing thoughts and feelings we all share. T. S. Eliot believed an author could easily be local without being universal, but he doubted a novelist could be universal without being local, too (12:56).

A contemporary author, Chaim Potok, believes authors write about a particular world, family, or culture; and only with luck and skill can they achieve a universal quality in their work. "Dig down deeply enough into any one human being and you will ultimately uncover his basic humanity" (35:709).

Another poem helps illustrate the ways in which Iowa literature can use a local image to make a universal statement. "The New Calf," is an excellent example of a poem rooted in a rural farm setting which

evokes universal, human feelings.

The New Calf

by James Hearst

In the basement by the furnace lies
a newborn calf I found, chilled and wet,
in the barn this morning, its mother
a wild-eyed young heifer frantic in
the pain of her first birth didn't
lick it off to dry its hair and kicked
it in the gutter when it tried to suck.
I picked it up, rubbed it down and
fed it from a bottle. Here it lies
in a basket lined with straw while
I watch its heart tremble, flanks quiver,
muzzle twitch, eyes flicker. It sucked
so feebly on my finger I had to spoon
the milk (mixed with a little brandy)
in its mouth and stroke its throat
to make it swallow. Now it waits for life
to decide whether to go or stay--and
I think of deserted innocence everywhere,
a child locked out of the house,
a woman dirtied in love,
a father betrayed by his son, all of us
sometime abandoned, lonely, denied. (20:44-45)

In this deceptively simple poem, the new-born calf hovers between life and death, abandoned by its mother. As it is tenderly cared for in the farm basement, the speaker poignantly thinks of human betrayals, denials, and deserted innocence, ending with the feelings of loneliness known to us all. Such an abandoned calf is true to a farm experience, but Hearst has enlarged its meaning into a poetic statement of much wider significance. Certainly a study of this poem could be a rewarding literary selection for student in Iowa, and because of its universal qualities, for students in almost any American classroom.

Literature and Identity

In William Albert Levi's concept of literature as a humanity (presented in Chapter Two of this study) the search for continuity is considered to be a basic human need. Finding a tradition into which one belongs is essential in forming a strong personal identity, for identity is seen as basically a sense of personal history (23:3). The identity of an individual or of a group, then, can be strengthened by finding links to the past (23:3-4). The type of history necessary in forming such a sense of personal continuity and identity is a sequence viewed from the human standpoint, often overlooked in an impersonal, cause-and-effect view of past events in a study of history. A body of literature, however, has a unique and lasting value in presenting social history and can rarely be matched in helping one gain a sense of the traditions of which one is a part.

Although the search for roots, traditions, and groups with which to identify and establish personal fulfillment seems to be widespread, Iowans appear to have a particular lack of identification with their state. Observers find few who have a strong sense of belonging or who take pride in being Iowan. Author Patricia Hampl comments that Midwesterners in general believe, "life goes on somewhere else" (19:98).

Surely a familiarity with the literary heritage of Iowa could be of great value to Iowa students looking for a tradition to which they belong and in the forming of personal identities. Perhaps John T. Frederick expressed the view of Iowa literature as cultural history best when he wrote: "Without it our cultural heritage, our understanding of the present, and our appreciation of the past would be immeasurably impoverished" (16:95).

Chapter 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It is disturbing to a teacher of English in an Iowa secondary school to find an almost total absence of literary selections by Iowa authors in the classroom. Whether or not to include those works in the English curriculum hinged on determining if a justification for their use exists.

A review of the history of teaching literature in American secondary schools revealed periods in which the primary focus of instruction was centered on the importance of a narrowly-defined body of literature to be mastered, alternating with periods in which child-centered instruction provided a wide variety of literary works in an attempt to foster social adjustment for pupils. Each period had its critics attempting to return the curriculum to the opposing emphasis. Each extreme proved to be unsatisfactory. However, new conceptions of the symbolic nature of language, and discoveries about the processes a reader uses in interacting with literature have put literary study on a firmer basis; less likely to fluctuate in the extremes approaches of the past.

The essential role language plays in human development in symbolically ordering and revealing meaning in experience has helped put literary experience in a central position in the English classroom. The development of the linguistic imagination with its relation to creative, symbolic thought is a basis goal of instruction, and its

development is fostered through experiences with creative literature. Literature and the linguistic imagination gain further emphasis with the understanding they play a major role in helping a person form his/her personal identity and relationships to others.

Theories of learning and reader response indicate the importance of selecting literature from a wide variety of works to find suitable materials to narrow the distance between the lives of the readers and the texts. Since the reader begins to develop linguistic ability in the process of ordering personal experiences, selections of literature based on the readers life help build a foundation of positive literary experience. Research also indicates reading comprehension is higher when selections are based on students' previous experiences since comprehension is linked to the ability to make inferences, and inference-making is related to knowledge of the social conventions presented in the text.

Legitimate concerns of literary study for the personal lives of students, based on sound pedagogical theories, led to a broadening of the criteria for choosing works for classroom study. Research supports the broadening of the curriculum and gives justification for the inclusion of local or regional literature. Therefore, it is concluded that students in Iowa classrooms ought to be given access to the literature of their state.

This study has implications for a similar inclusion of local literature for other states and regions. Particularly in those areas in which indigenous literature is excluded, educators should conduct a search to locate works.

In the course of this study, other concerns in the teaching of literature arose which were beyond the scope of this study. Two major issues are censorship and the ethical dimension of literary study. Choosing selections suitable for classroom use inevitably leads to making value judgments, often controversial ones, and the broadened aspect of literature in the classroom raises the likelihood censorship may become an issue.

The ethical dimension of literature is closely aligned with the process of forming identity, and that, too, would have been of interest had the scope of this study been expanded.

Perhaps the most obvious undeveloped aspect of this study is the literature of Iowa itself. A large body of literature exists, including many works of fine quality which merit closer attention from literary scholars then they have received. Encouragement for contemporary Iowa authors is also needed, especially when one considers they lack the attention and scholarly criticism writers of earlier years received from John T. Fredrick and others.

For other teachers of English in Iowa classrooms who may be unfamiliar with the literature of Iowa, a copy of Clarence A. Andrews' A Literary History of Iowa (1) will prove invaluable as a source and for its bibliography. The Iowa Department of Public Instruction has published Iowa and Some Iowans (6), a bibliography to aid instruction in literature and history at the secondary level. A supplement was issued in 1978. Both books indicate work is underway to organize sources. Andrews, however, does not list non-fiction works, and the DPI bibliography makes no attempt to limit titles to books with Iowa-related subjects or settings.

Limiting the choice of selections to illustrate Iowa literature for this study was difficult, for the range of Iowa authors is surprisingly diverse in subject and form. Even though the two Hearst poems were farm-related, it would be a mistake to believe all his poetry is directly related to the farm, or that the works of other Iowa authors are limited to rural settings and subjects. Iowa towns and cities are well-represented.

Much needs to be done in developing curriculum which includes Iowa literature with its rich potential for Iowa students. Selections could be added to existing thematically-organized study, and a wide range of selections for independent reading could easily be implemented. Many writing and language projects could be inspired from the reading of the literature of Iowa, and as models for familiar topics and imagery, they could be especially helpful. Students might also pattern their writing after the successful Foxfire series, using Iowa resources in a fresh way.

The prospect of using selections for speech projects is exciting for the vitality these selections could add. This author has submitted a list of Iowa books to the Iowa High School State Speech Association for book reviews in a variety of categories. Many Iowa works could be used for interpretive prose and poetry, literary programs, or for choral reading.

An ERIC search conducted as part of this study indicated the extent to which this field of study is still undeveloped. Hardly any sources for works on major Iowa authors, or critical studies of mid-western literature for secondary students, were indexed. Surely, further

research into Iowa writers is in order. Organizing Iowa selections by themes would be especially helpful in preparing units of study. Suggestions might include themes of tradition vs. innovation, tensions between farm and city, the rebel in society, the effects of off-farm migration, and midwestern humor.

Such study could also provide incentive and interest to develop curriculum centered on other Iowa arts, and for interdisciplinary study. Several biographical works by Iowa authors would be especially appropriate for use in social studies classrooms. The number of projects needed is limited only by one's imagination.

The literature of Iowa can be included in the secondary English curriculum of Iowa with the assurance its use is consistent with sound pedagogical theory and practice. The possibilities for its use are many, and its potential for adding effectiveness to the teaching of English in Iowa and enrichment for Iowa students should not be ignored.

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APPENDIX

AN IOWAN DISCOVERS THE LITERATURE OF IOWA

"Iowa, it's a beautiful name when you say it like we say it back home. It's the sumac in September; it's the squeak of your shoes in the snow." Iowa, it's . . . Let's face it. To strangers, Iowa can be border-to-border monotony of endless corn fields and hog lots, a state populated by uniformly dull country cousins. To those who stay long enough to get acquainted, however, Iowa is full of surprising contrasts. It's a "land in its working clothes," but it's also people driving many miles to catch the Boston Pops in Ames. Iowa is gasohol in a Mercedes, skiers in overalls and seed corn caps.

To those who had the good sense to be born here, Iowa is, well "no one who lives here knows how to tell the stranger what it's like, the land I mean." That's the problem. Nobody knows how to express the emotional bonds that tie us to our land and neighbors. At least that's what I thought until I discovered the literature of Iowa. Then I realized writers have been trying for years to express what it means to live in Iowa, presenting their perceptions of its land, its history, and its people. They have fulfilled the function of the artist in society: finding order and giving it form, articulating for the common person those heartfelt emotions which are the core of humanity, helping us examine our attitudes, and making us laugh at ourselves when we are foolish. Here was what I had been searching for. Here was an expression of what I knew and felt, but which I was unable to communicate. Now

I want to share my discovery of Iowa authors and the literature of Iowa with others.

I'm not exactly sure when I first wanted to express affection for my native state. Like a child born into a wealthy family, I accepted the rich life of Iowa only partially aware that the abundance I took for granted might seem like paradise to others. Then, on returning from a vacation in an arid region of Mexico, I saw Iowa from a different perspective. I marveled at luxuriant Iowa with its rich earth and ample rainfall; I saw Iowa as it might have appeared to an immigrant farmer. My prosperous neighbors now seemed smug and complacent as they attributed their success to their ambition and initiative, granting only a grudging tribute to the resources at their disposal. Later I visited an area in East Africa which seemingly had more natural resources than Mexico, but which had been exploited or left undeveloped under British rule. On returning to Iowa this time, I saw my home state and neighbors as priviledged politically and culturally but again felt absolutely unable to express the depth of my experience.

These unexpressed emotions smoldered until, almost by accident, I came across poetry and books by Iowans who had organized their impressions and given them artistic form. It all started when two of my students asked for books on farm life for projects in an independent reading class. We started with Carl Hamilton's books, In No Time At All and Pure Nostalgia, and soon discovered Clarence Andrews' A Literary History of Iowa which guided us into a whole new field of literary experiences. No longer smoldering, those unexpressed feelings caught fire.

I was fascinated by Julie McDonald's fictionalized family history in Amalie's Story and Petra, realizing how little I knew of my Danish grandparents and wondering how similar their experiences were to those of her family. When I read Herbert Quick's One Man's Life and Hamlin Garland's Son of the Middle Border, I knew their experiences on Iowa farms in the late 1800's had been shared by my husband's family. I liked Garland's honesty in portraying the hardships of pioneer farm life instead of glamorizing it. He loved the land, but he hated farming. When Garland wrote of his having to break virgin prairie with a walking plow when he was only ten years old, I sympathized with him but thought of my own sons, and thousands of other farm boys of the same age, who have had adult responsibilities on the farm while their classmates in town were carefree. One of Garland's themes, that working the land destroyed the human spirit, is echoed in Susan Glaspell's play, "Trifles," which centers around the investigation of the death of a farmer murdered by his wife because he had destroyed her personality and longing for beauty by always putting the needs of the farm first. The farm women who helped in the investigation were able to identify with their neighbor, and so was I. Even though I have never been tempted to move away from Iowa, I was enchanted by Curtis Harnack's We Have All Gone Away. I could respond, especially to his artistic prose. I could also respond favorably to Ruth Suckow's The Folks. The minute details of life in a small Iowa town transferred me back to my childhood when a big event was mother's hostessing the ladies in town, and when our every move was weighed against, "What will the neighbors think?"

I know my reaction to literature with an Iowa background is not unique. The popular success of Hamilton's books suggests a large group

of Iowans is interested in this type of folk history. Students in several of my classes have responded enthusiastically to a variety of Iowa books, getting a special thrill in finding familiar settings as well as topics and characters true to their own experience. In one semester, one high school junior read six books by Iowa authors which he later confessed were the first books he had ever read. For the first time, he had found in print an expression of his life. Another student realized that poetry could have a genuine impact when he read James Hearst's Snake in the Strawberries and found farm imagery guiding him to an examination of what it means to be alive. A fellow grad student this past summer told me how she had taken several of Hearst's poems home to read to her parents, neither of whom had completed high school. She wondered how they would respond to poetry constructed with familiar farm imagery. When my friend finished reading "Clover Swaths," she asked her father if he had ever had similar thoughts while he mowed hay. He just sat there, his eyes brimming with tears. So overwhelmed with emotion he didn't trust his voice, he could only nod his head. An Iowa poet had expressed for him what he couldn't. I'm convinced these reactions are typical of a large audience which would respond positively to the literature of Iowa if they were aware it existed.

Why, then, isn't more of the literature of Iowa taught in the schools of Iowa? Could it be that other English teachers are unaware of its existence? When I took a course in American literature written by black authors, I felt indignant to think so much of my cultural heritage had been ignored for so long. I felt a similar reaction on the discovery of the literature of Iowa. Why should I, as a lifelong Iowan and an always-reader-of-books, have had to discover it on my own? Why wasn't

this part of Iowa's cultural heritage presented as part of my formal education? Such ignorance or neglect must not continue.

I believe students in Iowa classrooms should read selections of the literature of Iowa for several reasons. First of all, knowledge of this important part of our cultural heritage can help students form positive identities so important in our transitional society. As a nation, we are increasingly aware of the importance of finding "roots" to understand ourselves both individually and collectively. Furthermore, providing selections students can respond to from their personal experiences is good pedagogy. To help foster a genuine literary experience, or in Rosenblatt's terms to create a "poem," the content of any literature study must be related to the students' understanding and interests. Of course no single work by an Iowa author should be part of a standard literary diet for all, but to ignore such a promising body of selections that may help forge the link between students' direct experiences and positive literary experiences seems unwise.

I certainly admit it would be a mistake to overvalue these selections simply because they have local appeal, for as teachers we are especially concerned with literature having the power to evoke universal themes. Concern for universality is discussed by T.S. Eliot who believed a writer could easily be local without being universal, but who doubted a writer could be universal without being local since universality could result only when writers wrote about what they knew thoroughly. Successful Iowa authors have done that, so to dismiss their writing simply because of its local qualities is unfair.

Perhaps the greatest fear in using selections closely related to the students' environment is the fear these works would restrict, rather

than broaden, the students' understanding of the world. Instead, I believe clarifying one's own perceptions of the immediate world is almost a prerequisite to an understanding of people and situations removed by time and place. Rather than limiting our students, we are helping them establish a solid foundation of literary experience on which to build bridges into the unknown.

My discovery of Iowa authors and the literature of Iowa is a personal one, for many before me have produced and promoted this important part of Iowa's cultural heritage, and others continue to use their talents to express their perceptions of its land and its people. Last fall I visited with Clarence Andrews for a few minutes and told him of my interest in promoting the work of Iowa authors in Iowa schools. "Of course they belong in Iowa schools. I've been telling them that for years," he replied rather testily.

The literature of Iowa has already enriched my life and those of my students. I hope that you, too, will discover this rich source of Iowa's roots. Then together we can say, "Iowa, it's the promise for tomorrow; it's the memory of long, long ago. Iowa, it's a beautiful name, when you say it like we say it back home."