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The Development of Criterion Categories for Evaluating Novels Dealing with Teen-Age Drinking

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The Development of Criterion Categories for Evaluating Novels Dealing with Teen-Age Drinking

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Abstract

Drinking has existed throughout time in many forms. It is only within the last few years that society has viewed alcohol use with concern as the number of teen-agers drinking and more importantly, teen-age alcoholism has increased. In order to combat these figures, many alcohol education programs are being instituted throughout the country.

Many- or these programs are based on the values clarification approach. One teaching method to this approach is the use of the novel. From research conducted, it appears that little has been done in using novels dealing with teen-age drinking. Recognizing the utility of this type of novel, this author has taken objectives from alcohol education programs and developed them into criterion categories. The criterion categories are then used in evaluating selected novels dealing with teen-age drinking.

This author chose a panel of experts who in turn, selected ten novels dealing directly with or including teen-age drinking. This author then applied the criterion categories to each novel. For each novel, a book review that included a plot summary and critique based on the criterion categories was completed.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITERION CATEGORIES FOR EVALUATING
NOVELS DEALING WITH TEEN-AGE DRINKING

A Research Paper
Presented to the
Faculty of the Library Science Department

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

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August 1, 1977

Read and approved by /
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Many of these programs are based on the values clarification approach. One teaching method to this approach is the use of the novel. From research conducted, it appears that little has been done in using novels dealing with teen-age drinking. Recognizing the utility of this type of novel, this author has taken objectives from alcohol education programs and developed them into criterion categories. The criterion categories are then used in evaluating selected novels dealing with teen-age drinking.

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THE PROBLEM

Alcohol is not a new "turn-on." It has existed in a natural state since the beginning of time. It is with man's discovery of artificial distillation that alcohol has taken on new dimensions. The most prevalent of these is a point of morality. "To drink or not to drink" is a question that has had solutions that have swung on a pendulum from Carrie Nation and her ax-swinging Temperance Movement to the free-flowing bathtub gin of the Roaring Twenties.

The question of whether or not to partake of alcoholic beverages has yet to be answered by a nation's laws. The experiment of Prohibition (1920-1933) with the enactment of the Eighteenth Amendment proved to be a dismal failure at national control of alcohol consumption. The most common reason for Prohibition's failure, and still a decisive factor, is the desire among the adult population to answer the question on the basis of personal judgment and preference.

Drinking is not confined to the "over 21" sector of the population. Many states have lowered the age of adult status from twenty-one to nineteen and, in some cases, to eighteen. Drinking generally starts before the sanctions of legality. In a poll taken of seventh graders, 63 percent of the boys and 54 percent of the girls had taken a drink. By twelfth grade, the statistics had risen to 93 percent for boys and 87 percent for girls.¹ With statistics of this proportion, it is evident that alcohol consumption is not limited to a small sector of the adolescent population.

¹US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Alcohol and Health (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1974), p.8.

Experts in the field of alcohol education have witnessed the reporting of these statistics with concern. The evidence indicated that the moralistic approach of "hell-fire and damnation," of stressing the evils alcohol, and total abstinence had failed in its objective to keep teen-agers from drinking. This "scare" approach was unsuccessful with its distorted facts and misconceptions because teen-agers could see their parents and other adults drinking without any apparent ill-effects.

Beginning with the 1960's, a new approach to alcohol education was introduced. The new approach dealt with the values clarification process. Instead of the "scare" tactics there is an effort to maintain a balance between "the objective data of the research investigation and an appreciation of the motives and circumstances which influence the behavior choices of people in relation to alcohol."² Students are encouraged to develop goals and strategies that are personally acceptable, taking into account that different people have different ideas about drinking and non-drinking.

With the advent of the middle 1970's, there seems to be a retreat from use of hard drugs such as LSD and cocaine back to alcohol's "being the most abused drug."³ There is more literature available on the responsible use of alcohol directed toward youth. This literature has not been limited to the factual, informative genre but has been extended to the literary form of the novel.

²Samuel A. Miles, ed., Learning About Alcohol (Washington: American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, 1974), p.153.

³Alvin Silverstein and Virginia Silverstein, Alcoholism (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1975), p.12.

The novel has long been used in the classroom as an effective means of presenting material. Its effectiveness is dependent upon its consistency with the objectives of the subject area. With this in mind, this author began with the problem statement, "Do the novels dealing with teen-age drinking exhibit the forces and attitudes of the values clarification approach to alcohol education?"

For the purpose of the study the following hypothesis was used. Criterion categories can be developed and applied to the novels dealing with teen-age drinking to ascertain if the novels exhibit the forces and attitudes of the values clarification approach to alcohol education. By developing criterion categories and applying them to novels dealing with teen-age drinking, a rational basis for selecting and recommending these novels to young readers ~~will~~^{can} be laid. At present, there are few guidelines other than the basic selection principles for a media specialist to utilize in the selection of novels dealing with teen-age drinking.

Underlying this study were two assumptions. The first assumption was that specific criteria could be developed to judge the novels on teen-age drinking. After the criterion categories were developed, the author assumed that there would be novels that the criteria could be applied to.

In the initial review and planning of the study, the author found five limitations. The first was a lack of consensus on whether the values clarification method is the best approach to alcohol education. The second was that the novels selected would be of the type that are read by adolescents. The third limitation was that the novel must deal with adolescent drinking rather than with adult drinking. The panel that selected the novels was the fourth limitation.

Even though the panel members were considered experts, they were limited in knowing all the possible novels available dealing with teen-age drinking. Some excellent novels may be excluded because of a lack of familiarity on the part of the panel.

In constructing the study the author used several conceptual definitions. Included are:

1. Alcohol education: an education program "concerned with developing attitudes and behavior involving responsible drinking and non-drinking."⁴
2. Adolescent: "synonymous with the teen years and with participation in the junior and senior high grades of our educational system."⁵ Within the study the terms adolescent and teen-ager will be used interchangeably.
3. Values clarification: an approach developed by Louis Rathes concerned with the "process of valuing rather than with the content of people's values."⁶ The three basic precepts of the process are (a) prizing one's beliefs and behaviors, (b) choosing one's beliefs and behaviors, and (c) acting on one's beliefs.
4. Drinking process: a sequence in a pattern of alcohol consumption that ranges from abstention to heavy drinking. The steps

⁴Miles, p. 27.

⁵George Maddox and Bevode G. McCall, Drinking Among Teenagers (New Brunswick: Rutgers Center of Alcohol Studies, 1964), -. 5.

⁶Sidney B. Simon, Leland W. Howe, and Howard Kirschenbaum, A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Teachers and Students (New York: Hart Publishing Company, 1972), p. 631.

are:

- (1) Abstainer—"drinks at least once a year or not at all."⁷
 - (2) Infrequent drinking—"drinks at least once a year but less than once a month."⁸
 - (3) Light drinking—"drinks at least once a month, but typically only one or two drinks on a single occasion."⁹
 - (4) Moderate drinking—"drinks at least once a month, typically several times, but usually with no more than three or four drinks per occasion."¹⁰
 - (5) Heavy drinking—"drinks nearly every day with five or more per occasion at least once in awhile or about once weekly with usually five or more per occasion."¹¹
5. Criterion: "standard, rule, or test by which someone or something can be judged or compared."¹²
 6. Value: "the importance one attaches to an object, situation, or condition."¹³
 7. Attitude: "an enduring, learning predisposition to react in a given manner toward a given class of objects and situations."¹⁴
 8. Novel: "a fictional narrative in prose of substantial length."¹⁵

⁷US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Alcohol and Health (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1974), p.53.

⁸HEW, p.53. ⁹HEW, p.53.

¹⁰HEW, p.53. ¹¹HEW, p.53.

¹²Karl C. Garrison and Robert A. Magoon, Educational Psychology (Columbus: Merrill Publishing Company, 1972), p.631.

¹³Garrison, p.642. ¹⁴Garrison, p.630.

¹⁵Maurice Z. Shroder, "The Novel as a Genre," The Theory of the Novel, ed. Phillip Stevick (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1967), p.13.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In order to pursue the investigation, this author divided the problem statement intoth three basic concepts of alcohol education, values clarification, and the novel. These three terms were defined earlier in the study. In the review of literature a correlation will be established among the three areas of concern.

The values clarification approach to alcohol education concerns itself with "what alcohol is, what it can and cannot do, and when its use is appropriate or inappropriate (for those who choose to use it)."¹⁶ In order to actualize the goal of responsible decision-making concerning the use or non-use of alcohol, several objectives have been defined in which the students demonstrate:

1. "...knowledge of and ability to evaluate alternate responses to interpersonal alcohol situations in order to make responsible decisions about the drinking behavior of others."¹⁷
2. "...knowledge of and ability to evaluate alternate rules parents can establish concerning their children's drinking behavior in order to respond constructively to parents' behavior."¹⁸
3. "...Knowledge of and ability to evaluate alternate responses to peer pressures to drink or abstain in order to make responsible-decisions about drinking."¹⁹
4. "...ability to distinguish between social drinking,

¹⁶Miles, p.43.

¹⁷Peter Finn and Judith Platt, Alcohol and Alcohol Safety: A Curriculum Manual for Senior High Level, I (Cambridge: Abt Associates, Human Development Division), pp.51-52.

¹⁸Finn, p.51.

¹⁹Finn, p.51.

abstention, problem drinking, and alcoholism in order to understand their own and others' drinking behaviors."²⁰

5. "...knowledge of alternate constructive attitudes toward problem drinking in order to develop constructive attitudes toward problem drinkers."²¹

6. "...knowledge of the theories of problem drinking and alcoholism causation in order to make responsible decisions about problem drinkers."²²

7. "...knowledge of the effects of problem drinking and alcoholism in order to respond constructively to problem drinkers."²³

Advocates of this approach agree that teen-agers should be presented with unbiased facts and be made aware of the misconceptions surrounding alcohol use. With realistic material made available, the teen-ager can make responsible decisions concerning the use or non-use of alcoholic beverages. Realistic information is not the only vital factor in rational decision-making. "Experts agree...among the most promising approaches to prevention are those focusing on promoting responsible decision-making and healthy self-concepts in young people."²⁴

As stated in the conceptual definitions, self-concept is how one views himself and in relation to others. "For the adolescent the development of a sense of individual identity is a crucial problem."²⁵

²⁰Finn, p.51.

²¹Finn, p.52

²²Finn, p.52.

²³Finn, p.52.

²⁴"Young People and Alcohol," Alcohol Health and Research World (Summer, 1975), p.2.

²⁵Maddox, p.25.

If a poor self-concept is developed, the adolescent will "exhibit behavior patterns that try to avoid the real difficulties of life... and may resort to alcohol...as a means of 'copping out.'"²⁶ In the values clarification process, young people look at their entire life. They learn to question their motives and to consider the consequences of their actions. In this approach to alcohol education, the adolescent does not look at alcohol per se but rather, at the forces which may influence his or her decision to drink or to abstain. After this realization is made, the teen-ager will delve into the effects of the decision and their impact.

There are many methods used in the values clarification approach. Instruction is not limited to the textbook and teacher. Discussion, role-playing, and simulation are among the methods used. Sidney Simon, a leader in the field of values clarification, urges teachers to "use materials and methods which encourage students to consider alternative modes of thinking and acting."²⁷ This opens the door for all types of material, including the novel.

Teachers have long used the novel as an instructional method. Because of its didactic quality, "literature which deals with social or group problems can aid in improving human relations and in developing a rational approach to social problems."²⁸ In a time where the family is no longer the sole influence in determining values, the educational and mass media worlds now have the "potential for helping to create social responsibilities, including responsible

²⁶Miles, p.68.

²⁷Simon, p.20.

²⁸Dwight Burton, Literature Study in the High Schools (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p.275.

drinking behavior by those who choose to drink."²⁹ The novel can actualize this potential in that it

...gives the adolescent a chance to approach his problem from the objective role of the observer, to gain greater insight because of the creative writer's power to identify the vital components,³⁰ and to clear away the irrelevances and ambiguities.

In summary, alcohol education has moved away from the "scare" tactic approach into a more humanistic mode. This "new" alcohol education is based on the values clarification approach of looking at the total person and their process of valuing. Emphasis is on responsible decision-making by the adolescent concerning whether to drink and the consequences of the decision. Many sources are used to present alternatives from which the adolescent can select. One valuable source is the novel which can bring into focus the many alternatives that an adolescent can choose, prize, and act upon.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology this author used consisted of a two-stage process. Briefly, the first stage dealt with the selection of a panel that chose the novels that this author analyzed. The second stage concerned itself with this author interviewing each panel member.

The panel was selected by this author to encompass a wide range of expertise and interests. This author was especially looking for people well-versed in alcohol education and/or adolescent reading, and who are considered experts in their respective fields. The panel

²⁹Morris E. Chaftz, "Problems of Reaching Youth," Journal of School Health, Vol.56, No.5 (May, 1967), p.42.

³⁰Burton, p.287.

consisted of:

1. Carolyn Heddinger, Media Specialist, Wood Junior High School, Davenport, Iowa.
2. Linda Waddle, Media Specialist, Cedar Falls High School, Cedar Falls, Iowa.
3. Barbara Uchtorff, Reader's Advisor, Davenport Public Library, Davenport, Iowa.
4. Craig Wunderlich, Director, Iowa Drug Abuse Information Center, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.
5. Dr. G. Robert Carlsen, author, Books and the Teen-Age Reader (Harper and Row, 1967); Teacher of Literature for Adolescents; Professor, Department of English, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.
6. Gerald G. Hodges, Teacher of High School Library Materials (35:134g); Assistant Professor, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

When this author set up each individual appointment, the topic and purpose of the study was stated. This author also requested that the panel members compile a list of a maximum of ten novels dealing with alcohol use. The novels could deal directly with teen-age alcohol use or where teen-age drinking is prevalent but not necessarily the major theme.

The panel was provided with criteria used to evaluate the novels. The criteria were a synthesis of the basic concepts of alcohol education. The criteria, their definitions, and how they were to be rated are as follows:

1. Self-concept: "the perception one holds of his own person

as a discrete entity and as one who stands in relation to other people."³¹

_____Favorable: has a positive image of himself or herself and is "confident about the decisions he makes in that they cannot be altered by someone else's opinion."³²

_____Unfavorable: is destroyed by criticism, ...develops hatred toward himself and others, ...and may resort to alcohol...as a means of coping out."³³

Self-concept was ascertained before, during and after the drinking process.

2. Parental attitude: "Parents' drinking behavior and attitudes are very important in determining whether their children will or will not drink. It is probably the most important single factor."³⁴

_____Favorable: tolerant with "occasional experimentation"³⁵ on the part of the teen-ager.

_____Unfavorable: demands total abstinence on the part of the teen-ager.

_____Neutral: exhibits no overt expression of being favorable or unfavorable toward alcohol use.

As with self-concept, parental attitude was determined before, during, and after the adolescent's drinking process.

3. Peer attitude: "teen-agers are often quite vulnerable to the opinions, the approval, and criticisms of their friends."³⁶ The "peer group is often responsible for moderation and responsibility of alcohol use."³⁷ Peer attitude measurement was based on the same scale

³¹Maddox, p.19.

³²Maddox, p.68.

³³Maddox, p.68.

³⁴Margaret Bacon and Mary Brush Jones, Teen-age Drinking (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968), p.59.

³⁵Miles, p.61.

³⁶Bacon, p.40.

³⁷Young People and Alcohol, p.6.

as parental attitude, using favorable, unfavorable, and neutral with the same definitional terms. Peer attitude was also measured before, during, and after the drinking process.

4. Secondary reasons for drinking: this criterion is a composite of reasons teen-agers often give for drinking.

Experimentation (to see what alcohol tastes like or to discover the effects on the body).

An expression of adulthood. Drinking has long been considered "an improvised rite of passage between adolescence and adulthood."³⁸

Anxiety reduction. Alcohol is often seen as a means of "relief from family, financial, or personal problems."³⁹

Conformity with the actions of a group of friends one associates with because "all my friends drink."⁴⁰

Pleasure. Alcohol is often used as a means of relaxation and enjoyment.

During the individual interviews this author asked for the ten novels selected. The author also asked the panel to evaluate the criterion statements and the genre of novels dealing with teen-age drinking according to strengths, weaknesses, and reader appeal. Their comments were recorded on paper by this author during the interview and ~~are~~^{were} used as expert testimony in the study.

The final step of this research paper deals directly with the interview data given by the panel of experts. With this information

³⁸Maddox, p.84.

³⁹Maddox, p.83.

⁴⁰Jim Haskins, Teen-Age Alcoholism (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1976), p.60.

and the author's evaluations of the ten novels, this author used the criteria categories in summarizing the ten novels.

As this author read each novel, an inventory sheet based on the criterion statements was completed. Specific examples were noted according to each criterion category. The inventory sheets and the interviews with each panel member were used to compile generalizations on the ten novels as a whole and as a basis for the individual book reviews.

The book reviews include a brief synopsis of each book describing the central characters and the story plot. The review continues with a description of how the book rated in regard to the criterion statements. Examples from the books were presented as evidence. No limit was placed on the length of the book reviews in order to allow the author freedom to discuss the merits or limitations of each book.

ANALYSIS

The analysis section is divided into several components. The first section deals with the interviews conducted with the panel members. Included is a description of the basic format followed with each interview.

Following the section on interviews is a section called "Comments on the Genre of Novels Dealing with Teen-Age Drinking." Utilizing the expertise of the panel, this author has made a composite of the panel members' reactions to the genre of young adult fiction. The section on individual criterion categories is based on the same format as that of the genre of novels dealing with teen-age drinking.

After the comments on the individual criteria, the paper continues with the critiques of the ten books selected by the panel

members. Each critique includes a brief plot summary and a narrative comment following the criterion categories.

The analysis section concludes with a section that indicates patterns that have emerged from the ten novels.

Interviews

After an appointment was made with each panel member, an information packet was sent to that member. Included in the packet was a sheet detailing the interview and a list of the criterion categories (see Appendix A).

The interview was divided into the four basic components of (1) comments on the genre of novels dealing with teen-age drinking, (2) comments on the criteria categories as a unit, (3) comments on individual criteria, and (4) listing of the novels selected dealing directly with the topic of teen-age drinking or where teen-age use is prevalent.

The interviews were conducted as informally as possible in order to allow the panel members to freely express themselves. Their comments were recorded on paper by this author. The interviews generally ran the course of comments on each of the above components with questioning by this author in order to clarify or to delve further into comments made by the panel.

The comments made by the panel members constitute the next two sections of the paper.

Comments on the Genre of Novels Dealing with Teen-Age Drinking

While discussing the genre of novels dealing with teen-age drinking, the common consensus among the panel was a great deal of

difficulty in ascertaining titles suitable for the study.

Barbara Uchtorff stated that "novels dealing with teen-age drinking were limited in comparison to those on teen-age drug use."⁴¹ Continuing along these same lines was Carolyn Hedding, a junior high school media specialist. She stated that the lack of novels available is "somewhat alarming considering the number of teen-agers that do drink."⁴² A possible hypothesis was offered by Gerald Hodges. Hodges remarked that there is very little recognition by adults of the fact that teen-agers do drink. "Up until recently," stated Hodges, "it has been a taboo subject, especially that of the teen-age alcoholic."⁴³

Why has teen-age drinking been brought out into the open? Linda Waddle, senior high media specialist, feels that the subject of teen-age drinking has become more obvious and is an "area that needs to be explored."⁴⁴ Offering another explanation was Craig Wunderlich, drug information center director. Wunderlich theorized that "we are now seeing a big media push on teen-age drinking."⁴⁵ Concurrent with this thinking was Uchtorff. She felt that there will be an increase in the number of young adult novels available on this subject. She explained the increase by stating that "there is a time lag in literature catching

⁴¹Statement by Barbara Uchtorff, Reader's Advisor, personal interview, Davenport, Iowa, June 1, 1977.

⁴²Statement by Carolyn Hedding, junior high media specialist, personal interview, Davenport, Iowa, May 26, 1977.

⁴³Statement by Gerald Hodges, Assistant Professor of Library Science, personal interview, Cedar Falls, Iowa, April 22, 1977.

⁴⁴Statement by Linda Waddle, senior high school media specialist, personal interview, Cedar Falls, Iowa, June 17, 1977.

⁴⁵Statement by Craig Wunderlich, drug information center director, personal interview, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, June 9, 1977.

up with the social issues."⁴⁶

In the opinion of Dr. G. Robert Carlsen, professor of English, these novels "follow in a succession of 'a problem of the times' novels."⁴⁷ Carlsen elaborated on this theme by saying "First there were pregnancy novels, then drugs, and now alcohol. All are written after the fact."⁴⁸

Carlsen feels these books are written in a characteristic pattern. He feels that each of the novels now available is written "as a message book for teaching purposes. As a calculated message book, the picture they present isn't a true representation of teen-age drinking or how teen-agers can develop into problem drinkers."⁴⁹

In reading the majority of books available dealing with teen-age drinking, Carlsen notes that two points are in evidence. First of all, in message literature, "the figures exhibit very little depth of character almost to the point of becoming wooden."⁵⁰

The second point that he stressed concerns plot structure. Carlsen feels that most problem novels follow a standard plot structure. In the case of this genre he maintains that the story line begins with the "first drink culminating in the crisis that brings them to their senses."⁵¹

⁴⁶Uchterff, interview, June, 1977.

⁴⁷Statement by Dr. G. Robert Carlsen, professor of English, personal interview, Iowa City, Iowa, May 4, 1977.

⁴⁸Carlsen, interview, May 4, 1977.

⁴⁹Carlsen, interview, May 4, 1977.

⁵⁰Carlsen, interview, May 4, 1977.

⁵¹Carlsen, interview, May 4, 1977.

Individual Criteria

Panel members were asked to react to each of the criteria categories. The five panel members who deal with young adult literature were in agreement that for judging this type of literature the individual criteria were acceptable from their particular point of view.

The remaining panel member was chosen to represent a viewpoint removed from a literature background. The sixth panel member selected was Craig Wunderlich, director of the Iowa Drug Information Center. The purpose of his inclusion on the panel was to be an expert on the criterion categories. This author asked Mr. Wunderlich if the criteria developed were consistent with the basic concepts of an alcohol education program. Mr. Wunderlich made the following comments on each of the criterion categories:

Self-concept: Mr. Wunderlich felt that this is the most important factor in abusive drinking. He stated: "A person content with his or her self won't be as apt to seek releases."⁵²

Parental attitude: Mr. Wunderlich strongly disagreed with the statement "Parents' drinking behavior and attitude are very important in determining whether their children will or will not drink. It is probably the most important single factor."⁵³ Wunderlich feels that parental attitude is an influence, but only after self-concept and peer

⁵²Wunderlich, interview, June 9, 1977.

⁵³Bacon, p.59.

attitude.

Peer attitude: Wunderlich agreed with this criteria category but made a qualifying statement. He felt that there "isn't the rebellion to the peer group position on drinking as there is against the parental position."⁵⁴

Wunderlich stated that "the three criterion categories of self-concept, parental attitude, and peer attitude are key essentials to alcohol abuse."⁵⁵ He added that the secondary reasons were "keys to alcohol experimentation and use."⁵⁶

Asked for possible modifications or additions, Wunderlich had two suggestions. First, he felt it would have been helpful to add parental drinking habits. He stated that "parental extremes in drinking (total abstinence or heavy drinking) often leads to the same drinking pattern by the child."⁵⁷ Another point he felt would be useful in determining a pattern in this type of literature was again dealing with the parent/child relationship. Wunderlich felt that the overall relationship and not just concerning parental attitude would be useful in determining why the teen-ager drinks.

Book Critiques

In this section the ten novels selected by the panel are critiqued using the criterion categories as evaluators.

⁵⁴Wunderlich, interview, June 9, 1977.

⁵⁵Wunderlich, interview, June 9, 1977.

⁵⁶Wunderlich, interview, June 9, 1977.

⁵⁷Wunderlich, interview, June 9, 1977.

Book CritiquesThen Again, Maybe I Won't

Judy Blume

Plot summary. Thirteen year old Tony Maglione is faced with a major readjustment to his life and daily challenges to the moral ethics he's been taught to believe in.

Tony and his family are the average middle class family. His parents are both working to make ends meet. His grandmother takes care of the house and his brother and sister-in-law are living upstairs. Tony makes his own way with a paper route. They comprise the familiar, safe lifestyle for Tony. The big problems in his life are getting ready for junior high school and making sure to put Mrs. Gorsky's paper under the doormat.

Suddenly, Tony's safe world is thrown askew by the instant success of his father's invention. The family moves into a new house in a prosperous neighborhood in a new city. Tony must now create a new life with new friends plus cope with the normal worries of a thirteen year old boy. He becomes confused and apprehensive when he feels his family is losing all the qualities of familiarity to which he has grown accustomed. To replace these qualities, Tony sees only a quest for material possessions and a lifestyle equal to that of the neighbors.

Making new friends is paramount to Tony. The ideal situation, or so he thought at first, was finding out that a boy his age lived next door. Tony and Joel strike up an instant friendship. As time progresses, Tony discovers that Joel does things that upset Tony's moral beliefs. Tony must now resolve the struggle between his desire

for friendship and his moral beliefs.

Critique. Teen-age drinking is confined to one scene of youthful experimentation. Tony and his old pal, Frankie, are at Joel's house. Joel suggests that they have a beer. At first, Tony and Frankie are skeptical but decide to try one. Not liking the beer, the trio move on to scotch, rye, vodka, and brandy. The results are inevitable. The boys become giddily drunk, then ill. The next morning dawns with Tony and Frankie suffering the effects of their experimentation.

The boys' drinking is not of a serious nature. They are together on a Saturday night in a jovial mood. The liquor is available and no one is there to say no. Tony and Frankie have never had a drink, so when Joel offers a beer, they accept it. The beer doesn't represent a poor self-concept, rebellion against parents, or excess peer pressure. Instead, it's the first taste, doing what everyone else does, but mainly it's saying "I drink. I'm not a kid anymore."

I'll Get There, It Better Be Worth the Trip

John Donovan

Plot summary. The death of the person he loved, his grandmother, has left Davy with no home. His mother has decided that Davy must come to live with her. Torn from his familiar surroundings, Davy must rebuild his life with a mother he hardly knows in New York City.

Life seems bleak to Davy as he must cope with a new school and the unpredictable behavior of his mother. Things improve with his friendship with Altschuler, but guilt over an intimate moment involving Altschuler coupled with the death of his beloved dog leaves Davy shaken. He must now reason out the complexities of life and his own sexuality.

Critique. The death of Davy's grandmother disrupts the secure life-style of both Davy and his mother. Davy is forced to leave the safe home he has known. He must cope with not only the death of the person who has really provided love and care for him but also the insecurities of a new life. His mother is forced to abandon her free-wheeling life-style and be a mother to a son she has not really known for eight years.

The change proves difficult for his mother. She is unable to lead the life she has known. She tries very hard to make a home for Davy. When she feels that she has failed, she retreats into liquor. A couple of drinks make her feel secure but leave her behavior erratic and unintelligible to Davy.

Davy manages to weather the changes successfully. He adjusts quickly to school, makes friends quickly and begins to reestablish a relationship with his father. Even when things are tough, he always has his dachshund, Frankie, to love. Then one night when his friend Altschuler is over, something happens that has Davy concerned. The guys are on the floor and in a moment of attraction, kiss.

The situation leaves them disturbed but in discussing it, they reason that it was really nothing. They decide to have a drink though neither likes the taste. Despite the fact that "it makes a mess of people's lives,"⁵⁸ they take two swallows of every bottle in the house. His mother arrives to find them lying drunk together on the floor. After Altschuler leaves, Davy's mother puts him through the third degree. Why? "We wanted to see what it tastes like."⁵⁹

⁵⁸John Donovan, I'll Get There, It Better Be Worth the Trip (New York: Dell Publishing, 1971), p. 158.

⁵⁹Donovan, p.161.

Why? "For fun. To see what it tastes like."⁶⁰ For what started out as an act of innocence, Davy is pushed to a point where he can't cope and lashes out at his mother. Later, his dog is killed, and Davy is left guilt-stricken.

The drinking Davy did seems to be an act of finding out what alcohol really does. He's seen his mother use it as a crutch to escape her problems. Maybe it would solve the problems he's facing. Painfully, he finds that drinking didn't erase the problems but accentuated the old ones and added new ones.

Rumble Fish

S.E. Hinton

Plot summary. Rusty-James and Steve meet up after many years of separation. Steve is in college and Rusty-James is still at the pool tables bumming around. Steve's face stirs the memories of long ago that Rusty-James can never escape.

They were kids then and best friends. Rusty-James was the leader of the gang and Steve was the tag-along. Rusty had a reputation and little more. He wasn't smart, his mother had disappeared when he was young, his father was a drunk, but he had an older brother he idolized. It was his brother that pulled him out of scrapes and kept him leader. He was always there until the night Rusty-James was nearly beaten to death, and his leadership disintegrated.

Critique. Drinking is a vital component to the story. Drinking touches each life in such a way that there is no turning back.

⁶⁰Donovan, p.161.

Rusty-James is the leader of the gang. He is tough, he can fight, and when things get too rough he has his older brother to depend on. He's not very bright and he's floundering in school. School really isn't so bad because all his friends are there. One of the big things in his life is his girl, Patty. Going to her house is pretty good because it is a home.

His best friend is Steve. He really isn't sure why Steve is his best friend. Steve is good in school, has a good home, and isn't like anyone in a gang. It comes down to "Maybe it was because I had known him longer than I'd known anybody I wasn't related to. For a tough kid I had a bad habit of getting attached to people."⁶¹

To Rusty-James, home is a place to crash. His mother ran off when he was a small child and his father abandoned a law career to become a drunk on welfare. Rusty-James really doesn't care what his father does as long as his brother, Motorcycle Boy, is around. He idolizes Motorcycle Boy. He has style, great ideas, can control people, and is free to determine his own life. Whenever Rusty-James needed help, he looked to the Motorcycle Boy. Without him, he felt helpless and alone.

Rusty-James is always grabbing a beer or swiping some of his old man's snakey pete. It is a part of the image of being a cool guy. Besides, everyone else is drinking. Steve always refused until a night during his mother's hospitalization. As Rusty-James described it, Steve has been acting peculiar lately, with a "funny kind of recklessness to him."⁶²

⁶¹S.E. Hinton, Rumble Fish (New York: Dell Publishing, 1976), p.17.

⁶²Hinton, p.62.

Rusty-James, Steve, and Motorcycle Boy hit the town and see the sights. Taking along a bottle of cherry vodka, they start making the rounds to the movie house and the pool hall. Steve starts in on the cherry vodka with Rusty-James and begins to get drunk. Rusty-James and Motorcycle Boy walk Steve around to sober him up, while Motorcycle Boy tells Rusty-James about their mother and of seeing her in California. The more he says, the more distressed Rusty-James becomes. Why did his mother leave, and why didn't she care for him?

The booze and the incessant questions begin to make his mind whirl. Rusty-James and a still-drunk Steve leave the Motorcycle Boy at the pool hall. They begin walking down the dark, deserted streets. Rusty-James suspects something amiss. Two shadows emerge from the dark. The rest becomes a bloody, beaten haze.

That brief moment of Rusty-James' destiny begins the deterioration of his life. Steve moves out of his life, and his girl finds a new guy. The Motorcycle Boy didn't really belong to him and doesn't want to. The fight has left his mind a jumbled mess of thoughts, and he is faced with the final realization that the gang is an extinct species and that he is really a nobody just bumming around.

That Was Then, This Is Now

S.E. Hinton

Plot summary. Bryon and Mark were one. They could read each other's minds, set up a hustle, and pull each other out of a jam. Then their lives began to move into conflicting paths. Bryon can no longer abide with Mark's philosophy of "an eye for an eye," and Mark feels alienated by Bryon's interest in his girl and his belief in right and wrong.

The chasm in their friendship becomes irrevocable when Bryon learns how Mark is making the money he contributes to the household.

Critique. Drinking began at thirteen for Bryon and Mark. After going to the movies, Bryon and some friends decided to try some cherry vodka. As Bryon puts it, "I was just a dumb kid and I drank it just to show I was as super-tuff as the rest of them."⁶³ Their drinking continued despite their mother's admonition of "I'd rather you didn't."⁶⁴

To the kids Bryon and Mark run around with, drinking is an escape. There isn't much to do, so most of the kids cruise the Ribbon with a six pack or a bottle of cheap wine. Getting the booze is easy. All you have to do is find some guy's older brother or promise someone extra money for buying it.

One night of drinking almost costs Bryons his life. Bryon and Mark pick up Bryon's old girl, Angela. Angela is already drunk, but Mark makes sure she passes out. In an act of revenge against her brothers, Mark cuts off Angela's hair. Bryon cooperates because he is too drunk to fully realize the consequences. After nursing a hangover, Bryon is confronted by Angela's brothers. In the vicious circle of revenge, Bryon is brutally beaten.

The drinking that takes place follows a definite pattern. The first drink is motivated by youthful desire to experiment and as a visible symbol of adulthood. The drinking continues as an escape from the problems of home or school. This is manifested by Angela

⁶³S.E. Hinton, That Was Then, This Is Now (New York: Dell Publishing, 1972), p.23.

⁶⁴Hinton, That Was Then, This Is Now, p.70.

who retreats from a home where she is beaten into an unhappy marriage while escaping into frequent bouts of drinking.

For Bryon and Mark, drinking is a part of life. They realize the consequences of abuse but enjoy it for its short-term enjoyment.

The Late Great Me

Sandra Scoppetone

Plot summary. The beginning of a new school year. The same old nothingness again. That was until Geri met Dave. From that day on it was a whole new life. A life that was dominated by drinking, booze parties, and continual hangovers.

This is the life Geri recounts after a year of being Queen of the Juicers. She starts from the day of the first drink, to her days of continual drinking, to waking up in New York, and finally to the day she can admit that "My name is Geri Peters. I'm an alcoholic."

Critique. For Geri Peters, life seems a hum-drum. She feels shy around most people. Her mother, while losing her own grasp on reality, says she is suffering from a case of BP—Bad Personality—and if she's not careful she'll be the "Queen of Nothing."⁶⁵ Her father barely says a thing and her brother is the perfect child. She has two friends, both considered losers.

And then Dave Townsend comes into her life. He is new at school and every girl is after him. Of all of them, he chooses Geri. Their first date is typical of their dates. Dave brings a bottle of

⁶⁵Sandra Scoppetone, The Late Great Me (New York: Bantam Books, 1977), p. 112.

cheap wine and Geri has her first drink. The first drink ends up being her first drunk that launches her onto the road of alcoholism.

Going with Dave completely changes her life. She doesn't like the taste of the liquor at first but she keeps experimenting until she finds her drink. She continues drinking and for the first time in her life she feels popular. She drops her old friends because they don't understand about her drinking. Geri and Dave get into a new group of friends. They are the juicers, the kids that Geri has always ignored before. "They were really neat kids. Nobody put me down or treated me like a freak or anything. It was...the beginning for me of belonging to a crowd."⁶⁶

Even her parents are tolerable. Maybe it is because every time she thought there might be a confrontation, she fortified herself with scotch. They are even admitting she is growing up and that she should be allowed to drink. As her father puts it, "We want you to drink properly. There is nothing wrong with alcohol if you don't abuse it."⁶⁷ Her mother adds, "I'd rather you'd have a little now and then than smoke pot."⁶⁸

And how does Geri feel during the siege of heavy drinking? She feels great. "I was all one and the one I was was Beautiful, Graceful, Witty, Brilliant, Sexy, Talented, and just plain Terrific. Geri Peters—The Great Me!"⁶⁹

⁶⁶Scoppetone, p.135.

⁶⁷Scoppetone, p.157.

⁶⁸Scoppetone, p.139.

⁶⁹Scoppetone, p.106.

But around her, life is falling apart. Her father stays away more as her mother's depression deepens. Geri is gaining weight, her grades are slipping, and the school is cracking down on her. She is depending more and more on the scotch. Dave's mother then dies in her own vomit after a drinking spree. Geri tries to cut down to only weekend drinking until her mother is placed in a mental institute. She awakens in New York with a nude man on top of her. Finally coming to, she calls a friend from Alcoholics Anonymous, even though her parents say that they can't handle the problem themselves.

Geri finds the road back difficult. She loses Dave because he can't understand why she can't drink now and then. She loses her juicer friends and it's difficult to return to her old friends. But there is help. She makes new friends that support her non-drinking. Geri and her mother reconcile and they become a family again.

How does she feel about herself now? Geri says of herself, "I am a young woman, an artist, both considerate and inconsiderate, generous and selfish, funny and sulky, rigid and open, arrogant and humble, and absolutely, definitely, without a doubt, a drunk."⁷⁰

Trying Hard to Hear You

Sandra Scoppetone

Plot summary. The summer of her sixteenth year is one that Camilla Crawford will never forget. The beginning of the summer seems promising, but a series of events turn the summer into one of upsetting revelations and for two friends—death.

⁷⁰ Scoppetone, p.5.

During tryouts for summer theater, Cam falls in love with Phil Chrystie. Her best friend Jeff expresses intense dislike towards Phil at first but as the weeks pass, the two become inseparable. Cam can't understand the fast friendship until the discovery is made that Phil and Jeff are having a relationship. Unable to cope with the situation, Cam retreats from Jeff's friendship and Jeff and Phil are taunted and threatened. It is only after a long talk with Jeff that Cam begins to realize the meaning of love.

Critique. Drinking is not the main theme in this book but it deals with the human compulsion of demanding everyone to fit into a consistent mold. This compulsion is exhibited by the popular reaction to the homosexual relationship of the two friends.

The drinking done by Cam's group is not of a serious nature. It is the sharing of a bottle of Boone's Farm wine in celebration or having a few beers in social enjoyment. As Cam puts it, "it wasn't for moral reasons that we didn't blow dope or drink hard stuff—it was just that no one felt a real need to."⁷¹

The one exception is Maura Harris, and she really isn't a part of the group. The rumor is that Maura is a real drinker and the rumor seems substantiated when she shows up drunk for one of the rehearsals. Cam comes to a greater understanding of Maura's drinking when she discovers the pressure that Maura is under because she dates a black guy.

⁷¹Sandra Scopetone, Trying Hard to Hear You (New York: Putnam, 1975), p.168.

The major drinking scene involves Cam's younger sister, Rachel. While her mother is gone, Cam is to take care of Rachel, but she has an important date, so her friends offer to stay with Rachel. Coming home from the date, Cam discovers the house full of kids she doesn't know, and most of them are drunk. Worst of all is Rachel, who is drunk and very sick. Managing to get Rachel to bed, Cam and her friends eventually evacuate the kids from the house by saying that the police are coming. The next morning, Cam discusses the situation with Rachel and reminds her that fourteen is too young to drink. With that Rachel retorts, "Nobody drinks legally."⁷² The discussion continues with Rachel saying that she got the liquor from a minister's son who stole it from his father. It ends when the culprit shows up—still drunk.

Drinking is also involved in the deaths of Cam's friends Penny and Phil. Penny has secretly had a crush on Phil and still does even though Phil has stated he is a homosexual. She gets him to go out and "was gonna feed him tequila and make a man out of him."⁷³ Unable to withstand the pressure being exerted, Phil goes. The date ends in tragedy when a drunken Phil loses control of the car and crashes into a tree. Jeff doesn't call it drunk driving. He flatly states that Phil killed himself with the liquor providing the courage to do it.

⁷²Scoppetone, Trying Hard to Hear You, p.136.

⁷³Scoppetone, Trying Hard to Hear You, p.237.

My Name is Davy. I'm an Alcoholic

Anne Snyder

Plot summary. I'm going to quit. Every morning it's the same promise until the thought of school or his parents makes it a promise Davy is unable to keep. The days drag on until he gets to know a group of kids that are hooked like he is.

Davy is an alcoholic who sails high on the booze euphoria and finds acceptance. Reality steps in and crushes his world when he and his girl slip out of their pledge to abstain. Davy must now face his responsibility for her death and to recreate the shambles of his life.

Critique. Davy is an alcoholic. He starts each day with a drink to get him going. The rest of the day is dependent on drinking to keep him going.

An only child of middle-aged parents, Davy feels lonely and "a real nobody,"⁷⁴ without any friends. He hits the low point of despair one New Year's Eve when all the world is out and he's home alone. He takes his first drink and then another. He begins to feel warm and happy. He is "suddenly as cool as, as tall as, as tough as anyone."⁷⁵

He continues to escape into liquor as he battles to "smother the hollow, empty loneliness."⁷⁶ The future begins to brighten as the clique he has always envied notices that he has liquor he is willing to

⁷⁴ Anne Snyder, My Name is Davy. I'm an Alcoholic (New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1977), p. 12.

⁷⁵ Snyder, p.18.

⁷⁶ Snyder, p.19.

share. He is invited to the group that to him "seemed the most adult."⁷⁷ Soon the group would do anything for their old pal, Davy, including making sure that he has his first sexual experience. A girl called Maxi is elected to do the honors and ends up taking Davy home.

Discovering that he is drunk, his father confronts him with the theft of his liquor. Finally calming down, his father lectures Davy on the use of alcohol, considering "this is the first time."⁷⁸ He remonstrates Davy that "when you are a little older, you can drink whatever you want--at home."⁷⁹ He concludes with "a little drink never hurt anyone just as long as it is kept under control."⁸⁰

Off the hook, Davy can concentrate on his drinking and the love of his life, Maxi. The two become inseparable. They enjoy being together, talking, and drinking Maxi's liquor. Dave feels secure until the night of Maxi's party.

Davy is still somewhat nervous about being with the gang and concerned about obtaining a bottle. He arrives at the party upset over shoplifting a bottle. The gang, after intense drinking, decides to play strip poker with Maxi being brutally undressed and humiliated.

Davy and Maxi need no others until their liquor supply is cut off. After being beaten by two guys they have begged to buy them liquor, Davy and Maxi decide to quit drinking. The road of abstinence is rocky for both. Maxi suffers from severe withdrawal and Davy must confess his

⁷⁷Snyder, p.15.

⁷⁸Snyder, p.33.

⁷⁹Snyder, p.33.

⁸⁰Snyder, p.33.

drinking to his parents. The confrontation is an angry, vengeful scene with his parents shifting the blame to each other. Both are in agreement that Davy is not an alcoholic and not in need of Alcoholics Anonymous. He winds up instead at a psychiatrist's office. Davy is told that alcoholism is an addiction that can be kicked. The responsibility is Davy's. The visit only alienates Davy and adds to the tension he feels.

Maxi feels their only hope is Alcoholics Anonymous, and, to please her, Davy agrees to go. Maxi immediately gets strength and whole-heartedly embraces the program. Davy is skeptical but goes to keep Maxi happy. The non-drinking is also making him feel better, his grades are improving, and the tension at home is easing, but the ~~group~~'s control over Maxi is straining their relationship.

It all comes to a head on the one-month anniversary of no drinking. The strain between the two becomes intense, so they decide to go to the beach. At the beach, the old gang is partying. Maxi, at first, refuses a drink, but Davy is easily swayed into drinking. The party really begins to swing when a drunk Davy is coaxed into skinny dipping by a now drunk Maxi. The next thing Davy realizes is sirens echoing the shouts that Maxi has drowned.

Davy escapes into hiding, existing as a drunken recluse. He seeks revenge of Maxi's death but fails. Barely living, Davy buys cheap booze from old drunks. Seeing himself in a mirror, Davy realizes what he has become. Knowing he can't whip the problem himself, he stumbles into an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting with the words "My name is Davy. I am an Alcoholic."⁸¹

⁸¹Snyder, p.128.

I Can Stop Anytime I Want

James Trivers

Plot summary. In one short instant, Graham Samson's world comes tumbling down around him. Busted on a charge of selling marijuana, Graham feels smothered by his parents and the restrictions placed on him by the court. Without friends and drugs, Graham now escapes into liquor.

Finally, Graham is unable to cope with reality and the threatened loss of his alcohol escape. Hitching a ride, Graham is almost killed by a maniac drunk. He returns home and acts out the role that is expected of him. But the act is marred by the fact that he is still drinking and still unable to cope with reality.

Critique. Graham Samson blows sky high on beer, pot, and cocaine. Life is in his pocket with a beautiful girlfriend, a best friend, being in the right crowd, and a bright future ahead of him. He has minor scrapes with his parents, but nothing serious. He's even rolling in money from the drugs he and Tortoise are pushing.

Then his world is completely reversed when they are busted for selling to a couple of narcotics agents. His girl refuses to see him again. Tortoise is bailed out by his parents and sent away to school. What he thought were his friends desert him. His parents are devastated at what he has done and all the bad publicity involved with his arrest. As his mother puts it, "Graham, you haven't been worth the effort."⁸²

In order to get out on bail and during his year's probation, Graham is told to act as an upstanding young citizen. He is forced to

⁸²James Trivers, I Can Stop Anytime I Want (New York: Prentice Hall, 1974), p. 37.

get his hair cut and to stop using drugs. The worst part is living day to day with his parents. He feels that his mother is unreasonable and that his father constantly harangues him about the real costs of the arrest. Aside from the three thousand dollar lawyer fee, he reminds him how he has ruined his college chances, the loss of his driver's license, and the effect the situation has had on the family.

Unable to cope with the loss of his freedom, Graham escapes into the forbidden territory of alcohol. Since his parents drink, he figures he can tell them, "At least I'm not taking drugs anymore."⁸³ Besides, his "life is so shitful I had to drink to relax and take it easy."⁸⁴ "I hated myself. I really had nothing going for me except to be as drunk as possible."⁸⁵

Life becomes unbearable. He receives a letter from Tortoise that leaves him feeling that he has been left with the blame. He has his first meeting with the probation officer and shows up drunk. Though his parents try to protect him at first, the situation explodes when the probation officer mentions that alcohol is prohibited. When he is pressured into admitting that he has been drinking, Graham is told to quit or face jail.

In a final attempt to retain his mixed-up life, Graham steals money from his mother and hitches a ride. Picked up by a derelict drunk bent on self-destruction, Graham barely escapes death when the man plunges the car into a bridge. Graham realizes how lucky he is but also "wasn't

⁸³Trivers, p.94.

⁸⁴Trivers, p.95.

⁸⁵Trivers, p.106.

strong enough to head out on my own...I had to go home...I had to start someplace."⁸⁶

After convincing his parents that he could change, Graham successfully deceives those around him into believing that he's becoming the model young man. Coming away from a successful deception, Graham meets his new girlfriend. Taking out a bottle of scotch, he takes a long drink. His girlfriend accosts him with stopping. "I can stop anytime I want,"⁸⁷ he replies as she leaves him back again in the middle of nowhere.

Sarah T.—Portrait
of a Teen-Age Alcoholic

Robin Wagner

Plot summary. Unable to cope with her parents' divorce and her mother's remarriage, Sarah Travis becomes a teen-age alcoholic at the age of fifteen.

Struggling to hide her drinking, Sarah resorts to scheming and lying. The deception works until she falls in love with Ken. She tries to quit drinking for him, but the need is too great. An attempt with psychiatry is unsuccessful because she refuses to admit that she is an alcoholic. Only after an accident that occurs while she is drunk can Sarah come to grips with the reality of her drinking.

Critique. Sarah Travis is lonely and feels neglected. Finding no one who she feels really cares, Sarah seeks the solace of a bottle.

Sarah's parents are divorced and her mother has remarried.

⁸⁶Trivers, p.145.

⁸⁷Trivers, p.154.

Sarah feels ugly and that her mother overly favors her older sister. She is "torn between being herself and being the person her mother wants her to be."⁸⁸ Sarah thinks they don't "care what's going on inside of me."⁸⁹ They seem to ignore the "fear that she is not making new friends, and the difficulty she has adjusting to a new school and new friends."⁹⁰ She longs to be with her father and the promise he makes of a life together. To compensate for the security she craves, she drinks although her mother takes a firm stand against it. It seems ridiculous to Sarah, considering her parents are "just like kids, boasting of their drinking prowess, trying to top the other."⁹¹

The world seems to brighten for Sarah when the most popular boy in school asks her to a party. The happiness dims when she finds out that her mother has set up the date. After a few drinks that Ken has "introduced her to," Sarah becomes the life of the party getting to know the kids that have ignored her before. The evening is only slightly marred by her parents' angry announcement that she is grounded for being drunk.

Feeling awful about what happened, Ken asks her out again and shows her his prized possession, his horse, Daisy. Their relationship develops and provides a small amount of security but not enough for Sarah to quit. Her drinking is having repercussions. The maid is fired when she takes the blame for money Sarah has stolen. Sarah is constantly stealing money and lying to obtain liquor. She gets drunk

⁸⁸ Robin Wagner, Sarah T.—Portrait of a Teen-Age Alcoholic (New York: Ballantine, 1975), p. 15.

⁸⁹ Wagner, p.13.

⁹⁰ Wagner, p.11.

⁹¹ Wagner, p.11.

while she's babysitting and encounters problems at school.

The whole situation is at the same time both raging and bewildering to her parents. The first time she arrives home drunk, they are angry at Ken that he got her drunk and upset at Sarah for drinking. Unwilling to believe that it could be Sarah's fault, they try to ground her. As the incidents become more frequent, they bribe, plead, and yell at her. At the moment she tells them the truth of her drinking, they are left in a state of helpless bewilderment.

Confronted with this knowledge, they reluctantly seek the aid of a psychiatrist. For both Sarah and her mother, the visit is disturbing. Her mother immediately rejects the idea of Sarah's participation in Alcoholics Anonymous and feels that the doctor is equating Sarah with a skid-row wino. To Sarah, the doctor's message sets off the fear that she is unwilling to accept as reality.

Only to prove to Ken that she can stop drinking, she attends an AA meeting. The meeting has the same effect as the visit to the psychiatrist. The whole experience hits too close to home. She escapes until she reenters reality again at the meeting of her parents at the psychiatrist's office. The room explodes with charges and counter-charges. Finally given her say, Sarah begs to live with her father. He passes it off by saying that her mother would refuse. Sarah's last strand of security collapses when given the chance, her father cowardly backs down and admits his failure at being responsible for himself, let alone for Sarah.

Sarah escapes and seeks the solace of liquor. Unable to obtain any on her own she allows herself to be violated for a bottle of booze. Drunk and humiliated, she runs to Ken. Finding him gone,

she takes Daisy for a ride. The rest becomes a blur of lights until a flashlight is shining into her face and she hears Ken urging the vet to help the horse.

Placed in a hospital, Sarah begs the psychiatrist to lock her up because she is crazy. She begins to force herself into the reality of her alcoholism but she thrashes out unwilling to take the first step. Emerging from the room, she surveys each parent. Realizing that the only one who could solve the problem was herself, she takes that first step. Facing her parents, she announces, "I'm an alcoholic,"⁹² and walks to those who can help—other alcoholics.

The Pigman

Paul Zindel

plot summary. John Conlan and Lorraine Jensen gravitate toward each other because John does crazy things and Lorraine thinks he's funny. The relationship starts out as a stunt. Pick up the phone, make a call, and see how long you can keep the person on the phone. That's all Lorraine had to do until she called Mr. Pignati, a lonely vulnerable man. A perfect set-up for a crazy John stunt, but unwittingly the stunt ends in an involvement with the Pigman. John and Lorraine begin to spend a great deal of time with the Pigman. They go to the zoo, shop, laugh and share a new life. Then one night the Pigman suffers a heart attack and is hospitalized. This seems like a perfect opportunity for John and Lorraine to have a party. The party is going great until the drinking starts to get out of hand, a gate crasher starts a fight with John, and the Pigman unexpectedly returns from the hospital

⁹²Wagner, p.11.

to find the police there and the house in shambles.

The next day John and Lorraine want to make amends and call the Pigman. Instead of the vibrant, lively man they are so fond of, they find a worn-out soul. Meeting at the zoo, they begin to slowly reconstruct the friendship John and Lorraine almost lost. Just as the chasm is healing, John and Lorraine irrevocably lose the Pigman but discover a new meaning to life.

Critique. John and Lorraine are going through painful periods in regard to their self-concepts when they meet each other. John is having difficulty with his parents. In his opinion, his mother's only concern is keeping her house clean and his father's is running his business. John feels that he is "out of place"⁹³ in his parents' lives, compounded by the fact that he doesn't fit the perfect son image of his brother, Kenny. In order to compensate, John does crazy things like roller skating in a store because "everything in the house had to have a purpose. There was no one there who could understand doing something just for fun—something crazy."⁹⁴

John finds someone who understands this need in Lorraine. She laughs at him and goes along with his crazy stunts. Lorraine thinks she's too fat, ugly and unpopular when she starts at a new school. Her mother warns her against all men, saying that all they want is sex. But in John she finds a friend, a confidant, and a chance to live. Lorraine feels that an analyst would call his family the

⁹³Paul Zindel, The Pigman (New York: Dell, 1970), p. 94.

⁹⁴Zindel, p.88.

"source problem"⁹⁵ to John's drinking and that he drinks to "assert his independence."⁹⁶ Whatever his real motivation is, John's drinking has not reached a problem stage but is at the stage where he enjoys beer. For both John and Lorraine, drinking wine at the Pigman's house is a ritual that the three share.

The crisis point in the story involves a drinking scene. While the Pigman is hospitalized, John and Lorraine go to the hospital everyday and it becomes a real home to them. They decide to have a few friends over for a sociable drink, something they can't do in their own homes. The evening starts as planned with a few friendly people gathering to enjoy a friendly drink. Both soon grow out of proportion. An uninvited guest begins taunting John and the two become involved in a fight. The police are called in to calm the party down. Unexpectedly, the Pigman returns from the hospital to find his house in shambles and his prized pig collection destroyed.

What had started as a pleasurable, adult evening ends in chaotic tragedy. Escaping from unpleasant surroundings, John and Lorraine are now faced with the consequences of letting their drinking get out of control. They see that in reality that they have not escaped but in fact has nearly destroyed a precious part of their lives.

⁹⁵Zindel, p.14.

⁹⁶Zindel, p.14.

Pattern of Similarities

In applying the criterion statements to the ten selected novels, several similarities among the novels were noted. Where teen-age drinking was the main theme, as in The Late Great Me, Sarah T.--Portrait of a Teen-Age Alcoholic, I Can Stop Anytime I Want, and My Name is Davy. I'm an Alcoholic, the similarities fell under the criterion statements of self-concept, parental attitude, and peer pressure. All of the novels exhibited the secondary reason for drinking.

Self-concept:

- A. Before drinking:
 - 1. The major characters exhibit a sense of loneliness.
 - 2. The major characters suffer from a poor self-concept manifested in such statements as I'm ugly, I'm fat, I'm unpopular.
- B. During drinking:
 - 1. During the course of drinking, the characters feel an exaggerated sense of worth as noted in The Late Great Me by Sandra Scoppetone.
- C. After drinking:
 - 1. Only in The Late Great Me can self-concept after drinking be viewed. It would appear that the major character has a more favorable view of self worth than at any other time in the story.

Parental attitude:

- A. Before drinking:
 - 1. The parents involved feel that their children should not drink. The parents are not rigid on their stance; in fact, in the four novels mentioned, the parents drink.
- B. During drinking:
 - 1. During their child's drinking, the parents seem oblivious to the drinking. Their attitude seems to be that drinking is better than drug use. It is only after a crisis in their child's drinking do the parents fully realize the situation.

- C. After drinking:
 - 1. At the point where the realization of drinking is made, the parents refuse outside help. They feel that it is a situation to be handled within the family.
 - 2. The parents exhibit eagerness to help their child overcome their problem and make attempts to strengthen the home environment without outside help.

Peer attitude:

- A. Before drinking:
 - 1. There seems to be no overt display of peer pressure to start drinking.
- B. During drinking:
 - 1. The peer group influences the teen-ager to keep drinking because it is the main activity of the group. There is also an invisible pressure within the adolescent to continue drinking because he feels that to belong to the group he has to drink.
- C. After drinking:
 - 1. The teen-ager is at a loss for friends at first. The teen-ager realizes that returning to the old group will lead to resuming the drinking. Generally, new non-drinking friends are sought to help reinforce sobriety.

Secondary reasons (as exhibited in the ten novels):

- A. In most of the novels, drinking began with experimentation.
- B. The characters associated drinking with adulthood.
- C. Many of the characters enjoyed the taste (unless it was involving the first taste of liquor.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

During the course of the research and actual writing of this paper, this author has found several limitations. These limitations aren't without possible solutions. Further research into this subject has merit both in challenging material and in usefulness to those

delving into young adult fiction. For this reason, this author offers the following recommendations for future research.

This author feels that there is merit in conducting this research again after a lapse of time, choosing an arbitrary number of two years. The panel members agree that there will be an increase in the number of novels available as teen-age drinking becomes recognized as a social issue. Along these same lines, there will, hopefully, be an increase in the professional literature on the subject of novels dealing with teen-age drinking in regard to content and consistency with the goals of an alcohol education program.

In regard to the panel, this author offers two recommendations. First, that the panel members be increased to include more members. This would provide for possible diversity within a particular panel qualification and expansion into areas of competencies other than those listed. Another advantage to increasing the number of panel members would be to allow for possible differences in cultural viewpoint. The panel members all reflect basically the same cultural values and views of one state, Iowa. An increase in panel would allow a researcher to select members from across the United States. This cross section might offer a wide diversity of opinions on teen-age drinking, the genre involved and the novels selected.

The criterion categories selected are just a small segment of possible areas that can be used in evaluating this genre. Future research could delve into characterization, plot structure, literary evolution and many other areas.

This study is just a small beginning. This study has just scratched the surface of the comparability of novels dealing with teen-age

drinking and the goals of alcohol education. There are many areas yet to be touched in order to assist teen-agers in their decision on their own drinking behavior.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW

- A. Comments on the genre of novels dealing with teen-age drinking.
- B. Comments on criteria statements as a unit.
- C. Comments on individual criteria.
- D. Discussion over the novels selected (covering novels dealing directly with the topic of teen-age drinking or where teen-age drinking is prevalent)
- E. Final Comments

The criteria are a synthesis of the basic concepts of alcohol education. The criteria, their definitions and how they will be rated are as follows:

1. Self-concept: "the perception one holds of his own person as a discrete entity and as one who stands in relation to other people."

____ Favorable: has a positive image of himself or herself and is "confident about the decisions he makes in that they cannot be altered by someone else's opinion."

____ Unfavorable: is destroyed by criticism,...develops hatred toward himself and others,...and may resort to alcohol...as a means of coping out."

2. Parental attitude: "Parents' drinking behavior and attitude are very important in determining whether their children will or will not drink. It is probably the most important single factor.

____ Favorable: tolerant with "occasional experimentation" on the part of the teen-ager.

____ Unfavorable: demands total abstinence on the part of the teen-ager.

____ Neutral: exhibits no overt expression of being favorable or unfavorable toward alcohol use.

As with self-concept, parental attitude will be measured before, during, and after adolescent's drinking process.

3. Peer attitude: "teen-agers are often quite vulnerable to the opinions, the approval, and criticisms of their friends." The "peer group is often responsible for moderation and responsibility of alcohol use." Peer attitude measurement will be based on the same scale as parental attitude, using favorable, unfavorable, and neutral with

the same definitional terms. Peer attitude will also be measured before, during, and after the drinking process.

4. Secondary reasons for drinking: this criterion is composite of reasons teen-agers often give for drinking.

_____ Experimentation (to see what alcohol tastes like or to discover the effects on the body)

_____ An expression of adulthood. Drinking has long been considered "an improvised rite of passage between adolescence and adulthood."

_____ Anxiety reduction. Alcohol is often seen as a means of "relief from family, financial, or personal problems."

_____ Conformity with the actions of a group of friends one associates with because "all my friends drink."

_____ Pleasure. Alcohol is often used as a means of relaxation and enjoyment.

APPENDIX B

Blume, Judy. Then Again, Maybe I Won't.

____ Hardcover: Bradbury Press, 1971. \$6.95

____ Paperback: Dell, 1973. \$1.25

Donovan, John. I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth the Trip.

____ Hardcover: Harper, 1969. \$4.95

____ Paperback: Dell, 1971. \$.95

Hinton, S.E. Rumble Fish.

____ Hardcover: Delacorte, 1975. \$6.95

____ Paperback: Dell, 1976. \$1.25

Hinton, S.E. That Was Then, This Is Now.

____ Hardcover: Viking Press, 1971. \$4.95

____ Paperback: Dell, 1972. \$.95

Scoppetone, Sandra. The Late Great Me.

____ Hardcover: Putnam, 1975. \$7.95

____ Paperback: Bantam, 1977. \$1.50

Scoppetone, Sandra. Trying Hard to Hear You.

____ Hardcover: Harper-Row, 1974. \$5.95

____ Paperback: Bantam, 1976. \$1.25

Snyder, Anne. My Name Is Davy. I'm An Alcoholic.

____ Hardcover: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1977. \$5.95

Trivers, James. I Can Stop Anytime I Want.

____ Hardcover: Prentice-Hall, 1974. \$5.95

Wagner, Robin. Sarah T. Portrait of a Teen-Age Alcoholic.

____ Paperback: Ballantine, 1975. \$1.25

Zindel, Paul. The Pigman.

____ Hardcover: Harper-Row, 1968. \$4.95

____ Paperback: Dell, 1970. \$.95