

INPUT AND INSIGHT
AN
ASSESSMENT OF ATTITUDE

by

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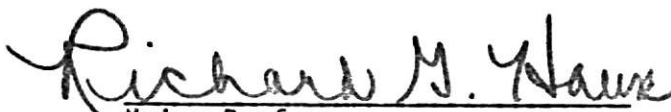
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WITH GRATITUDE TO DR. RICHARD G. HAUSE, WHO GAVE ME THE IDEA
IN THE FIRST PLACE, AND TO THE STUDENTS OF ENGLISH XI, CONCORDIA
HIGH SCHOOL, WHO TOLD ME WHAT THEY THOUGHT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter	
I. IN THE BEGINNING	5
II. BORN TO REBELLION	13
III. COMPONENTS OF COURAGE	22
IV. IT'S HERE AND IT'S REAL	29
V. VARIATIONS ON THE THEME	35
VI. FEEDBACK	48
APPENDIX: REPRESENTATIVE POINTS OF VIEW	
The Value of History and Tradition	53
Conformity, Individualism, and Class Distinction	57
Honesty	63
Courage and Heroism	66
Dropouts and Failure	69
Religion	72
On Being Misunderstood	74
Signs of the Times	79
Metaphorically Speaking	83
Resolutions for Myself	85
FOOTNOTES	86
BIBLIOGRAPHY	88

INTRODUCTION

How does one kill his lion in America today? This is a question posed by Margaret Mead, a well-known American anthropologist. In some African tribes a boy has passed into manhood when he goes out and kills a lion. At this point he knows, and so does everyone else, that he is a man. In America things are not so simple. To begin with, there are many, many lions to be killed, not just one, and a quandary evolves concerning just which one to slay first. After that, there is the question of methods and weapons. Just how does one go about killing a lion and proving maturity, anyway?¹ And then what does one do with the carcass after the deed is accomplished? Often by the time a particular lion has been encountered, the would-be hunter is already bogged down in the morass of everyday living and is too confused or entrapped to be able to utilize his opportunity intelligently. Sadly enough, many Americans live out their lives at a level of immaturity compelling them to worship at the shrine of a cult of youth which denies the worth of anyone over thirty years of age. A current world plague seems to be the "generation gap," with everyone madly scrambling to stay on the young side of the precipice.

Educators agree that the school is in crisis and that education must be revamped, re-molded, and re-charged, preferably as of the day before yesterday. It must teach two-year-olds to read, and even to type! It must promote career information in grades K-12; it must provide continuing education for its adults; it must make the golden age more golden. In effect, it must be all things to all people.

Common sense dictates that this is an impossible task. American

ingenuity says, "Let's give it a try." And so we jump on our horses and ride off in all directions at once, looking not for a lion to slay, but for a dragon to beat to death with a stick. More trouble lies in the fact that we don't know where we are going or what to do after we get there. And perhaps the generation gap is at fault. Again, Margaret Mead relates that today's children can no longer turn to any older person who has ever lived in the world before to tell them what to do because there just is no one who can predict to what ends we should be educating. There was a time when we knew, or thought we knew, exactly what each child needed to know and why. One of our basic inheritances as Americans is a reverence for the value of education. The Puritans knew that every child must learn to read so that he could read the Bible and learn the word of God firsthand, not through the mumblings of a priest. They so strongly felt this to be an essential value that they founded Harvard College only sixteen years after the landing of the Mayflower and printed their first volume, The Bay Psalm Book, some four years later. Indeed, they knew what they wanted!

At various other stages in the development of America we have known what we wanted and have set out to get it. After World War II, when we learned from draftee examinations that a surprising number of young men in North Carolina were deficient in health and education, we boarded the band wagon for physical education and better reading programs. As soon as Russia launched Sputnik, however, we abandoned the so-called "soft" education and launched our own private missile in the form of programs of math and science to gear the gifted child to space supremacy.² These directions were great while they lasted, and the dragon was duly slain and digested.

But now things seem different, somehow. "God is dead"; wars end "not with a bang, but with a whimper" (albeit it is more like a sigh of relief),

and the voice of the turtle is not heard in the land (not very clearly, at least). What is worth knowing, anyway? Learners are both mobile and diverse. Twenty-five percent of the families in America move annually. Children of practically all of these families have grown up in front of a television set which is capable of carrying them into all areas of human experience and existence.³ They have acquired an amazing array of technical knowledge, as well as a somewhat over-realistic view of drugs, sex, the "fuzz," and the "establishment." They have seen extremes in poverty and affluence, and if they are confused, their elders are even more so. It is not surprising that those who don't turn to violence dissolve in apathy. And the things the schools attempt to teach them are on the top of a list headed "Who Needs That?"

There is a Basuto proverb which is used as an epigraph in Robert Ruark's book about Africa called Something of Value. It states, "If a man does away with his traditional way of living and throws away his good customs, he had better first make certain he has something of value to replace them."⁴ Ruark contends that the major mistake of the white man in dealing with Africa's blacks was to deny them this exchange. But there is more to this issue as it concerns American schools. The time has long since gone when adults can pass on their traditional values to the young. Children no longer accept without question (if they ever did) the answers they are given. What is worth knowing? What is worth having? What is worth doing? If the over-thirty generation cannot tell them (and if they will not listen) they will have to find out for themselves. "Tell it like it is, man!" The question is, "How is it?" or better, "How do we find out how it is?" Louis Rath in Values in Teaching urges educators to help the child clarify his own values and find out what is important to him in the time in which he lives. Since that time will change as years go by, he needs to be able to probe deeply into his own thinking so

that he may see what causes him to believe as he does. Perhaps this is a logical starting point in the search for a way out of the classroom dilemma. What are values, anyway? And how does the curriculum of a school help a student to define his own?

Chapter I

IN THE BEGINNING

It is not enough to say of a given procedure that "it doesn't hurt anyone" to study it; the criterion should be "does it help anyone?" If the only person helped is the teacher by satisfying his need for dominance or feeding his vanity, then it would seem worse than useless, or "existentially immoral," to teach it.⁵ The democratic way of life is more than sentimentalization of lofty ideals; it must change the way people relate to their fellows. Schools must see that individuals have knowledge and skills necessary to make wise and intelligent choices. Unfortunately, freedom of inquiry and the right to make critical judgments have been restricted by public schools throughout history.⁶

Critics of middle class values object to the plastic (synthetic) character of American life. These critics claim Americans have no choice when it comes to setting their own goals.⁷ One of the problems of moral education is to determine how the young can move from dependence to independence within this structure. To act morally is to believe that the action is right and can be reasonably justified.⁸ Thus, it would seem to behoove those who act as educators to attempt to devise approaches and techniques which might help the student to understand himself and his relation to moral action within the structure in which he functions.

Schools in our society transmit culture's heritage, but they also transmit traditional knowledge, beliefs and values. These values, coming from history and literature, should not be presented as possessing unquestionable

authority, but should serve to open doors to the future.⁹ The teacher who is secure as a person, secure in his command of the basic structure and meaning of his discipline and alert to change in his area of specialization can be unafraid to challenge old, time-honored ideas. He will attempt to find ways to teach as much as he can which is relevant to the life style the student seems apt to lead.¹⁰ This implies individualization of instruction based upon knowledge of the student's cultural environment.

The student himself tends to conform to dominant values and beliefs of society as he finds them. Should his life be one in which personal standards are determined by occupation, social groups, et cetera, or should it be a life in which he deliberately chooses his values and establishes his own standards?¹¹ This choice might well come about through an assessment of the origin of his values and their subsequent development through the process of his association with his environment and his peers. Educational leaders are often tempted to react to undesirable behavior by becoming more and more directive. Rarely is the dignity of failure and humanness of error seen as part of a growth pattern.¹² Perhaps this consideration is noteworthy in value assessment. Witness, for example, the life stories of Abraham Lincoln and Winston Churchill. Sylvia Ashton-Warner makes a savage, but not totally unjustified indictment when she says that the unskilled teacher invades the houses of the minds of children, routs out the native inhabitants and takes over occupancy with his own static images.¹³ Sadly enough, these images can not and do not relate to the student's current life style.

Dr. William Glasser, originator of the Success Schools approach to education and author of Schools Without Failure, bases his program upon three concepts--student involvement, relevant topics, and thinking.¹⁴ These are, indeed, powerful present-day concepts. Relevance is now more than a fourth

member of the traditional Readin', Ritin', and Rithmetic. It is the base upon which the triangle rests. No longer does the student learn in order that he may read the Bible, race the Russians to the moon, or simply revel in the joy of learning. If facts do not apply to his particular life style at a particular moment, he doesn't buy them. That the information may be considered necessary knowledge at a later date does not interest him in the least. If such be the case, he will just jolly well learn it at that later date, and the devil take the hindmost.

Galling as this attitude may seem to an educator of the old school, it is just another contemporary challenge which must be met if the public school is to continue to exist in its present concept, or in any other, for that matter.

David Seeley, Director of the Public Education Association, is quoted as stating, "The myth of universal education is no longer as American as apple pie."¹⁵ The word "myth" deserves much serious contemplation. Some writers have raised questions concerning whether schools can survive, or if, indeed, they should survive. Ivan Illich has proposed a plan for education without schools, and Daniel Levine and Robert J. Havighurst are authors of a new book entitled Farewell to Schools???¹⁶

Paradoxically, materialism and humanitarianism seem to be the major goals of Americans today. Sometimes they seem to be poles apart. Posters on a bulletin board for a Guidance Department show two feckless students pursuing implicitly unworthy goals. One is of a girl wandering aimlessly through a meadow and is captioned, "Johanna Hawkins is forever looking for four-leaf clovers. What kind of job do you think that will get her?" The other is of Ron Taylor, who, according to the poster, is "constantly looking for buried treasure."

A visit to an Area Vototechnical School is an awe-inspiring experience, the key-word of which seems to be "efficiency." Some classes run day and night. If a course doesn't work out (sell in the market place, that is) it is removed from the curriculum and replaced with something more in public demand. And yet a visitor comes away with the feeling that surely there must be something more to education than this. In the words of a popular song, "If that's all there is, let's keep on dancing."

Factories are plagued with the effects of boredom engendered by routine assembly-line techniques. Some are providing clinics for the study and treatment of alcoholism or drug addiction among employees. Sabotage and ennui on assembly lines cause various makes and models of automobiles to be recalled periodically; autos made on Mondays and Fridays are carelessly constructed. Surely we cannot deny the student an opportunity to investigate his own heritage, both as an American and as an individual, and to determine his own life style. Many classes in traditional subject matter probably should be retained, but the academic approach should be drastically altered. Memorization should be de-emphasized, testing and grading procedures should be altered, and the focus of learning should be placed upon ways to develop concepts of broad understanding. Questioning should be open-ended and relevant. The student should become a thoughtful, responsible person who knows what he believes. "The basic goal of education is not knowledge nor skill development, but rather is the maximum personal development of the individual according to the idiosyncratic pattern which he discovers in and for himself."¹⁷

This sounds like an extremely tall order, and that it is. However, no matter what the task, there is only one place to begin, and that is "where you're at." Therefore, the course described in the following pages was worked out from materials on hand and taught to an eleventh grade American literature

class in a small, North Central Kansas town where conservatism reigns supreme, everywhere except, perhaps, in the innermost hearts of the students. The purpose was to attempt a plan of reflective thinking and open-end inquiry which, hopefully, would enable the student to understand himself, his aims, beliefs, and purposes. There were no right or wrong answers to the questions posed. The word "values" was avoided almost entirely. Students were told that they were free to say anything that they thought or believed if they would explain and support their contentions. Any questions which were distasteful, offensive, or too personal could be omitted.

For an opener, chairs were arranged in a semi-circle around the room when some 50 students (in two sections) walked into room 107 on August 28, 1972. This situation created only a minimum of confusion, however, because the girls were still able to find seats at one end of the semi-circle and the boys at the other. Equality of womankind has not yet extended to Concordia, Kansas--not in seating arrangements, anyway!

The objectives of the course were explained to the group, with emphasis upon the search for America's educational and literary heritage as it paralleled the historical development of the nation. This idea drew no enthusiasm, since one ever-present common student complaint is, "I don't see any sense in studying American history. It all happened before I was born and it doesn't have anything to do with my life." That argument might be refuted before the term ended--and by the same token, also it might not.

Further explanation brought out that traditional examinations would be, for the most part, eliminated, and the student would be tested by means of reaction essays and discussions, in which he would express his opinions and thoughts, based upon what he had read. Grading would not be determined by what he said but by the way in which he said it--clarity of expression, support of

contentions, extent of explanation, and the ever-present "mechanics," anathema to man and beast alike. The following handout set the project in motion.

Choose one of these sets of questions. Think about them, reflect upon them and think of other questions which they might suggest. Then react in writing, as honestly as you can. There are no right nor wrong answers; you need not worry now about how you express your ideas, just so that you can be understood. For now, anyway, you need not be concerned with mechanics. Simply concentrate upon what you actually feel or think about the subject you choose.

- I. What do you worry about most?
What are the causes of your worries?
Can any of your worries be eliminated?
How?
Which of them might you deal with first?
How do you decide?
- II. When you become an adult, how do you want to be similar to or different from the adults you now know?
Why do you feel this way?
- III. What, if anything, seems to you to be worth dying for?
How did you come to believe this?
What seems worth living for?
What makes you think so?
- IV. At the present moment, what would you most like to be doing?
What about five or ten years from now?
What might you have to give up in order to do some or all of these things?
- V. What are some of the most dangerous ideas that are popular today?
Where did these ideas come from?
Why do you think they are dangerous? *

At first the students tended to be freer in written expression than in class discussion, so reactions were collected and presented in essence on the following day when the consensus of the group was pointed out. This frequently triggered additional ideas or arguments which had not been apparent previously.

Actual consumption of literature began with the reading of Thornton Wilder's Our Town, which the author himself has described as "an attempt to find

* Suggestions for some of the questions were gained from Louis E. Rath, Merrill Harmin and Sidney B. Simon, Values and Teaching (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1966), James A. Smith, Setting Conditions for Creative Teaching (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1968), and Alex F. Osborn, Applied Imagination (New York: Scribner, 1963).

a value above all price for the smallest events in our daily life." This may be a rather heady initial concept, but students very quickly identified with the situations (boy-girl, parent-child, righteous female-town drunk) which carry the reader to Emily's realization of the wonder of the earth on even a fairly ordinary day. They reacted very enthusiastically to the following questions which were covered in approximately two class sessions. Some were discussed orally and some in writing.

- I. "I have set the village against the largest dimensions of time and place," says Wilder, concerning Our Town. The recurrent words in the play are 'hundreds,' 'thousands,' and 'millions.' "Emily's joys and griefs, her algebra lessons and her birthday presents--what are they when we consider all the billions of girls who have lived, who are living, and who will live?"

Discuss briefly the ways in which Wilder sets Grover's Corners "against the largest dimensions."

Can you relate Concordia (or any other small town in which you have lived) to Grover's Corners?

How is your life restricted or benefited by living in a town of this size?

Are there more restrictions than benefits, or is it the other way around?

Would you want your children to grow up in a town of this size? Why or why not?

Do you think people in other towns such as Chapman, our traditional rival, are different from us? If so, in what ways?

- II. When discussing the marriage of Emily and George, Dr. Gibbs says, "Everybody has a right to his own troubles."

Has anyone ever gotten you out of a bad situation which you have brought about all by yourself?

Could you have gotten out of it alone?

Would it have been better to do so, do you think?

What are your reasons for thinking as you do?

Do you think that your parents would lie for you?

Do you think that they should?

Do you rely upon others for help more than you rely upon yourself?

- III. Mrs. Soames, who always cries at weddings, says after the marriage of George and Emily, "I always say: happiness, that's the great thing! The important thing is to be happy."

How much do you agree with Mrs. Soames?

Are you more often happy than unhappy?

What is your definition of happiness?

What would you give up in order to be happy?
If you could walk out of the classroom door at the end of this period, and be anybody or anywhere you liked, what would you choose?

- IV. The Stage Manager tells us that very few human beings ever realize the greatness of life while they are actually living it.

Do you agree? For what reason?
What is the major theme of the play?
How does Emily's great desire to simply have people look at one another and truly see and appreciate one another demonstrate that the smallest events in our lives have priceless value?
Is there anything you can do to help carry out Wilder's theme?
What are some specific things?

Chapter II

BORN TO REBELLION

Although anthologies of literature have fallen into disrepute among teachers of English, one of the textbooks in current supply was American Literature, edited by Mark Schorer, Arno Jewett, Walter Havighurst, and Allen Kirschner. Therefore, partly because of availability but more by reason of its format, this book was selected as a basic text, supplemented with paperback editions of novels which had been a part of the curriculum for some time. The anthology traces the parallel developments of history and literature in America. A very apt feature of its composition is an inclusion, in each historical section, of a contemporary piece of writing called "The Present Recovers the Past." This selection deals with the peoples and events of the earlier time and leads into an "Eyewitness Account," taken from actual journals and diaries of persons living in that day. This provides the student with a more or less three-way linking of the past and the present and serves to make relevance a more pertinent issue.

In the section entitled "Not by Bread Alone," America's beginnings from 1607-1750 are chronicled first through Stephen Vincent Benet's poem, "In the House of the Wildwood," and then with Mary Rowlandson's "Massacre!" which relates an actual woman's actual encounter with an Indian raid. Other selections used came from The Bay Psalm Book, The New England Primer, Anne Bradstreet's poetry, Jonathan Edwards' sermons, and the writings of John Smith, Samuel Sewall, and William Byrd. After the customary reading and discussions, the following reaction sheet was distributed.

- I. This section is headed "Not by Bread Alone."
Where did this expression originate?
What does it mean?
Do you need things other than food and clothing
in order to live?
What kinds of things do you need?
How do you find out what these things are?
- II. What personal characteristics were needed for men and
women to survive in early America?
Do you think that the average American today would
have survived the first hardship years in Jamestown and Plymouth?
Why or why not?
In what ways have Americans changed since that time?
In what ways are they alike?
Can you think of any of the characteristics of the early
colonists which you yourself possess today?
What are they?
If you can think of none, what do you lack?
Do you really need this quality? Explain.
- III. In both Plymouth and Boston--indeed, throughout New England--
people lived with a continual awareness of God's handiwork
around them. Are our lives as centered in religion as were
those of the Pilgrims?
If there has been a change, do you think it is for the
better or the worse?
Why do you think this?
- IV. Mary Rowlandson's "Massacre!" very clearly describes scenes
of violence. Do you think this could be one of the reasons
it was so popular for almost 100 years?
Do people just naturally enjoy reading about or watching
scenes of violence? Why or why not?
Are young people encouraged to participate in violence
by its prevalence in the media today?
How do you actually feel about scenes of violence?
Give your reasons for approving or disapproving of TV and
movie censorship.

Study of the period of Revolutionary America (1750-1815) was initiated with the prologue to Sidney Kingsley's The Patriots. The eyewitness account came from the journal of a young Connecticut surgeon, Albigeance Waldo. The entries covered the time of the grim winter of 1777-78 and were entitled "Valley Forge." Other writings used were St. Jean deCrevecoeur's "What Is an American?" and selections from Benjamin Franklin's The Autobiography and "Poor Richard's Almanac." Further readings included Patrick Henry's "Speech to the

Virginia Convention," samplings from Thomas Paine's "The Crisis," and Thomas Jefferson's "The Declaration of Independence." "Yankee Doodle" and "The Battle of the Kegs" touched upon the balladry of the era.

Reactions to this unit were tied in somewhat with the previous one. One of them compared Benjamin Franklin's project of arriving at moral perfection with that of Jonathan Edwards as expressed in "A Young Puritan's Code." Students compared Edwards' rules to Franklin's list of virtues.

- I. What are the similarities or the differences that you see in the rules of personal conduct set up by Jonathan Edwards and Benjamin Franklin?
How did each man attempt to live up to his beliefs of right and wrong?
- II. Make a set of rules you would choose for yourself in today's world.
How do they differ from Franklin's and Edwards'?
- III. Have you ever changed your behavior simply by making up your mind that you were going to change?
How did it work out?

Another reaction dealt primarily with the use of rebellion in society, and continued the line of questioning begun with the selection "Massacre!" These questions followed.

- I. America was born in rebellion. Early colonists, themselves rebels from the Church of England, banished Roger Williams because he preached what they called "heresy." To the edicts of their mother country, England, they figuratively stuck out their tongues and "double-dared" her to retaliate. Violent incidents followed royal demands for new taxes. Today some persons deplore the glorification of violence and crime in our media. Why do you believe that man is (or is not) essentially a creature of violence?
- II. What are some of the episodes of violence in our national history?
Do TV programs and books about crime make you think of ways in which you could "get even" with somebody you dislike?
- III. There has been, according to local police, a rash of vandalism in Concordia.
Why do "kids" break windows, steal Christmas decorations, slash tires, sugar gas tanks, egg cars, etc.?

Is it just natural for them to be destructive, do you think?
 Please explain your thinking on this subject.
 If, by chance, you have ever been involved in some acts
 of vandalism, minor or otherwise, you need not make a
 confession, but rather try to sort out the motives
 behind this sort of action in general.

- IV. Do you feel that rebellion is ever useful and good?
 Explain.

The next period covered the years from 1815-1850 when America began its journey westward, via covered wagon and the Erie Canal. Walter Edmonds' "Water Never Hurt a Man" was the present-day tale of a long-ago time, and H. B. Fearon's "Crossing the Allegheney," communicated the emotions of the people who struggled across the mountains in search of a suitable place to live. The first literature of the time concerned frontier writings and the "tall tale," along with Washington Irving's "The Specter Bridegroom" and "The Devil and Tom Walker." The distinctive American flavor of these writings was noted, as was the fact that their motifs not only had evolved from earlier writings in European countries, but also had greatly influenced later works of such men as Mark Twain and William Faulkner. Students also learned of James Fenimore Cooper's great success with the over-cultivated Europeans, who were yearning to learn about the simple beauties of nature, uncorrupted by the works of man, thus answering Sydney Smith's peevish question of 1820, ". . . who reads an American book, anyway?"

One reaction in this case was varied by suggesting two alternatives.

1. Investigate at least two examples of the Faust legend, concentrating upon reporting the similarities and the differences in the way it was handled by the authors you chose.
2. Compare or contrast James Fenimore Cooper's western hero, Natty Bumppo, with his current descendants in song, story, and TV.

Later in the unit, another set of questions dealt with the views of death

as revealed in William Cullen Bryant's "Thanatopsis" and Edgar Allan Poe's "The Masque of the Red Death."

- I. Contrast Bryant's view of death as expressed in "Thanatopsis" with that of Poe.
- II. Which viewpoint would you say most people share?
Why do you suppose they feel this way?
- III. Have you ever thought very much about death?
Do you know how you feel about the subject?
Do you remember your first contact with death?
What did you think?
- IV. Why do we sorrow over the death of a friend or a member of the family?
How about the death of a prominent figure, such as Robert Kennedy or Martin Luther King?
Do you really believe that we should feel the way we do?
- V. Do grownups adequately prepare children for the death (or possible death) of a family member, or, for that matter, of a pet?
What do you think that you will try to teach your children about the matter of death?
Why do you feel this way?

Shorter reactions concerned Oliver Wendell Holmes' poem, "Stanzas on Freedom." Students were asked these questions.

- I. Do you agree with Holmes when he says, "Man wants but little here below"?
Do you think he really means what he says?
Explain your thinking.
- II. Complete the statement, "Happiness is . . ."
from your own personal point of view.
- III. At what period in history was James Russell Lowell's poem "Stanzas on Freedom" written?
What were the political views of Lowell and his wife?
- IV. How does Lowell define "true freedom"?
What debt do free men owe mankind?
- V. How would you define true freedom?
Do you think people ever achieve this state?
- VI. Do you believe that you are responsible for anyone other than yourself? Explain your viewpoint.

At this point it seemed appropriate to introduce Ralph Waldo Emerson, with what Oliver Wendell Holmes called "our Intellectual Declaration of Independence." Emerson's Phi Beta Kappa speech of 1837 maintained that a scholar is not simply a man of books; rather many persons who are solely wrapped up in books really know very little. The scholar is a man thinking, Emerson contended. Therefore, his beliefs which stress the importance of the individual, rather than that of society; the value of a man's mind, rather than the value of any material things around him; fit very well into the pattern of the course work being attempted. Consequently, certain of Emerson's essays were read and discussed. Because these are rather difficult for the average student, the class spent several periods analyzing his points of view. Next came selections from Emerson's disciple, Henry David Thoreau, after which the class reacted to two different sets of questions.

ON EMERSON

- I. What do you think was Emerson's attitude toward the age in which he lived? Gives examples from selections on pages 320-328.
- II. Emerson said, "Let the thinking man respond not to the ancient and honorable voices of the earth, but to life as he himself interprets it."
 What, in your opinion, did he mean?
 Do you think that it is possible to be completely individual in 1972?
 What things (if any) stand in our way?
 Do you know anyone who is truly individual?
 Do you like him or her? Do others like him?
 What, if anything, would you be willing to give up to be an individual?
- III. Why does society value conformity so highly?
 Do you agree with Emerson's condemnation of conformity?
 You may not, of course.
 Can you suggest reasons for the fact that many intelligent persons disagree with Emerson at this point?
 In what way do you conform to that which is expected of you?
 Are you happier when you conform or when you do not?
 Is there any danger for you in either conformity or non-conformity?

- IV. "Greatness" for Emerson consists in the individual's doing what he considers right in all that concerns him; "meanness" is living "after the world's opinion," doing what other people feel he should do in a given situation. In short, the difference lies in who determines the manner in which an individual lives--the individual himself, or the world.
- Consider these ideas in the light of current world affairs. Do you agree or disagree?
- What happened in Concordia last summer when a group of so-called "hippies" wished to camp overnight at the Airport Park? In your opinion, what was the actual reason that they were not allowed to remain?

ON THOREAU

- I. What reasons did Thoreau give for going to live by Walden Pond? Why did he return to Concord? Does he recommend that everyone go live by a pond in the woods? What does he suggest that we do with our lives? Do you think that this is practical or possible for you?
- II. Emerson and Thoreau both questioned the wisdom of following tradition--doing things just because "that's the way they've always been done."
- Do you think of tradition as a help or a hindrance in your life? Can you think of times when tradition has helped you or hurt you? What traditions (if any) would you like to pass on to your children? Do you think tradition has helped or hurt our school? Explain your thinking.
- III. Thoreau said that "Age is no better, hardly so well, qualified for an instructor as youth, for it has not profited so much as it has lost. Practically, the old have no very important advice to give the young . . . I have lived some thirty years on this planet and I have yet to hear the first syllable of valuable or even earnest advice from my seniors."
- Do you feel that this statement is harsh or disrespectful, or is it really true? Explain.
- There is a present-day saying that you can't trust anyone over thirty. Have you found this to be true? How do older people "bug" you (if they do)? Do you think there is any hope of overcoming the so-called "generation gap"?
- IV. Why did Thoreau enjoy being alone at times? How can you explain his belief that we can be alone in a group of people? Have you ever felt a similar "aloneness"?

- V. Explain: "If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them." How does one do this?

After this, readings on the life and background of John Greenleaf Whittier, along with some of his writings, were culminated with this reaction sheet.

ON WHITTIER

- I. In what ways was Whittier persecuted for his political beliefs?
Can you imagine the intensity of feeling which preceded the Civil War? What do you suppose it was like?
Do you know of any groups of people today who have suffered for their convictions about the draft, the war in Vietnam, unemployment, racial discrimination, religious beliefs, etc.? Have you ever felt discriminated against because of anything in your life over which you had no control? (religious faith, color of skin, social position, family background, etc.)
- II. Now that peace seems imminent, there is talk of granting amnesty to young men who previously have fled to Canada to escape the draft.
Under what conditions should they be pardoned and allowed to return to the United States?
What, exactly, is their crime?
Whom have they harmed?
- III. Whittier was a Quaker farmer who knew the folklore of the countryside.
What do you understand by the term "folklore"?
Kansas folklore has been collected by S. J. Sackett and William E. Koch in a volume entitled Kansas Folklore. Ask your parents, grandparents, or any older friend about superstitions or legends that they have learned from their parents or grandparents.
Are there any superstitions that you believe?
If so, what are they?
What local legends or folk tales do you know?
- IV. After reading the poem "Abraham Davenport," do you recall having read or heard about groups of people who were convinced that the world was coming to an end on a specified date?
What did they do?
What do you suppose you would do under these circumstances?
What did Abraham Davenport do?
Why did he choose this course of action?
Can you see any connection between this thought and the cowboy's tradition of "dying with his boots on"? How about old Siward's question in William Shakespeare's

Macbeth when he asked, after he had learned of his son's death in battle, "Had he his wounds before?"

- V. According to Whittier, what is the greatness in life?
Do you agree, or do daily tasks seem monotonous and unprofitable?
How about going to school? Would you quit if your parents would allow it?

Other reactions from the period included these.

FROM NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

Dr. Heidegger's Experiment

- I. Describe the atmosphere of the story.
Compare it with the atmosphere of Irving's "The Specter Bridegroom." What similarities or differences do you find?
- II. What do we mean by "tone" in writing?
What is Irving's tone in "The Specter Bridegroom"?
Hawthorne's, in "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment"?
Can you tell anything about the writers' views of human nature? Do they seem to like people, look up to them, suspect them, admire them, or what?
- III. In "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," how do the old people act after they have drunk the water?
How do you suppose they will act in the time which follows the story?
Do you believe that if we had our lives to live over again, we would do it any differently?
What would you do differently, if you had the chance?
How did Emily feel about this in the play Our Town?

The Ambitious Guest

- I. When did you first sense the feeling of impending doom?
- II. What is the extra twist of irony which Hawthorne adds at the end?
- III. Which of the ambitions of the family seems to you to be the most worthwhile?
Which seems to be the most pathetic?
- IV. What was your ambition when you were very small?
Has it changed since you have grown older?
- V. Some educators now claim that all education should be career-oriented. That means that a child should begin to learn about different occupations as soon as he starts to school.
How do you feel about this?
What did you gain (if anything) from the Career Day which was held at CHS this spring?

Chapter III

COMPONENTS OF COURAGE

Because Bruce Catton is considered the outstanding modern historian of the Civil War (his works are not only extremely accurate, but also excitingly readable) his poem "Names from the War" introduced the literature of this time. These names do, as Catton writes, ". . . still clang when we touch them," and he succeeds in presenting war from the viewpoint of the ordinary soldier. The eyewitness account in this section came from an actual letter written by a Northern seaman on board the Monitor, immediately after that vessel's history-making encounter with the Merrimac on Sunday, March 9, 1862. The excitement and pride shown by the practically anonymous seaman combine with the feeling that he actually understands the immense importance of the battle in which he has just participated. In both this and Catton's poem there is a definite aura of the reality of war.

How do ordinary men become heroes? The question was developed with the reading of the short story, "A Mystery of Heroism," by Stephen Crane. This reaction sheet provided food for thought.

A MYSTERY OF HEROISM

- I. Fred Collins risks his life getting to the well.
Why does he do it? The reasons are complex; be sure to give as many of them as you can. Together, do they seem sufficient for his undertaking such a foolhardy adventure?
How large a part do the opinions of other soldiers play in his decision to go?
- II. What is Fred Collins' definition of a hero?
Is he really a hero when he undertakes his mission?

When, in your opinion, does he become heroic?
 Can you define the term "hero"?
 Must a hero be unafraid? Must his goals be worthy ones?
 How do persons become heroes, anyway?

- III. Is the hero always the "good guy" in a story?
 What is the term often used instead of "hero" to designate the main character in a story?
 Do you think that there are any true "heroes" in the world today? Explain your thinking.
 Who are some of the individuals who might have been considered heroes in the last twenty-five years?
 Have any of them proved to be false heroes?
 Can you think of any persons whose lives have been damaged because they were at one time heroic?
- IV. Do all heroic acts have to be of major importance?
- V. What irony is present in the ending of Crane's story?
 What does the fate of the water suggest about the importance of the mission for which Collins risked his life?
- VI. What are some adjectives which you would use to describe war as Crane seems to see it?

At this point came a longer work by the same author. Crane's novel, The Red Badge of Courage, is considered to be the first great fictional account of the Civil War, although it was written some thirty years later by a man who had not yet seen war at first hand. The book was read and discussed in depth, with particular attention to the attitudes and values of Henry Fleming as he grows up via his war experiences. Each student wrote an expository theme, in which he attempted to prove a thesis chosen from the following suggestions:

- a. the changing values of Henry Fleming
- b. naturalism in The Red Badge of Courage
- c. the worst thing that Henry Fleming did was _____.

Evaluation continued with the following reaction sheet.

- I. Henry Fleming in the story is often called simply "the youth."
 Why do you suppose that Stephen Crane chose to call him this?
 In what ways does Henry act like a typical young person?
 What are some of his goals and aspirations?
 In your opinion, what real values do these goals and aspirations have?

- II. Ralph Waldo Emerson, in his poem "Voluntaries III," says, "So nigh is grandeur to our dust/So near is God to man/When duty whispers low, 'Thou must,'/The youth replies, 'I can.'"

In what ways does modern youth reply to challenge?
Does he accept it gladly, or does he hang back?
How did you react to the greatest challenge you have faced so far in your life?
Are you now proud or ashamed of your actions?

- III. Early in the book The Red Badge of Courage, Crane brings up the nature and meaning of courage by having Henry think that he must discover whether or not he is brave. He learns that courage is a "temporary, but sublime, absence of selfishness in which men for a short time become united in a comradeship which leads them to heroic actions."

Ernest Hemingway says that courage is "grace under pressure."

H. G. Wells says, "Ultimate courage is bravery of the mind."

La Rochefoucauld says, "True courage is to do without witness everything that one is capable of doing before all the world."¹⁸

What is your personal definition of courage?

Do you think that everyone has courage? If so, how?

If not, why not?

Discuss your personal level of courage.

Are you proud of it?

Four great poets celebrated the tragedy and glory of the Civil War, but the greatest of all was Walt Whitman, whose Drum-Taps appeared in 1865. The students in the course met Mr. Whitman by way of a few of these poems such as "Reconciliation," "Beat! Beat! Drums!" and "The Wound-Dresser," but most of the emphasis upon his poetry centered around selections from "Song of Myself," which shares so many of Emerson's concerns for "the common, the familiar, the low." Like Emerson, Whitman urges people to turn their eyes from the past in favor of life in the open air around them, and to believe in the infinite worth of the individual. Several class periods were spent in reading Whitman's poetry and discussing his philosophy as it applies to the individualist and his effort to determine his own identity. Students reacted well to his feelings on

death, immortality, and self-reliance and related these ideas to literary works previously studied. Most, incidentally, seemed to think that free verse form was more readily understandable than the more conventional poetry to which they had been accustomed. They worked through a reaction sheet, and then did some group work to identify poetic techniques and differences in style as evidenced by the poetry of Dickinson, Lanier and Whitman. A comparison between Whitman's "To a Locomotive in Winter" and Dickinson's "I Like to See It Lap the Miles" brought this forth very well. The Whitman reaction sheet follows.

ON WHITMAN

- I. Whitman's poem "Song of Myself" states "You shall no longer take things at second and third hand nor look through the eyes of the dead, nor feed on spectres in books."
 What is your interpretation of this quotation?
 In what specific ways are you able to live life for yourself, right at the present moment?
 How do you propose to do this in the future?
 What do you think of persons who "drop out" of today's society?
 What might be some of their reasons for doing so?
 To what extent do you think their reasons are valid?
- II. Whitman says that agonies, as well as glories, are a part of life and, as such, should be accepted. Many times our agonies are not large ones, but they are nevertheless agonizing. Dr. Gibbs in the play Our Town says that everyone has the right to his own troubles.
 How do you honestly feel about the bad times in your life, whether they be huge heartbreaks or minor setbacks?
 Do you feel that school should be made easier for the present-day student?
 How about failure? Should the educational system refrain from failing students in course work? Why or why not?
 Does failure defeat an individual or does it strengthen him? Explain your position on the question.
- III. "In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barley-corn less,
 And the good or bad I say of myself, I say of them." -- Walt Whitman
 Have you ever tried to identify with a person who was very different from you?
 What happened?

What would you do or what would you think if you went away to college and were assigned a black roommate?

Since the class was well into poetry now and rather enjoying it, there seemed to be some justification for pressing whatever advantage existed. Consequently, American folk songs and ballads were read, sung, and played. Ballad form and content were identified from such varied items as "The Ballad of Trees and the Master," "Blue Tail Fly," "Sweet Betsy from Pike," "Casey Jones," "Ira Hayes," "Ode to Billy Joe," and "Abraham, Martin, and John." As diverse as these selections may appear on the surface, each bore a definite relationship to an era or a philosophy previously defined. Students brought some of their personal albums of current pop groups and concluded that balladry is, indeed, a continuing force in American life, both in style and content.

Samuel Langhorn Clemens, the "first literary giant born west of the Mississippi" as he has often been called, came on the scene now through some readings from The Autobiography of Mark Twain, edited by Charles Neider. The class read portions of the book as background information for Twain's style, his propensity for exaggeration, his attitude toward the Negro--in short, for many of his early experiences which he later incorporated into his fiction. Three questions were posed for reacting.

MARK TWAIN

- I. The tone of this book is definitely one of nostalgia. Students today often feel that there is little value in looking toward the past, yet recently there has been a trend toward the thirties and forties in styles of dress, music, etc.
What is your thinking? Do we need to know the history of our country in order to understand ourselves?
Are you interested or are you bored when you hear older people tell about their early day experiences?
Why do you feel as you do?
- II. Mark Twain says that his mother was secretly proud of the aristocrats in her ancestry yet he seems to feel that they would have gained more from honest, hard work

than from their futile attempts to regain their titles of nobility.

How do you interpret this line of thinking?

Do you believe that we, in this part of America, are class conscious to any degree? Explain.

Have you ever felt that someone was "better" than you? (financially, socially, etc.)

Why do you feel as you do?

What things would you like your children to have (or to be) that you yourself do not have right now?

- III. Mark Twain, in his anecdote concerning his being hypnotized, implies that a lie is long-lasting and its teller may become thoroughly sick of it, but he can never lose it.
- How do you feel about honesty in everyday life?
- What, actually, is honesty? Does truth concern facts or emotions?
- Are there situations which justify what we term "little white lies"? If so, what would some of them be?
- From what you have read and heard, is it more difficult to be honest today than it formerly was?

A slightly different type of approach was used for the next piece of literature. The class did an in-depth study of The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, set up on an individualized basis with each student being responsible for his own grade, according to the number of points for which he opted. It worked like this, according to the study guide.

THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN

Your grade for the study of this novel will be entirely up to you. Below is a list of required and optional activities and a grading scale. After you have completed the requirements, you may choose from the others whatever you wish to add up to as many points as you wish.

REQUIRED: Read the book

Achieve a grade of at least 80% of the possible points upon a factual test which will be given at the end of the unit.

50 points

OPTIONS:

- I. Write an expository theme on one of the following topics or one of your own choosing which you have previously cleared with the instructor.

A. The adults in Huck's life.

B. Huck's attitude toward Jim and toward slavery in general.

- C. Superstitions in the story.
 - D. Episodes of violence in the story.
 - E. The meaning of the Mississippi River to Huck. 50 points
- II. Make a series of sketches which tell the story, as it seems to you. 25 points
- III. Construct a model raft, as you think it might have looked. 25 points
- IV. Put together a newspaper with appropriate news items, advertisements, social news, etc., as you think it might have been done during the time of Huck's adventures. 25 points
- Grading scale:
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 140-150 points | A |
| 130-139 | B |
| 117-129 | C |
| 105-116 | D |
| Below 105 | F |

Anything you turn in must, of course, be done with good workmanship to receive the top number of points. Work turned in late will not be accepted, unless for some very good reason--absence because of illness, for example.

At the end of the factual testing, students commented upon this type of grading. All were enthusiastic, except for some who wished more options (a valid criticism). Particularly did most express a liking for the fact that it was not necessary to "ace" the test in order to gain its full point value. This eliminated the need for placing great emphasis upon memorization of facts. The unit also allowed those who chose to do so to avoid the expository theme. Over 50% of the class received grades of B or better, and those who didn't were easily able to see just where they had failed to score.

Chapter IV

IT'S HERE AND IT'S REAL

The next general historical period was from 1865-1914. It might partially be summed up in this statement from Andrew Carnegie: "The old nations of the earth creep on at a snail's pace; the Republic thunders past with the rush of an express." This Scottish immigrant who became known as the richest man in the world in the short span of less than fifty years in America was not the only one to acquire a personal fortune in the years which followed the War Between the States. Many of these men contributed heavily to the construction of railroads, libraries, churches, even cities in America.¹⁹

There was another side to the coin, however. If history was characterized by the rich getting richer, it was also characterized by the poor getting children. The number of poor people was increasing, due to immigration, migration and industrialization. The little man was set adrift without education, money or skill in a society growing ever more complicated. The most obvious contrast of the age was between the fabulous wealth of the few and the appalling poverty of the masses. Literature responded in dichotomy, with the local-colorists, on the one hand, endeavoring to preserve what had seemed distinctive and unusual about their own regions, and the realists, on the other, recording with cold, unsentimental devotion to truth.²⁰ A unit of short stories pointed up these developments.

Beginning with the "father of local-color," the students read Bret Harte's "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," identifying the elements which caught the flavor

of the Far West soon after the Gold Rush. In order to note that local color is not entirely flamboyance, the next selection was Sarah Orne Jewett's "The Hilton's Holiday," taken from The Country of the Pointed Firs, which has nomination from Willa Cather as one of the three works of American fiction most likely to endure. That the limited life of this hardworking, New England family is as exciting in a miniscule way as that of the western adventurers was a surprise to most students, but, again, tied itself to Emily's discovery of every day life in Our Town. To note the anonymity of the city, they read O. Henry's "The Furnished Room." The following reaction sheet was used for all three.

- I. "Great writers do not try to write about people and things." What is your interpretation of this advice given to Miss Jewett by her father?
- II. What is your understanding of the term "local color"?
Mention some examples from the selections you read.
If you were going to write a story about Concordia, Kansas, what kinds of information would you use to show its "color"?
- III. In what ways were you prepared for the conclusion of O. Henry's "The Furnished Room"?
What is the irony of the ending?
Does the suicide seem logical? What is your reasoning?
Statistics show a sharp increase in the suicide rate among young people. How do you account for this?
If you can do so, explain your thinking with regard to the actual taking of one's own life. Can you personally understand the motivation which exists, or do you think suicide is usually a spur of the moment thing?
Have you ever had a feeling of despair in which you felt that life was not worth living? If so, what did you do to change that feeling?

After this came the question as to the ways in which the realist would be most likely to differ sharply from the local colorist. Hamlin Garland's Main Traveled Roads seemed a logical launching point. The text in use contained a good, but brief, summary of the rise of realism, and also the selection "Under the Lion's Paw." Discussion centered upon the treatment Garland might have

given the story about the Hiltons and their holiday. Students felt that the tone of the tale might have been changed from one of leisurely enjoyment of the simple pleasures, to a sense of frustration with the circumscribed world in which the family traveled. They concluded that Miss Jewett's interpretation of nature was beneficent, while Garland's was harsh and cruel.

Stephen Crane's philosophy ". . . a man is born into the world with his own pair of eyes, and he is not at all responsible for his vision--he is merely responsible for his quality of personal honesty,"²¹ was tested on the short story, "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky." The fact that Crane equated realism with honesty was applied to the story as it affected both the plot and the characterizations. Students noted that the bride is neither pretty nor young; the groom lacks a certain romantic verve. The couple's reception at Yellow Sky is marred by the ferocious, whiskey-crazed outlaw who bears the marshal an ancient grudge and is out for revenge, but recognizes the incongruity of "knocking off" a brand new husband. Here is realism, tempered with humor and lacking the grim determination of a Garland story. The "bad guy" goes away, dragging his feet. Someone noticed a certain Bret Harte flavor here, as the "howling animal" was tamed by the "drooping" bride.

The third selection to exemplify realism was "To Build a Fire" by Jack London, who certainly viewed life as a struggle for survival against a cruel and indifferent nature. The nameless protagonist and his unimaginative conduct combine with the frigid atmosphere to proclaim the doom which awaits the man, but not the dog.

After three days of discussion, these questions.

1. Today's farmer often feels "under the lion's paw," particularly since the fuss and furor over the price of beef.
In what way do you feel that the farmer is or is not to blame for the high prices of food stuffs?

- II. President Nixon has recommended some changes in the present federal farm support plan which some farmers feel will hurt the economy of agriculture.
If you have formed or have heard any opinions concerning price supports, federal crop subsidies, etc., what is your feeling?
Should the farmer be helped more than any other business man? Why or why not?
- III. In "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" the attitudes of the other passengers, the porters, the waiters, etc., clearly show that they know there is a newly-married couple on board the train. When the bride and groom leave the dining car, they exhibit a "sense of escape."
From what are they escaping?
Why do onlookers often show unfeeling and even cruel amusement at persons who are obviously embarrassed?
What was your most embarrassing moment?
How did you handle it?
- IV. Early in the story "To Build a Fire," Jack London singles out one all-important trait in the man he is describing. This trait is a lack of imagination.
How does this characteristic make the man's fate inevitable? Have you ever become involved in something that you were not quite sure about? Explain.
Do "kids" sometimes become hopelessly involved with drugs, alcohol, sex, etc., because they can't look ahead to what might happen?
Which would you consider to be most dangerous--marijuana or alcohol? What are your reasons for thinking so?
What do you think to be the pros and cons of the legalization of marijuana?
What is your opinion concerning sex education in the schools? Is there too much or too little left to the imagination in this area?

In point of time, the school year had arrived at (1) the contemporary short story and (2) the last ten days of school. A brief review of Poe's ideals for the short, prose narrative preceded an introduction to Willa Cather, whose hometown of Red Cloud, Nebraska, is only some sixty miles from Concordia. The relation of the physical and cultural atmospheres of the area about which Miss Cather wrote in the short story "The Sculptor's Funeral" is very like that found in Concordia, Kansas. This was a relatively new idea, however, because most students had rarely considered themselves except in the context of their environment. The reading of the story "Paul's Case" indicated, however, that

a lack of appreciation of the aesthetic is not limited to the rural area and that the creative individual often finds himself misunderstood.

"Land," by Sinclair Lewis, provided some food for thought about ambition and the results of misguided attempts to impose the values of one person upon another. The last story, chosen primarily for its enigmatic shock value was "The Lottery," by Shirley Jackson. This was the final reaction.

CATHER, LEWIS AND JACKSON

- I. Beside his son's coffin, old Merrick ("The Sculptor's Funeral") mutters ". . . we didn't none of us ever understand him . . ."
Which of the townspeople, do you think, understood him best? Why?
What was the real tragedy of Harvey Merrick's life?
How do you feel about Paul in "Paul's Case"?
How does Paul defy the establishment?
Why does he do this?
What are his values in life? Is he secure in his value judgments? How can you tell?
- II. The organist, Simon Stimson, says in Thornton Wilder's Our Town, "The artistic people of the world are never really understood by the practical."
Do you believe this? Explain your viewpoint.
- III. For the last two years the Community College and the Concordia High School have had a poet-in-residence for brief periods of time. How do you feel about this program?
What need do you see or not see for such a program?
- IV. What reaction did you have, or did you hear about from fellow students, regarding the visits of the poets, Mr. Dickey and Mr. Katz, to our campus?
- V. Have you yourself ever felt at any time that you were "misunderstood" by others because of your creativity or sensitivity, or your lack of these qualities?
Explain your feelings.
- VI. The main character in Sinclair Lewis' story "Land" does not really lead his own life, but rather lets others lead it for him. Throughout the story, what is the basic emotion he feels toward both his father and his wife?
Why does he feel this way?
- VII. Sinclair Lewis is apparently contemptuous of the ambitions Sidney's father sets before the boy. What are these ambitions and what are their outward signs?
Why do you think Mr. Lewis objects to them?

- VIII. "The Lottery," by Shirley Jackson, is one of the most disturbing stories of the past fifty years; it has been interpreted, argued about, and printed over and over. What was your first reaction?
Did it later change, and if so, in what way?
- IX. You have probably heard a very popular song from the musical Fiddler on the Roof which has played in Concordia both on the stage and on the screen. This song deals with tradition.
What good or harm can you see in tradition itself?
Give specific examples which occur to you.

Chapter V

VARIATIONS ON THE THEME

A pernicious enemy of the English curriculum is "ennui." To file into a room day after day at an appointed hour and routinely do the same thing in the same way is as deadly dull here as on the assembly line. Classroom teaching seldom proceeds at a steady, organized pace; more often the journey is like that of a kangaroo, hopping from water hole to water hole. The best defense against boredom may be a kind of offense, with the teacher reversing the play every now and then, for no apparent reason. Many times a spur-of-the-moment assignment will spark an interest in the most unexpected places. Consequently, several assignments took advantage of current school situations; others merely were interpolated to avoid the monotony of plodding doggedly from cover to cover of the textbook.

One of the current-situation variety concerned a bomb scare. Just before 8 A.M one November morning, the police dispatcher in the city received a call stating that a bomb had been placed in the high school building and would explode at 9:30. The message was relayed to the high school office. The local radio station carried the news to the homes; students already in the building were evacuated; faculty members remained outside in their cars, while administrators (who must have been considered expendable) conducted a search of the sprawling, many-crannied building. They discovered nothing any more dangerous than the usual dirty sweat sox and semi-pornographic literature in student lockers.

With the resumption of the school day at 12:45, rumors of all shapes and

sizes filled the halls. The community quickly worked out a system which offered a reward of \$250 for information leading to the identification of the culprit, and the school's PA system urged students to respond if they had anything to tell. It seemed that more stress was placed upon the financial reward to the informant than upon the fact that justice would be served and future dangers possibly avoided.

That afternoon the English classes involved in this project were asked to answer the following questions in writing:

THE BOMB AND I

1. What would you do if you knew definitely who had phoned in the false alarm?
2. What if you just suspected?
3. Would it make any difference if the person was your friend? Your enemy?
4. What would you do with the money if you received the reward?

The concensus tended toward laissez-faire. Most students wished to avoid involvement for personal reasons. Several thought the criminal would be uncovered anyway, so why should they speak out? (He wasn't.) Some felt concerned enough to say that they would talk to the culprit and either show him the error of his ways or urge him to turn himself in. No one, but no one would "squeal." This seemed to be the current "code of the West." One more courageous soul would have taken things into his own hands and "beat up on" the criminal himself, in the hope of straightening him out. In the main, however, an attitude of "live and let live" prevailed.

Another occasion for improvisation occurred at the time of the annual junior-senior prom. Hard pressed for both finances and willing workers, the sponsors sent out a questionnaire to determine the number who planned to attend the event. Out of some 155 juniors, only 54 indicated this intention. Again,

the reaction sheet.

TO PROM OR NOT TO PROM?

A survey taken yesterday among junior class members indicates that about 1/3 of the class plans to attend the prom. Please state your reason or reasons for your own personal choice.

Do you feel that perhaps the prom has become an out-moded social event which should be dropped, for the present, anyway?

Or do you think that it is a tradition which should be kept for those who consider it worthwhile? Explain your thinking.

The cost of the event is approximately \$1300. There are also many, many work hours involved for those who are willing to spend them. In your opinion, is this cost justified? Or could both the time and money be used to better advantage?

Please state your frank and honest opinion.

A tabulation showed that out of 40 student responses, 20 felt that the prom was a worthwhile tradition which should be continued, nine felt that it was outmoded and should be discarded, ten qualified their affirmative response with some suggestion for improvement, and one didn't care. As to cost, eleven felt it was justified, 22 felt it was far too much money and seven made no comment. Those in favor of continuing prom supported the contention on the grounds of tradition, parental influence, and a debt of respect owed to the graduating class.

The most frequent criticism cited financial pressures on class members to pay class dues and to earn money for the event. Others were critical of the lack of communication between the steering committee and other class members. Some objected to the idea of getting all dressed up and spending all that money on a dress, shoes, hairdo, corsage, tux rental, and the like. Particularly those without "steadies" felt the price was excessive for someone he or she did not particularly wish to impress. These were some of their comments.

The prom is not really out-moded; it's just old-fashioned. In my opinion, most juniors and seniors would rather go out drinking or go to the drive-in or something like this because they can do what they want to do. But at the prom you have a bunch of teachers who think that holding hands during school leads to pregnancy, looking over us. Honestly, we're 17 and 18 years old. We're not babies any more. We can tell the difference between how far right goes

before it is wrong. So why have all the teachers around? We won't tear the place up . . . In other words, the prom needs to be more modern . . . Don't get me wrong. I believe that the prom is really worthwhile. It just needs to be brought back into the modern world.

I like the tradition of prom, but to me, this date thing bothers me. Most of the guys I know are friends and some are going steady. What makes me mad is that most of the girls look forward to prom and only those that are going steady go. Hardly anyone goes stag to prom or any other dance.

I want to go to the prom because I like music, dancing and talking to friends. I think the prom gets people in a good social mood. Another reason for going is that my girl would kill me if I didn't take her!

I don't think that prom is outmoded, but there is something missing in this school. I don't know whether it is the idea of having to dress up that turns people off, or if students at CHS are just tired of the prom as a whole. Possibly if it was dropped for a year or two, students would want it bad enough to attend.

This is my one objection to prom. I know that it costs a lot of money to bring a band in to play, but why spend money on all the decorations? Before half the night is over, some of them will be torn down and there goes all the work and money down the drain. There is always a 10% that thinks it's fun to tear things up!

I feel that the prom idea is being shut out a little more each year. People are losing interest. At the first of the year, all the students were making a big fuss . . . "Boy, I sure can't wait 'til the prom; it's going to be neat." I just say "Fiddle sticks!" Where's all the interest now when it's just a few weeks away? The trouble is that too many students like to state their opinions and have a good thing, but they think they're too cool to do the work that is necessary. They figure that the others can do it. This really ticks me off.

I, personally, have never had any intention or desire to attend prom. Prom is nothing more than a glorified, fantastically expensive dance. I have a moral aversion to dancing (in this sense) and I don't enjoy the atmosphere created by a nerve-shattering, high-decibel band. I could not, in good conscience, attend . . . The cost of this affair is nauseating. Three years of work flung into crepe paper and napkins for one night for a miniscule percentage of the student body! Close to a thousand dollars for a group of young men to drag a tangle of over-circuited electronic junk into the gym, and we're asked if the cost is ridiculous!

A slightly different variation upon the theme came through a unit on critical thinking, which received a favorable reception. This was adapted from

Modern Grammar and Composition III by David A. Conlin and George R. Herman.²²

Class work proceeded along the lines of the following study guide, which was followed rather loosely.

CRITICAL THINKING

Lesson I

1. How does one write with clarity and conviction?
2. What is the value of a statement that involves judgment or opinion?
3. What 6 concepts are involved in critical thinking?
4. What is "fuzzy writing"? What is "high generalization"?
5. What is the first obligation in the defining of terms?
6. Explain 3 qualifications for a good definition.
7. Define and explain these terms--make them absolutely clear:

curriculum
rhetoric
diction
psychology

Lesson II

1. How does one make a statement to be believable and convincing?
2. What sources are available for documentation of numbers
5-6-7-8, P. 197?
3. What is a generalization? What presumptions are evident in the statements on page 197? (bottom of page)
4. What is a platitude? What is the danger in using sweeping generalizations?

Lesson III

1. What 3 things are involved in problem solving?
2. Select 5 problems from ex. 5, pp. 200-201, and solve them according to directions.

Lesson IV

1. What are fallacies in thinking?
2. Explain 3 types of common error in arriving at conclusions.
3. Discuss the steps taken in reaching the conclusions in ex. 6, p. 203. Discuss the validity of the statement and the reasons for your opinion.
4. Explain "begging the question."

Lesson V

1. Explain "irrelevant evidence," "faulty analogy," and "selected evidence."
2. What is the value of using "emotional appeals" in argument?

3. Bring examples from current advertising which use one of the above types of so-called reasoning. Be prepared to show them to the class and explain just what is being done by the ads.

Lesson VI

1. Select 5 of the conclusions in ex. 7, p. 206, and discuss the validity of the conclusions expressed or implied. Mention the type of reasoning used and the fallacies that you find.

First, such terms as pessimist, psychology, Puritan were extensively discussed as to the necessity of clearly defining and limiting their meanings to avoid misinterpretation. Without going very deeply into semantics, the class was able to see that communication goes awry if one or both of the communicants means one thing and says another.

As a class unit, they wrote paragraphs moving broad generalizations to lower levels of meaning, using such topic sentences as "Severe damage was done to our car in a recent accident," and "Mark Twain helps us to understand the happiness of boyhood."²³

Students investigated available library sources for documentation of such topics as "Chicken is a less expensive source of protein food than beef," "The cost of living has been gradually increasing from year to year," and "Huckleberry Finn's trip down the Mississippi River was an attempt to escape from the adult world."²⁴ Here, again, relevance was served, since the news media had for days been urging consumers to substitute chicken, fish and cheese for the almost prohibitively priced steaks and roasts; current food costs had just gone up 12% from last year, and the class had only last week completed Twain's novel.

More work was done on generalizations. The terms "presumption" and "stereotype" worked very well here, along with the general acceptance of platitudes which worm their way into student writings. Actual high school themes were duplicated and from them students identified such unqualified

generalizations as these:

Television is a good thing because it keeps families at home.
 People today are too much concerned with money.
 Young people today don't realize the wisdom of thrift.
 Happiness is what all people want.
 The strong survive and the weak perish.

Each student then discussed the validity of certain seemingly accepted statements such as these:

The good die young.
 Haste makes waste.
 There's no fool like an old fool.
 Young people are going to the dogs.
 No one over 65 should be licensed to drive a car.
 Cats make fine pets.
 Labor unions help the workingman.²⁵

At this time, the lesson moved on to problem solving. Each student listed a variety of problems which he might expect to encounter during this particular year. A wide range resulted. As a class exercise, steps in problem solving were applied to the following hypothetical situation.

A very good friend of mine from another school who is already on her spring break is giving a big party on Thursday night. I am very eager to go, as she has invited a "groovy" fellow from out of town who has said he wants to meet me. The only problem is that my school is still in session and I have an important history test the next day. What shall I do?

These were the proposed solutions:

1. going to the party and forgetting to study
2. staying home to study
3. studying first and attending the party later
4. going to the party but leaving early
5. getting up early the next morning to study
6. calling in sick the next day and making up the test later

In assessing the possible solutions, many felt that the ideal (?) solution would be number 6, provided that your mother would be gullible enough to write your excuse, and that you, yourself, had no hang-ups insofar as conscience was concerned. This, not all could concede.

The next most practical was number 3, although more than one student

expressed concern that the "groovy" boy from out of town would be snapped up by some other eligible female by the time you got there. Several more serious-minded individuals admitted priority to the test and said they would forgo the party altogether. Everyone agreed that the "right" solution would not be the same for everyone in the class.

At the close of the discussion, each member of the class was asked to present in writing an analysis and solution of a problem which he currently faced. To allow for the student who is unwilling to bare his personal feelings, an alternate list of theoretical problems was provided. Most of them relate very well to situations in which these students find themselves. These were the suggestions:

1. Your father, a very particular man, has just purchased a new car. You have a date for Saturday night with a girl whom you want to impress. You have a car of your own, but it is only a jalopy.
2. You have an older sister whose grades in high school established for her a fine scholastic reputation. No matter how hard you work, your grades are only average. Your parents and teachers are constantly reminding you of your sister's record.
3. The boy next door is in your algebra class. His grades are higher than yours, and his mother is continually reminding your mother of this fact. The truth of the matter, however, is that your neighbor cheats on almost every test and you have proof. Now your mother threatens to take away some of your privileges if you don't raise your grades to match those of your friend next door.²⁶

Several students tried to solve actual personal problems. Two samples illustrate their lines of reasoning.

SAMPLE #1

Problem: you buy a new car. You borrow \$400 from your sister. You said you would pay her back \$50 every month. Your car has been worked on and the mechanic's fee is \$60. The week before, you put a down payment on tires. You have \$40 from your weekly job.

- Solutions:
1. pay full \$40 to sister
 2. pay full \$40 to mechanic
 3. pay full \$40 for tires
 4. pay parts of each on 1, 2, and 3

- Reasoning:
1. Your sister would probably give you as much time as you need, but you want to stick to your agreement if you can.
 2. The mechanic doesn't have to pay the parts bill until the end of the month, so you can let this go, but you want to pay it as quickly as possible.
 3. Tires can wait 2 or 3 months. There is no real question because of a good down payment. But you told the man they should be paid off in 3 weeks.
 4. You could pay \$15 to sister, \$20 to mechanic, and \$5 on tires. This would keep everyone happy until next week's check. You would still be paying sister \$60 per month (15×4); mechanic \$60 (20×3) and tires \$40 (5×8).

Thus, in 4 weeks I will have my sister's car payment and in 3 weeks have the mechanic paid off and in 4 weeks I should have the tires paid off. My choice is #4.

SAMPLE #2

Problem: Your parents are leaving town and you don't know whether to move with them or not.

- Solutions:
1. move
 2. live with grandmother
 3. live by yourself
 4. live with boy friend

- Reasoning:
1. Get out of this town; meet new people, but still get stuck with parents. You don't get along now, and if you move, they are the only people you'll know.
 2. Adorable old lady, but getting slightly senile; can't afford another person on Social Security, and her cooking gives you indigestion.
 3. Can't afford to pay rent, food, clothes, and bills on semi-part-time job.
 4. Share bills, make life less harried; a most enjoyable situation--a home, a friend, and parents aren't in town.

Best possible solution: Move in with boy friend. Logically, economically, emotionally, and physically best decision.

Final evaluation for the unit consisted of an exercise in value judgment

which created a hypothetical situation very disturbing to some students.

Without comment, the following handout was distributed.

A QUESTION OF VALUES

One evening a year from now you invite eight college acquaintances to your home to talk with a psychology professor whom you know personally. In the midst of the discussion, you hear the air raid siren. You turn on the radio and the Civil Defense station broadcasts that enemy planes are approaching. Fortunately, you have a well-equipped bomb shelter in your basement, so immediately you direct the professor, you eight companions, and a mechanic who has been repairing the air-conditioning unit to go downstairs. Shortly after you are all in the shelter, a terrific blast shakes the earth and you realize that the bomb has fallen. For four frantic hours you get static on the radio in your shelter. Finally you hear the following announcement: "A bomb of great magnitude has hit your city. Damage is extensive; radiation is intense. It is feared that all those not in shelters have suffered a fatal dose of radiation. All persons in shelters are warned that it would be fatal to leave before at least a month. Further bombings are anticipated. This may be the last broadcast you will hear for some time."

Immediately you realize that you have eleven persons in a shelter which is equipped with food, water, and--most important--oxygen enough to last eleven people two weeks or six persons for a month. When you reveal this information, the group unanimously decides that in order for anyone to survive, five must be sacrificed. As it is your shelter, all agree that you must stay and choose the other five who are to be sacrificed.

Mary, the psychology professor, is a few years older than the rest of the group. It has already become evident that the others respect her and recognize her grasp of the situation and her ability to take control. Although she is rather cold and impersonal, she has helped to quiet the group's nervousness and settled an argument between Don and Hazel. Although no one seems close to her, you feel she would be valuable as an organizer and pacifier.

Hazel is studying home economics--nutrition and dietetics. She is a very attractive girl. One of the first things she did was to appraise the food supply. You realize that her training has given her practical knowledge of how to ration food to avoid waste; also, she is an imaginative cook who can fix even canned food appealingly. She is efficient, to the point of being domineering and bossy.

Alberta is a brilliant girl who has been given a graduate assistantship to do research on radiation. She has been pampered all her life and is horrified at wearing the same clothes for a month, being unable to take a bath or wash her hair, and sleeping in a room with five other people. Her scientific knowledge of the situation would be a definite asset; her whims and attitude would be trying.

Laura is a literature major, has read extensively, and writes well herself. Already she has entertained and diverted the group by retelling one of the books she has recently read.

Nancy, Chet's wife, has a pleasant personality generally; however, she has been the most nervous and upset of the group. Her temperamental, excitable mood is partially due to the fact that she is expecting a baby in two months.

Chet, Nancy's husband, is a medical student. He has had two years of medical study, three summers in a camp as a medical director, and a close association with his father, who is a doctor. You realize that he would be a great aid; however, he refuses to stay unless Nancy also remains.

Jack, the mechanic, who had been working upstairs, also has a great deal of practical know-how to recommend him. Although his formal education ended with high school, he has had extensive experience with air-filtration systems, air purifiers, and oxygen supply. He is a rather dull, chubby fellow. He has already been reprimanded by Hazel for snitching a Hershey bar from the limited food supply. Despite his understanding of the technical aspects, he fails to grasp the necessity for self-control as far as the food and water supply is concerned.

Paul, a young minister, is easy going. His calmness, optimism, and faith are an inspiration to the group. In an intangible, yet perceptible way his presence is reassuring. He helped quiet Nancy's tearful outburst. At this time he revealed that he has learned to remain calm of necessity because he is diabetic. He would require a special diet, and easily becomes tired. Over-excitement causes him to faint.

Joe is a clean-cut, husky Negro football player, who is the star center of the college's team. He is highly respected by everyone on campus. Joe was the only one able to lift the heavy metal plate that had to be placed over the shelter door. At one point when Chet took it upon himself to set the tank valve, Jack flew at him and shoved him out of the way, and reset the valve properly. A fist fight might have ensued, had not Joe parted them.

Don is a gay romantic. His smile, lively guitar music, and scintillating sense of humor have helped improve everyone's mood. He gets along well with everyone--too well with some of the girls. He has already offended Hazel by being fresh, and several of the girls have noticed his flirting eyes darting from face to face as he sings.

WHOM WILL YOU CHOOSE?

In making the decisions, you must keep four things in mind:

1. Accept this hypothetical situation as a fact. Concern yourself with choosing your companions, not with attacking the logic or possibility of the situation.
2. Be candid. You must stay in the shelter. Your physical and mental well-being and survival will depend upon your companions--their abilities and personalities.
3. Accept all facts concerning the ten persons as actual; overlook neither their assets nor their weaknesses. You may assume nothing about the characters which would conflict with what you have been told.
4. Do not overlook your own strengths and weakness in making your choice. Remember, you are one of the six.

Prepare in writing your reasons for having one person in preference to another. This exercise requires you to weigh values: you will be expected to defend your decisions. The "right" choice is the one that accurately reflects your choices.²⁷

A discussion of choices and reasons for making them revealed patterns of similarity in thinking among class members. Of the forty students responding, thirty-five chose to keep the married couple, Nancy and Chet, partly because of Chet's knowledge of medicine, but mostly because Nancy was pregnant. This seemed to reveal ideas about child-bearing which might reflect some attitudes on the issue of legalized abortion. Approximately the same number elected to keep Joe, the Negro athlete, not so much because he was black, but more because he was strong and athletic. Thirty-three of the number rejected Alberta because of her "finicky" habits, and twenty-eight retained Hazel because of her practical know-how in the department of food and nutrition. As to Jack and Mary, the class was almost equally divided, but with Paul, the diabetic minister, and Don, the romantic playboy, rejection was practically unanimous. Several thought that Paul's religious faith should be stronger than that of most people, allowing him to make the sacrifice voluntarily. Almost no one trusted Don's flirtatious tendencies.

In spite of the detailed directions, some rejected the entire situation

with a disclaimer of any desire to "play God." Others, also contrary to instructions, evolved an alternate plan or opted for self-sacrifice. All recognized that each individual described in the exercise had both his good and his bad points, and that weighing these strengths and weaknesses showed something about the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluator, as well as the qualities which he valued most highly.

Chapter VI

FEEDBACK

At a point midway through the course and again at the end, students had opportunities to express their own opinions concerning this method of instruction. The first such evaluation was appended to a conventional objective test, one of the two used during the entire session. This particular instrument was designed to contain matching items, short answer definitions and true-false statements. The rationale for its use was that in order to make a comparison between conventional testing and reaction type essays, the student must have had a recent experience with each type of evaluation, covering much the same body of knowledge.

A tally of responses showed that 75% of the students preferred the reaction essay, 13% would rather have objective testing, and 12% could see advantages to both types. Arguments for and against ran like these:

FOR OBJECTIVE TESTING

I like the objective tests in that there is only one answer and this makes up your mind for you.

When there is only one answer you don't have to do so much writing and it doesn't take so much time.

I think tests should be multiple choice and true and false. It is hard enough to think of all the names and then you get them all mixed up because there are too many. If there was multiple choice, the names would be written down and it would be easier to remember something about them.

FOR SUBJECTIVE TESTING

I think the subjective tests are better. Anyone can memorize definitions and match up phrases that look the best together, but a person must really know about the subject in order to write about it.

I like a test where you put your opinion down because there is no right or wrong answers. And it gives me a chance to express my opinion. It also helps me learn what words I should use to get my ideas across to someone else.

An opinion has to come from our head. We have to think.
A test like this (objective) we have to memorize.

Too much is stressed on facts, like most of the words you will never use again in your life.

Stories such as "The Devil and Tom Walker" weren't written for us to remember every detail, but to give us some pleasure in reading. I don't like the objective type of test because you must stick strictly to fact and with the other type, you can relate one story to another.

Like one of my other teachers said, "You don't take the objective test; we more or less give it to you, with all the answers right there and you just put them in the right places." I believe the reaction sheets are more worth doing.

FOR A LITTLE OF BOTH

I think both kinds of tests have merit. I don't favor one over the other, but in some ways objective tests are harder. You have to know some stated facts or definitions and, in doing so, I don't think you get as much out of the story. In other ways, having to put your feelings into words isn't easy.

I really don't know which of the two types of tests I prefer. I think the kind with more facts is better. I don't think I get very much out of the reaction type, but maybe I get more than I think I do.

I think the reaction test is all right, but I think a test in which you have to give facts should be given every once in a while. One thing I find hard on a written reaction is to find the words to express what I want to say.

The second evaluation made at the end of the year concerned the entire course and the manner in which it was taught. The instrument used for this critique was patterned after one used by colleges. A tabulation of responses led neither to complacency nor to unqualified confidence in the system. Some very scathing comments resulted. Interestingly enough, some of the more intellectual students became emboldened sufficiently to burst into vitriol, something they might not have done even anonymously before the advent of the

opinion essay. One, in particular, grew increasingly peevish as the year advanced, and, being an avid student of Judaism, often threw up his hands with "Oy Gevalt!" as he considered the outlandish nature of some question he was attempting to think through.

Another boy had become quite angry early in the course at what he considered to be a rank invasion of privacy. An early reaction of his reached the boiling point, as he concluded with the statement, "Why don't you go back to the earlier ways of teaching English so that I can raise my grade, and besides, I don't feel like answering any more of these questions on this piece of paper." Since he was so obviously upset, he was allowed to bypass reactions from that point on and took only objective tests over the material assigned.

A girl who wrote beautifully but had not said much all year apparently had disliked the fact that directive opinions and ideas had not been forthcoming from the instructor during the course, because she wrote, "You don't have enough confidence in your own ideas and thoughts to be basing your classroom activities on reactions and personal opinion. I refuse to believe anyone in a high school situation is as ignorant as you sometimes appear." (Ouch!)

It might seem that not all of them had been in the same classroom. One wrote, "I disliked being taught the same old grammer [sic] for the 11th straight year." This, in spite of the fact that there was no grammar per se, except for what evolved from student writing. On the other hand, another wrote, in an obvious effort to be facetious, "I don't not thinks that we is covered enuf of that their gramer?"

The same fellow who disliked being taught grammar for the eleventh straight year also missed the point that not every mechanical error in every composition would be marked with red ink, only those which served the purpose

of identification of a particular point to be stressed. He wrote, "I enjoyed testing you out. On many themes, I purposely made mistakes (not the common ones, though) just to see if I could slip them past you."

There were, of course, many favorable comments. In fact, from a percentage standpoint, 86% of the students responding ranked the course as being valuable, and 93 1/3% thought that the instruction had ranged from "average" to "the best I have ever had." Only 3 1/3% thought that students in the course had made very little effort to learn.

One adverse criticism which indicated a need for improvement concerned the pace of the course work. While 70% thought it was "somewhat fast" or "just about right," 20% considered it to be "somewhat slow," and 10% felt that it was "too slow." From a mathematical standpoint these figures might appear to be fairly satisfactory. However, to a teacher of experience, they indicate a definite need for acceleration. If that many people are willing to admit that the course moves too slowly, it definitely does!

In retrospect, there seems to be considerable need for improvement in certain areas: individualization of pace, refining and revising of composition work, and, possibly, some student choice of materials. Next year, the curriculum offerings have been changed to make this an elective course and to limit it to one semester's duration. Hopefully, these changes may make for more efficient lion hunters in the future.

REPRESENTATIVE POINTS

OF VIEW

THE VALUE OF HISTORY AND TRADITION

It is small wonder that in a society in which anyone over the age of thirty is suspect, a reverence for history and traditions of the past seems unnecessary and burdensome. Students of American history complain strenuously that "they could care less" (the negative seems to have fled completely from that expression) what happened to any of their illustrious ancestors, no matter what part they had played in laying the groundwork for the country in which we now live. That Benedict Arnold and the Watergate Seven might be brothers under the skin seems incomprehensible to them. While they fall eagerly in line with current fashion trends which feature the clunky shoes and wide lapels of some forty years ago, the majority negates the value of knowing what went on while citizens were wearing those articles of clothing. As one student put it, "We are living today and not in the past, and I see no reason in the world why people depend so much on the days before us."

Another answers, "No, we don't need to know the history of our country in order to understand ourselves. Maybe how our government is run, but we could self-analyze ourselves or maybe even meditate to understand."

Another thinks, ". . . the decision of whether or not to take history should be left up to the student. When older people talk about the past, it is interesting because they tell stories about their lives, not about the nation. Some history class students are taught about the political, social and economic problems of the nation. People's lives are more interesting than the history of a country."

One opinion reflects the materialism of the age. ". . . I think that

learning history is a waste of time because there aren't very many careers to go into that require you to know who discovered each country and the dates of all the battles of the Civil War." Another places some of the blame for current problems upon knowledge of the past. "After all, maybe the blacks and whites would be getting along today if the past wasn't known. I don't really know, but I do think it would be interesting to know what this world would be like if the past wasn't known."

Directly opposite in thinking are the two statements which follow:

People in America or in any other country need to know what makes their present day lives as they are. We need to know what happened in the past to understand ourselves. A person who does not know the history of slavery can't understand the American Negro of today. This is true with many different types of racial problems of the world.

Although many people look down on the past, they actually are living in it. Civil Rights leaders are speaking out because of the past. People worship God on a foundation that came about thousands of years ago. The new style trends are only repeating the past. The people of the world will never draw themselves away. History, in its many forms, has always repeated itself, and it always will.

Several students were in agreement with that last statement, and felt that future world citizens should know enough about what had occurred previously to prevent their making the same mistakes again. Someone else "shot" that theory "out of the saddle" by citing World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, (Cambodia?) ad infinitum, and aptly pointed out that man does not, unfortunately, seem to learn from his mistakes.

Part of the problem was analyzed by an imaginative girl who reflected, ". . . the way it (history) is taught isn't always fun. I don't know if there is a way to teach history and make it fun. If some day they build a time machine, I would like to try it. I would visit all the periods of history that I could, just to see how people lived and how they had fun."

Perhaps an adequate summary comes from one who seems to be fairly per-

ceptive, "I think we do need some background on history, but it needs to be brought alive. The way we study it now, it's just a bunch of facts that skim the top of what happened. I think it should have more meaning." With that statement, there can be no argument.

Persons living in the "Age of Aquarius" seem to have made an uneasy truce with tradition. Most of these individuals responding were reluctant to do away with it completely--their answers tended to hug the middle of the road and deal in generalities. "Tradition can hinder and help you; it just depends upon the tradition. I can't think of any examples right now."

Or, "Tradition is a hindrance more times than not; if you're really in a jam, tradition can help you out." The consensus was that traditions which are negative (prohibitions or "no-no's") should be abandoned, and those which were positive, retained. It was as if they thought they weren't supposed to follow tradition, but were afraid to do away with it completely. Some of these ambivalent statements read:

Tradition has its ups and downs; in some aspects it is nice, like following the family trait as it has been done for fifty years. But then some traditions don't quite fit with the "now" world society, in which case they aren't much of a help.

The pattern of tradition is the best way to do many things. But there is nothing wrong with "a change for the better."

. . . as a youth I think of it (tradition) as a hindrance because a person can be tied down by it, but when I look at it from a more mature level, I can see its good points.

I think right now I would say tradition is a hindrance, although in the future I think it will be a great help to me.

Those who definitely felt they had been hampered by the following of traditional courses might use as spokesman the rather laconic individual who unequivocally stated, "It's stupid!" Others went into its stupidity rather more fully.

The Catholic religion has hurt me--what they expect of a Catholic couple when dating.

Tradition has hurt the school because there are students here because their parents make them come. Then these students make it bad for those who want to be here.

. . . the students rebel against the same old ways. They like to have changes occurring. That is why I think we are having so much trouble with things like the dress code and school regulations.

As far as school is concerned, one tradition which could possibly hurt is the idea about how terrible school is. If a person really hated it that much, he should drop out.

Many times tradition is a nuisance.

Tradition is a hindrance in my life. People tell me that that is the "way they used to do it." Fine, but the days are changed; there are different ways to do things now. I went to school when I was in Junior High without wearing socks. That was a federal offense. People get all upset when someone breaks the tradition.

Tradition gets me angry quite often. Just because I am a girl, I shouldn't go out every night. I hate that tradition.

Tradition is just a custom made to be broken. . . . it has hurt me a couple of times. Its bite is embarrassment and sadness.

Almost without exception, the traditions which these students would like to pass on to their children were the ones concerning the family holidays: Christmas, Thanksgiving, birthday parties. Others had praise for belonging to the church, going to school, and getting married, rather than entering into an arrangement of "just living together." One girl stated rather enigmatically, "When I have children, they will know the tradition, 'Keep thy hands to thyself.'" One wonders just what had happened to her recently!

A boy felt, "I wouldn't pass any tradition on to my children. The tradition might be all right for 1972, but would it be right for 1990?"

Perhaps the most perceptive comment likened traditions to desserts and then said, "You have to know when to quit." And that is that!

CONFORMITY, INDIVIDUALISM, AND CLASS DISTINCTION

"Whoso would be a man must be a non-conformist." This statement by Ralph Waldo Emerson, was, in the main, not in line with the thinking of the teenagers who reacted. One firmly stated, "I think Emerson was wrong. A man, in my mind, is someone who can get along in any walk of life, and to do this, you must conform."

Other considerations were similar:

There are things in this life that we have to do in order to make it in this world, and in order to live with the people around us.

Society was created to conform to man's comforts, but it has a twist to its purpose. If anyone does not conform to society, then he is not a man worth mentioning.

I think some people are afraid to be non-conformists in fear of what they'll find out about themselves.

The world would be in a mess if we didn't have conformity. No one would come to work. There wouldn't be anyone to look up to.

Most people dislike the extreme non-conformist.

There are people who claim manhood because of their non-conformity, but in reality they may be grown-up children.

People get along better when they think and act alike.

The conformists are in danger from the non-conformists, and the non-conformists are in danger from the law.

Being a person who is truly individual was also considered suspect, as is seen in this quotation, "I don't know if there are persons completely individual, but I am sure if there are, they must be persons who are full of selfishness and they must be very sad and alone."

The concept of situation ethics was given credence by the girl who said, ". . . for every individual now, people seem to get horrible thoughts and say bad things about girls that get pregnant before they are married. Some people won't go near them, and who knows, maybe that girl is really nice, but our elders from way back say it's wrong. Maybe it's not, for that girl."

The pragmatism of being completely individual in this period of time was also questioned. "I don't think it is possible to be completely individual in 1972 (or in any other time) because you'll always need someone to lean on and someone will always need you. People really don't want to be completely free and independent; they'll always want someone to boss them around. It's just human nature."

Another such comment was, "I don't truly want to be an individual because I don't sincerely believe that I could take it for a long period of time. Therefore, I wouldn't give you or anyone a plugged nickel to be an individual."

Society's part in this turn of events was characterized succinctly by one who said, "Beware of society." Others elaborated:

Being a truly independent individual is obsolete. It is hard to be an individual today because there are so many people telling you what to do and how to do it. There is always someone giving you a good piece of advice you didn't even ask for.

No one wants to be "out of it" or a so-called "weirdo."

The thing that probably stands in our way (of being individual) most is love. We love the people around us too much, and we sometimes don't have the "guts" to hurt them.

Even Thoreau depended upon someone for his salt.

One cannot possibly meet the requirements for society's approval and retain any individuality.

Anyone who would be a complete individual would also be a complete social outcast or reject, because what society doesn't understand is punished.

Society values conformity so much because we are all too insecure to be different or to strike out on our own to "do our own thing."

The conformity of non-conformity did not go unnoticed. This boy thought, "Today many people are saying that you should be your own person and do your own thing. It seems that most of the people who say this are doing the same thing. And so, in 1972, if you want to honestly be an individual, you will have to find something really out of the ordinary in order to be different from the rest of the people who are being individualists."

A vague aura of melancholy ran through some of the thoughts such as, "I don't know anyone who is truly individual except maybe the dead or God . . . they have their peace because they are gone away from all that is happening in the world," and "At times I am happy (in conforming), yet there are times when I feel that everyone is running my life but me. I feel like just running and never stopping."

Almost ironically, the thinking of the group could well be summarized in the essay written by a girl who was a foreign exchange student from Ecuador. Except in the area of social class distinction, it might be that American thinking in this small, grass-roots community has not strayed very far afield from its Old World influence. She wrote:

In my country we still have classes in the society and the difference between groups of people. The old persons keep the idea of tradition, family, religion, and society, although in the middle-aged people, this difference is established by the amount of money that the people have. For these people, it is very hard to understand that the noble titles and the amount of money in the bank is not the person. For me the unique value is what the person knows, what the person feels, what the person thinks, what the person really is. It is really difficult to keep out the custom of talk about other people and their behavior, for the most of the time a person doesn't do what he really thinks or what he really wants because he is worried of what the other people may say about him or his behavior. I remember now that I have listened many, many times from my mother, my grandmother, or other people, this phrase, "You don't only have to be a good person; also you have to look like a good person."

I am very happy with my family and my country, but I am not in conformity with those two ideas because I am not agreed; for this I tried and will try that these ideas change. But if I get that, I will try to keep those ideas in the middle turn; this means that people must be free, but must be responsible, too.

Students did admit to some inequality in certain areas of society, but most seemed to feel that this inequality existed because of economic pressures, and was, in the long run, annoying and frustrating, but not necessarily meaningful. The girl from Ecuador was aware of the "All-American Monster (Hard, Cold Cash)," and another student wrote, "Your class in society now is based on how much you have, not you as a person." Most, however, reflected the theory of American equality in this response, made in commenting upon a passage from Mark Twain's Autobiography. "A duke or an earl doesn't mean much in the U. S. Even if Twain's ancestors had made a name for themselves, nobody here would have honored them. If the "aristocrats" had worked for a high status, then they probably would have, in time, made a name for themselves and made money. The only ways we are class conscious is in thinking of other people as poor people. People may have more money, better clothes, or more knowledge in certain areas than I do, but they are no better than I. Everyone is equal in my thinking."

Even those who were aware of class barriers seemed to think that these barriers are superficial and really don't count so much in the last analysis. A girl who began, "I think that we are truly class conscious. Almost every girl or boy dreams about getting in with the social crowd in town . . . but it only happens to people with money and educational background. It really makes me mad!" concludes her thinking with, "I have felt that a person is better than I because he or she is the offspring of a well-to-do family. Yet at times I can talk to them at ease and really feel they are no different when it comes to the things inside."

That social and physical superiority tends to work in a spiral fashion was pointed out. "Everyone is class conscious. When you find someone who is better than you, then most of the time you try to find someone that you are better than." Several comments, in fact, noted the "pecking order" of society.

Social hierarchy which perches on the rungs of the financial ladder was recognized by a boy who wrote, "I still feel that some people are better than I am. When I get off work every night and head for home and see all these kids riding around in their new cars and spending lots of money, I wonder how they afford it. Then it hits me that their parents have given them all of these things and I had to get them myself. So maybe I'll change my mind; maybe they aren't better, just luckier . . . My children should hear stories of when I was small and they should and will learn that honest work never hurt anyone."

A girl shows essentially the same thinking: "I have never felt that someone is better than I, only luckier."

Many brought the concept down to a personal level. "There are people in this school that are more popular than I, but I think they have more problems, too. People are always asking them questions and following them around. The popular people don't seem to have as much privacy as I do." Another said, "Maybe I just think that others are better. Maybe I need to change my thinking. I think maybe I try to put myself down or act like a snob. I am going to try to think differently and see what happens."

Other similar philosophies were these:

I don't think anybody is "better" than I. Some people think they are because they have more money or a higher social standing, but if you took this away, what would you have? Plain, old, ordinary people--no better or no less than I . . . We are all the same, essentially.

It makes no difference if you're a hard worker or someone of nobility. What makes you as you are is how hard you work toward making a better life for yourself and maybe others who depend on you. I would like for my children to under-

stand people and not condemn them because they don't care for the way they think or do things. That's what is so wrong in today's world. We judge each other too much.

There are plenty of people who are a lot better off than I, but at the same time, there are ways in which I am better than they, although they don't run as money does in the "Social Rank Derby."

One small voice crying out of the wilderness of American material and political class consciousness forms his own social hierarchy. His prose grows vehement as he writes, "We are all equals, but some of us are more equal than others! We all would like some hidden clause to assure us that we're better than someone else. Let's face it; the only person who an equalist [sic] is convincing is himself. We aren't all equal. We have the same rights to achieve to the greatest of our abilities, but we aren't all equal. Some people have more money, some have more talent, and some have greater minds than others. The problem is priorities! Everyone has a right to better himself, but when a person's money or social position begins to influence his treatment of others and their treatment of him, then we have a class-conscious society. Equality is relative to worth.

"I do not believe Jean-Paul Getty is a better individual than I. I believe Howard Hughes, Henry Cabot Lodge, John Mitchell and other such 'important' men are inferior. I will tell you who is better than I: Dr. Paul Cullison, martyred missionary to the Congo; Elizabeth Saint, missionary to the headhunters who killed her husband; John and Betty Stam, young American missionaries killed by the Communist Chinese because they stayed to help their Chinese neighbors; and Ethel Waters, who has given up the stage to spread the gospel with Billy Graham. This is my hall of fame. These people were or are not wealthy, have never influenced a political election, and have never been social lights, but they are the giants of American "equal inequality" because they have achieved greatness by self-denial and sacrifice and by undying belief in what is true and right."

HONESTY

In assessing the character of Henry Fleming, the protagonist of Stephen Crane's The Red Badge of Courage, a poll revealed that over 50% of the students responding considered Henry's greatest sin to be the lie which he told when he allowed his comrades to think that his wound was the result of action in battle. This misrepresentation was compared to two other situations in which Henry had proved himself to be less than noble: running from the combat field and deserting a dying man. (One very practical fellow asserted that "The worst thing Henry Fleming did was to enlist. He should have waited for a year or two until he was more mature.") Generally speaking, though, the falsehood, actually a sin of omission, loomed large in their moral code. It seemed, however, that in putting honesty to a practical rather than theoretical test, most persons were not averse to situation ethics.

One said, "Honesty is saying what you really feel the truth to be. The truth does concern facts, but some situations cause emotions to conflict. Since it is true that the truth sometimes hurts, it would be stupid to tell your sister that her 'awful' cake tastes awful. It would be hurting her unnecessarily because it's not going to make any difference and it (the lie) wouldn't stay with your conscience forever."

Others rationalized:

The truth isn't always the best policy; sometimes fantasy is better.

You will always have plenty of time for the truth as you get older in life.

I think honesty is very important in everyday life, although there are situations when a lie is better. The situations are only when a lie is more loving.

There is a difference between a lie and a false statement. A lie deals with emotions and a false statement with facts.

Honesty is not telling it like it is, but is telling it the way it will affect your fellow man.

It just depends on the situation whether a white lie will hurt or not. If it is continual, then it could mean trouble.

Most of the time a lie just prolongs your agony before you get punished.

And then there was the child who apparently faces problems realistically. "I think honesty should be used in everyday life as much as possible. I think you should always try to tell the truth unless you are better off by telling a lie."

There were, however, a few who refused to compromise with fact or soften it into fiction. "The truth cannot be ignored. Life works around truth. You should always face the truth, no matter how much it hurts. If you go on believing something which you know really isn't true, it would be like being imprisoned, and when you face up to the truth, you are set free."

Probably the most telling argument for truthfulness stated, "I think that if you don't tell the truth, it hurts inside."

Some believed it more difficult to be honest today than in former times; an approximately equal number disagreed. Representative opinions differed from "I don't think it's very hard to be honest today. I don't think it ever was very hard to be honest," to "Honesty has always been difficult and will continue to be."

On the other hand, one person thought that the area a person lives in has more effect upon honesty than does the time. "A person in the ghetto, for example, probably will find more gain in being dishonest than in being honest."

Another blamed a decline in morality for what he considered the laxity of the times. "In the old days the majority of people believed in God. Now only a few believe in Him and every one turns dishonest."

Still another accused society of being soft, as it were, in that "People today say that they want to hear the truth, even if it hurts, but when they do hear the real truth, it scares them. They probably were expecting what they dreamed up to be the truth, and when hearing the real thing, they didn't believe it."

One fellow took a blast at situation ethics with a five-page typewritten paper welcoming the reader to the "Land of Butchered Logic and Twisted Reasoning" in which "The approach to honesty is about as sensible as something found Through the Looking Glass." His reasoning jumped from pinnacle to pinnacle along a path outlined in It All Depends, a religious publication put out by his church. He condemned Joseph Fletcher's Situation Ethics (one suspects without ever having read it) as "sugar-coated lawlessness," and concluded with a paragraph entitled "Long Live the Prudes," in which he contended that "Battle scarred and worn, but hardly dead, Victorian squares continue to be in the majority." He blamed the whole philosophy upon the fact that "when a man knows he is wrong, he must grasp at straws to find some other source to blame."

COURAGE AND HEROISM

It is an oversimplification to say that man and his stories have always been greatly concerned with feats of courage and deeds of heroism. Perhaps Americans are expressly involved with the image of fearlessness because of the competitive nature of their origin. Be that as it may, these students felt that heroes abound everywhere today: in politics, athletics, war, religion, and even in getting cats out of trees. In fact, one wrote exactly that: "Heroes lurk everywhere; on police forces, in dog kennels, in doctor's offices, and in law offices, not forgetting housewives, secretaries, and cheerleaders. Just turn on your TV and there they are. All the characters, all the plots, all the commercials, all the real actors and singers are the real heroes of the American public. We take every person that has even hinted at superhuman qualities, worship and adore him and make him into the meaning of his heroism. We need heroes. We need those perfect qualities up there to admire and glorify."

Others thought along these lines:

"... there are heroes in the world today, but they remain unheard of for many years. I believe it takes a while for a person to be classified as a hero.

A hero's goals must not necessarily be worthy ones. Among kids maybe the one who can "pop a wheelie" on his bike may be considered a hero.

Most children think of their father as a hero until they find out that he is not perfect. Maybe being a father is being important enough to be called a hero. I don't know.

I think Martin Luther King, John Kennedy and Robert Kennedy were all considered heroes because they died trying to help others.

The first men on the moon were heroes and also people who have devoted their lives to research and medicine.

. . . some of the people like missionaries and soldiers could be considered heroes because they risk their lives going to unfit places trying to make the lives of the people there a little better.

All heroic acts need not be worthy ones. People can become heroes just by putting others' needs before their own.

Heroic deeds can run all the way from killing people in the army to scoring 40 points in a basketball game. A heroic deed does not require the attention of the whole world. It could be as simple as playing catch with your little brother.

In assessing their own personal level of courage, they had this to say:

My own personal level of courage is for me to do something right away and not put it off.

I don't think you can know your own personal level of courage. You just can't say, "I'm brave," and expect to be. When a situation comes up, that will be the time you find out how much courage you have.

Sometimes it takes much courage for me to come to school when I'm going to have a test or don't feel well. Sometimes I can face up to this problem. More often, I run.

I don't think a person is able to say if he has courage, because what he calls courage may be another man's fear.

One girl rationalized thusly concerning her own personal fearfulness:

"I don't think I have very much courage because if somebody tries to get me to do something that I'll get in trouble for, I don't have enough courage to do it. For example, most of my friends smoke and they try to get me to smoke but I don't have enough courage to take the risk of getting caught by my parents. In a way, I'm proud of it because cigarettes are dangerous to your health, and if I had enough courage to smoke them, I might be ruining my health."

A boy commented upon the irony of hero-making. "There was a man driving around with three people in his car when he accidentally went through a bridge and plunged into forty feet of water. He got out, dived back in and pulled

one person to safety; dived back in and pulled another person to safety; but when he dived in the third time, he couldn't find the third person and gave up. The people in the community thought of him as a hero, but the police got him on manslaughter for crashing through the bridge in the first place. He didn't claim any heroism, but the people considered him a hero because he went against great odds to save those that he could."

Another, in the same vein, decried, "It is a pity that heroism is so often a product of irrational sensationalism and that so many acclaimed 'heroes' have such massive chinks in their armor of nobility."

DROPOUTS AND FAILURE

To fail or not to fail? That is the question. Some educators maintain that a failing grade may so damage a child's self-image that he will lose all sense of security in his own ability. Current readings in educational methods place some of the blame for the ills of society upon the percentage-based grading scale. The Kansas High School Activities Association declares anyone eligible for inter-scholastic competition provided he maintains a grade average of at least three D minuses and one F.

The traumatic effects of failure and consideration of the "don't fail anybody," philosophy brought forth the following comments:

I don't feel schools should be made easier. Many sources say that American schools are inferior to European schools. I wouldn't change to such an extreme, but there would be no sense in going to school if it was made easy for everyone. I think that if a student doesn't attempt to get at least a passing grade, he should be failed. When children are young, I believe it hurts to fail, but failure is a fact of life. We can't all be huge successes. Failing will strengthen an individual who sincerely wants to succeed. If one doesn't care, then he can be defeated no more.

In discussing failure in school we come back to the problem of who is to blame. My generation has been pampered, spoiled, analyzed and usually denied nothing. We have been brought up being told that all of our maladjustments and failures are someone else's fault. We are a lazy generation. If a student deserves a failing mark, by all means fail him; it won't kill him. It can't possibly defeat him for he knows he deserved it. Failure is self-manufactured.

If anything should be done with school, it should be made harder. I am being brought up in a family that believes that you don't get what you want unless you work for it.

If school isn't hard, you aren't going to learn much.

I think the school system now is as "loose" as it can get with learning still to take place.

A student will fume over the work load, but he always does it.

If he (the student) develops an inferiority complex, he may get mad enough to want to sit down and do better.

Failure defeats an individual at first, but it later strengthens him. He'll feel low and want to pick himself up.

The vast majority of pupils are more than capable of doing the work if it were doubled. If there is no choice, we'll do it. As soon as a person realizes he isn't going to be pampered, he'll accomplish at least enough work to get by.

Failure defeats the weak and strengthens the strong.

In all fairness, it must be said that there were a few dissenters. They said this, in effect!

If you were to fail a student, he might come to think that he will be a failure all his life. He may think that if he can't pass through school, then how can he make it through the world?

People who try and are defeated get the feeling that they are dumb. But they really aren't; they are the strongest people. They'll try and try as long as they have to.

I think that failure defeats a person because it really lets him down and sometimes it is more than he can take.

I don't know why a student should be failed if he has put forth any effort at all.

I don't believe there should be any grading system whatsoever. Students would do a lot better if they just got a card saying whether they were trying and improving. I know a lot of students who will get an F in a subject and will say the teacher gave them an F. Well, that's it; they won't do any more work and just flunk out because they figure if they get an F, they're not capable of doing anything. I think abolishing the grading system, except for files, would be a good thing for everyone.

Concerning drop-outs themselves, whether they be from school or from society, they had varied emotions. Many of them were remembering that the city fathers only last summer had refused permission for a group of "hippies" to camp overnight in the park at the airport. The refusal was rationalized by a so-called lack of facilities, but the plain, unadorned fact of the matter

was that the community was afraid, much as earlier settlements had been afraid of Indian tribes or gypsy bands. This confusion was indicated by the girl who wrote, "I really don't know what to think of people who drop out of today's society. I can see their view but I can also see the 'establishment's.'"

. . . both sides have wrongs and rights, and if someone on either side has a good solution for today's problems, let him speak out and be prepared for criticism because not everyone in the world will accept the idea, even if it will solve the problem."

Another thought that "People drop out of society because they don't like the way things are (pollution, no jobs, violence). When they do so, they are really 'copping out' because they should be trying to better things so that future generations won't have to drop out."

One admitted, "The world and everything in it bores me. So dropping out sounds great. I feel it would be quite an experience and a real tough challenge." His thinking was joined by another who wrote, "Some of the reasons for dropping out are to have a 'free' life, which means to live life, come as it will and do its worst, and never to plan ahead. This is the only reason I would agree with them (the dropouts). This type of life appeals to many people, maybe even me or my classmates."

Two dissenting opinions came in the form of these criticisms:

No person should live his life for himself. If everyone would stop following Whitman's and Emerson's advice and start living life, not for personal gratification, but for others, our world would be in much better shape. I would like to think that I could live my life for others' benefit, not my own.

The dropouts of society are irresponsible dimwits. Nothing makes me more furious than to hear some self-proclaimed intellectual broadcasting the individuality of man, the glories of peace, and the powerful union of man and nature while he, at the same time, is living in some un-ecological eyesore doing nothing about making our world a better place in which to live.

RELIGION

That the youth of today is aware of a definite change in man's interdependence upon a Supreme Being cannot be questioned, according to these reports. One youth phrased it this way: "There has been a change in religion. We don't rely on God to do everything for us. We rely more on ourselves."

Whether this change be good or bad was debatable, they thought. Some made comments such as these:

The lives of people (today) are centered too much around material things and worry over what the other person will think. This has to be for the worse, because if we spend too much time thinking about worldly things, we will not have time for spiritual things which are very important.

People today are much more informed and aware of life around them than they were 200 years ago. People tend to believe that there is no need for God, no cause for strength. Most miracles are explained now as quirks of nature or coincidence. But people tend to forget that man's mind and emotions are what make him higher than monkeys and frogs. Sometimes we need help through a bad time or maybe a shoulder to cry on. That's what God is for. It's too bad many people miss this nowadays.

Back in the early days, it was the belief in God that allowed people to make it.

More people fight now; there are more deaths, robberies and so forth. It is as if God is punishing us for our rejection of religion.

I think Americans today are not as likely to be centered around religion as the colonists were because of all the scientific know-how. The colonists believed in God to pull them through, while today the only troubles we have are financial. I think this change is for the worse, because we should believe in something that has stability, like God. This is why so many people are lost . . . We have just as much to pray for, but we don't always know it.

I think that within my lifetime I will see the fall of the church and worship will be entirely individual.

There were others (approximately just as many) who believed that the turn of events was for the better. They said this:

Now people can think clearly of God in their own way without thinking that they have to.

Religion is becoming a more personal thing. I think it's for the better, because we can have our own feelings and no one else knows about them.

People today, especially the youth, are "geared toward the average rather than the exceptional," and search for a religion that is more relevant. I think this is for the better because it can help people to handle today's problems. (quote from "Thick as a Brick," by Jethro Tull)

I believe this is a change for the better, because it is possible to become so dependent upon God that you can't or won't help yourself.

It (the change) is for the better, because we try to find out why things happen instead of saying it was God's will.

People used to go to church every week acting like stuffed shirts because they had to. Now the churches are more lenient and it separates the people who want to go to church and the ones who don't.

One young man viewed the change philosophically, as he wrote, "I don't think anyone knows if it's better or worse, but it must be better because God hasn't put a stop to it yet."

Several commented upon the "Jesus Movement" and its appeal to young persons, but there was no agreement as to its worth. Directly opposite views such as these were voiced:

I have noticed in the last couple of years that religion is getting stronger in young people with all of the Jesus rallies and revivals going on. I think this is for the better. All people should believe in God.

Even though there is a Jesus Movement today, I think that turns people away from religion, instead of toward it. Besides, man has found that he can do much for himself and does not really need the help of God.

ON BEING MISUNDERSTOOD

A plague of man's (and woman's existence) from the time that the serpent sweet-talked Eve into tasting the apple has been one of misunderstanding. The term "understanding" itself is most difficult to assess, as anyone who has tried to write behavioral objectives for education very well knows. Small wonder, then, that great rifts occur between generation and generation, between the artist and the pragmatist, and between man and society.

Most of the students questioned felt that the "generation gap" is here to stay. They said:

The old suffered through infinite pain to achieve their great wisdom, or so they think. Though time offers experience, and experience brings insight and wisdom, who's to say that it is any better or any truer than what the youth can deduce himself? Everyone lives differently; very seldom would anyone's advice truly help another through life.

I couldn't care less what they (the older generation) did when they were my age; I want to know what to do now.

The older people always tell you what you do wrong and never what you do right.

Thoreau's statement against the old isn't really disrespectful, but I kind of interpret it as if he's saying the younger you are, the more you have to learn and the more unqualified you are. "A boy can't handle a man's job," so they say, but I believe that statement may be read backward also.

The only way I can find myself, just who I am, is to think on my own and not dwell on my elders' views.

I know it's a parent's job to correct us, but what good does it do? I never listen to my parents; I figure it is better to find out what life is like the hard way. I think the only way anybody ever learns is by mistakes.

The older generation "bugs" me because to hear them talk, you'd think they were perfect when they were young. I've noticed one thing that I do. If I like some adult really well, I think of him as younger than he is. I don't know why; I just do.

I think some advice is good, but not helpful to the youth, because they have to try things out for themselves. There is no use telling them more than once, because they heard you the first time and will do what they want to do, sooner or later.

The old say what they want to say any way they want to say it. They should try to understand the young people better. But that is only 50% of it to me. The other 50% is that young people should understand the older people better.

Sometimes adults' advice comes in handy, but I do think that the young should try to experience life for themselves. The adults can help by leading the young along, but they should never become a crutch.

Another area of misunderstanding upon which students commented concerned the remark made by Simon Stimson, the musician in the play Our Town when he said, "The artistic people of the world are never really understood by the practical." This idea cropped up again in the Cather stories, "The Sculptor's Funeral," and "Paul's Case," and led to mixed reactions. Some of the group agreed with the one who felt, ". . . artistic people have the gift of being able to see the things which can't be seen, hear the things which can't be heard, and touch the things which can't be touched. Naturally, people who don't have these qualities will not be able to understand one who does."

On the other side of the fence was the boy who thought, "Any modern artist or poet I have ever seen is usually in dirty, way-out clothes with a beard and stringy hair . . . I think poetry and art are "sissy" (and some music). It just seems like a bunch of namby-pamby stuff to me. I am not now, and hope I never will be, culturally inclined to things like poetry, opera, some concerts, or orchestras."

Additional representative samplings brought forth ideas such as these:

To some, writing a poem or painting a portrait is work, but this simply doesn't make it on the star-spangled work scale. Unless you make it your hobby to move pianos or lay bricks, you are not an American male. To many Americans, unless your hands are dirty and your back is sore, you are a bum. (The most notable exception is professional people, of whom most of the population is insanely jealous.)

Our eyesight is very poor. We can't relate other people's feelings to ourselves. We can see the problem, and the solution is sacrificing our defenses to help.

Practical people see life in terms of the future. Artistic people are commonly thought to be more aware of the world as it is now. I feel that artists have a definite advantage because they have a more active and colorful imagination.

Most people would say it isn't practical to sit and watch a sunset instead of working. There are the people who always take the practical viewpoint. This type of person laughs at a beautiful, modern painting or calls a poem "silly." In my opinion, the artistic will never understand the very practical.

Contained in almost every group of reactions was one that related to the materialism of present-day society. This particular set of comments included, "I don't think that the poets or musicians are considered "sissy" anymore because they make the same or more money than common laborers."

Finally, a rather strange and somewhat sad reaction came from the child who said of "Paul's Case" that it was a "literary farce, somehow born out of the mind of a senile Nebraskan." This assessment was difficult to reconcile with his later statement, "Yes, I have felt persecuted for my likes and dislikes in artistic fields. Most people have no idea of what it's like to grow up in a sports-oriented, masculine-crazy society and have a passion for Bach and Handel . . . During my childhood, I preferred Strauss and Beethoven to the Beatles or the Rolling Stones. Of course, certain of my peer group took great delight in the fact that I could name all the capitals of Europe (big deal!) but I didn't know who Joe Namath was."

A lack of understanding was only one of the reasons which were given for the growing suicide rate. Some of the respondents thought they could recog-

nize the feeling which might lead to the taking of one's own life, but none of them could understand actually committing the deed itself. In essence, they felt that life has too much to offer and there are too many things ahead which they want to accomplish. Drugs and alcohol were blamed by many for distortions of judgment which might lead to self-destruction. This was their rationale:

There is a lot of pressure on the youth of today, and since the moral code is getting freer every day, there are greater chances for youth to get into positions that might lead to suicide. Suicide is definitely a pre-meditated way of "copping out." I have seriously thought about it. Who hasn't? But I talked myself out of it. I think it takes more guts to face up to things than to kill yourself. Besides, what would be accomplished by your death? Just a little sorrow, and then everything is forgotten. A guy has to think of what he can do in the future and set goals.

Many times I have felt that it just wasn't worth the bother. The last time was about three weeks ago. I had a lot of thinking to do, so I jumped on my bike and rode out to a spot on the river where everything was turning green and the violets were blooming and the river made a funny, little sound. And when I saw nature in all its beauty, I knew that for just one glance of this, everything else was worth going through.

I have had a feeling of despair before. I prayed that things would get better and they did.

When I was very young, I used to almost always feel depressed, sometimes even to the point that I would cause physical damage to myself, but nothing really serious. It was mostly because I felt sorry for myself because I worked so much around the house. It seemed to me that I was doing dishes as soon as I was able to walk. But then Jesus came into my life and He began to heal the hurts of my early years, making me a whole creature.

I think that the reason many young people commit suicide is that they feel nobody understands or cares about them. A lot of them have become so confused or mixed up with drugs and don't have anyone to turn to. Some of them plan it so they will be found before they are dead because they really don't want to die; they just want attention.

I don't think I have enough guts to do anything to harm myself. To change this feeling (of depression) all I have to do is think about the future. I tell myself that something exciting might happen in the future that I wouldn't want to miss out on.

I've had feelings of despair in which I felt that life was not worth living, but I go out and race my cycle somewhere and get over it.

Man is too worthless to think he has any right to choose death for himself. Death is too spectacular to be decided upon by a creature that can't begin to understand life. The mind is filled with unfathomable loops; ideas of depression, of being lost, or of morbid loneliness can appear from nowhere. When one appears, a person needs to be told that it's not his fault he's feeling that way, but something he can't control himself. The feeling will pass. Give him a cookie and tell him he's loved.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The majority of the teen-agers involved in this course declared themselves to be in favor of sex education, legalization of marijuana and the institution of marriage, not necessarily in that order. About sex education, they said this:

I believe there should be sex education in the schools, especially at the senior high level. Little or no accurate information is the cause for quite a bit of VD and many pregnancies. I think it would be better to have accurately informed students than it would be to have pregnant ones.

Concerning sex education, . . . I feel that the time-old style of learning it in the home is crumbling. By learning it in school, young people have a chance to get all the facts straight and ask any questions that might be bothering them. When a parent tries to explain, one runs the risk of inadequate, misquoted information. This occurs when the parent isn't fully informed himself. . . Since everyone is curious, schooling can stop the "Russian roulette" now involved in experimenting with sex.

We must face it; we've seen more flesh in our lives than in the previous sixty generations. In some areas of our country, sex is close to becoming a team sport. But that is not the point; if sex education were needed in the high school, I'd agree to have it. The fact remains that such courses are so watered down that the only good it would achieve would be to give someone an easy credit.

Sex education needs to be treated as a wholesome process with the purpose of enlightening students, instead of "the egg joins with the spermatozoa to make a baby," usually directed by a slightly embarrassed biology instructor. Young people today are operating on too many fallacies that are bound to get them into trouble. Kinky sex, with Crisco oil and pink vibrators, need not be taught. But sex education, not biology education, should be taught to high school students.

There are a lot of questions I think need answering in a sex education class that not everyone knows the answers to.

Sex education in the schools isn't much. They just tell how a baby is formed. A person still doesn't know anything. The only way they'll know is by trying.

There were, however, some dissenters:

I think sex education would be good if it was taught from a Christian point of view. Most kids get so much sex poured down their throats, they don't know what to do on their wedding night.

The way I see sex education is nobody taught anybody years ago, and they did just fine. Sex and drugs are being pushed into everything today--movies, books, school, and conversations. No wonder there is so much premarital sex. There's no mystery to it any more.

Face it. Kids are going to learn about it anyway, so why all the fuss about where it should be taught?

As to alcohol, most people considered it to be more dangerous than marijuana. They also offered some rationale for the use of "grass."

When it comes to dangers of your own body, no one can or will imagine anything bad happening to them. It's always Joe Blow, the other guy. I suppose some people do fall into addiction and drown before they realize it even might happen to them. Of marijuana and alcohol, alcohol is by far the more dangerous. It destroys brain cells, eats the lining of the stomach, may cause damage to the liver and can even freeze the lungs, if taken in excess . . . Marijuana, on the other hand, leaves the brain cells intact, does nothing to the body processes and is less dangerous to the human body than smoking a normal cigarette.

Legalization of marijuana would stop syndicate involvement, scarcity and whatever minute stealing is involved with its procurement. It would save the future of many nice kids, not degenerate, despicable hoodlums who happen to get caught.

I don't know if marijuana or alcohol is more dangerous and I don't care to find out about either one.

I think all the drugs, alcohol and sex in the world are forced upon the kids who are searching for a way out. They are searching for peace, an escape from reality.

I believe kids go into drugs and alcohol because they have fun at it. They don't imagine what will happen, but who does? Have you imagined what would happen if you hit a semi head-on at 70 mph? Does that keep you from driving? . . . I think marijuana should be legalized because it is not as harmful as alcohol.

People have the habit of thinking, "Oh, well, that wouldn't ever happen to me."

Most of those who discussed the institution of marriage were definitely in favor of its continuance. There were some, however, who felt as did the

student who wrote "Today there are more people living together, or simply enjoying carnal pleasure, without buying a marriage license for \$3.50. But if their relationship lasts forever, what is the difference between that and a \$5000 ten-minute ceremony with 22 bridesmaids? It's hardly a sin to enjoy yourself, so if both partners are willing, understand the situation and are happy with the outcome, what's the harm?"

One refused comment for what seemed to him a very good reason. "I have never thought seriously about marriage because I just got my driver's license two months ago."

Another objected to abolishing the institution because, as he said, "Without marriage, there would be one big mess--no more relatives. How would a person know exactly who was family and who was a friend?" Good question!

Most people, however, commented in this vein:

I don't know about anyone else, but I would never live with a man unless I had a marriage license because any two people who live together show how immature they really are. Most won't admit it, but it's the simple fact that they're "chicken"; actually they're scared of getting married. They figure it's easier to take off anytime they get an urge, without having any strings attached. Well, I figure they'll be running all their lives, every time things get tight.

I don't agree that marriage should be abandoned because . . . the world would be utter chaos. What about children that would be born? If the two parents didn't love each other or the child, he would grow up not loving anyone. This is why there is so much trouble and rebellion in the world today because people have known nothing but hate all their lives.

All the talk about marriage being an out-dated institution is absurd. As long as there is an established government with laws and regulations, there will be legal marriage. As long as people believe in God, there will be marriage sanctioned by Him. As long as there are two people on the earth, they will be taking vows and forming bonds between themselves. People need the security of a bond that they can't back out of.

I think that most people who say that marriage is old-fashioned and should be abandoned really don't feel the way they say they do.

You have to be strong to resist the new morality. It's a sugar-coated cop out.

I think marriage might be an old-fashioned institution, but if it is so old-fashioned, why has it lasted so long? I don't think it should be abandoned. It doesn't say anywhere in the Bible where a couple just "shacked up."

In the last analysis, most people felt that it boiled down to a question of responsibility. This feeling was given in summary by the student who wrote, "There is really no difference in the responsibility of two people, whether they are married or not . . . I think what has brought about this kind of philosophy is the fact that there are more and more divorces. To me, this insinuates they (people) aren't able to decide what they want and that they don't want to have to put any effort into something to make it work."

METAPHORICALLY SPEAKING

That little fellow Charlie Brown certainly did his part to set the world straight a few years ago in the book Happiness Is a Warm Puppy. These students provided an infinite variety of additions to his list. Among them were these:

HAPPINESS IS a good feeling inside of you that makes you smile.

being in a good mood toward everyone, including yourself.

love for everyone and just enough troubles to keep you busy.

being on good terms with your family and friends.

knowing that you are loved and can be trusted.

a mellow feeling, when you do something good to someone or they do it to you.

not being overburdened with more than you can handle.

being really aware of something which makes you feel bubbling all over.

feeling that the whole world is yours, but really you know it's yours for just a second of a second.

being pleased by small things that are done.

being able to do what you want to do when you want to do it.

getting what you want out of life without having too many problems get in your way.

getting along with people; hardly ever fighting with your boyfriend.

having everyone on your side and achieving a "great" feat, be it large or small.

being able to make the best out of a bad situation.

being yourself and loving it.

something coming from within. It can't be bought or sold,
but it can be lost and given.

HONESTY IS not cheating anyone, whether it is yourself or another person.

telling the truth when it doesn't hurt another person.

being able to tell someone the truth even when a lie would
make you look very good.

not telling it "like it is," but telling it the way it will
affect your fellow man.

doing everything the right way, which is very hard.

what every person wants to be, but every now and then we goof!

COURAGE IS the ability to back down from a fight or to stand up for
what you believe.

a man who is not afraid to stand up to his rights, no
matter what anyone says about him.

being able to do something and not knowing you had it in
you to do it.

reaching down inside and giving one's all without fear of
being hurt or making a mistake, or being killed.

doing whatever must be done, no matter how great the odds.

standing up to what you did against everyone who puts you
down for it.

the ability to stand up to the tasks and difficulties that
you hate.

strength, along with anger.

risking life or treasured things for the good of another
person and not taking a great deal of praise for it.

putting the needs of others who need your help before your own.

the willingness inside a person to do something in which he
has faith.

selflessness, bravery, and heroic feats--the strength to
do what a person is afraid of most.

necessary, for a person to be a human being.

RESOLUTIONS FOR MYSELF

Don't talk so much.
Don't complain so much.
Don't procrastinate.
Don't eat or drink too much.
Don't judge people until I really get to know them.
Do my homework better.
Do everything on my own with my own resources.

To live with all my might without doing bad.
To be pleasant at all times, and in all things show respect.
To see beauty in all things and look for favorable characteristics.
To be humble.
To remember that Jesus is my example and strength.
To always regard others as better than myself.
To turn on to life and stay away from drugs.
To be more honest with myself and others.
To think before I act.
To use only the necessary amount of resources and not be wasteful.
To give of what I have to make others happy.
To take a person for what he is.
To listen in class even though it is boring to me.

Never do anything that would give a bad name to my family.
Never get any bad habits that I can't break easily.
Never spend too much money.
Never make a fool out of myself.
Never depend upon someone else.
Never say a word of spite, malice, or gossip against anyone.
Never prejudge people.
Never jump to conclusions.
Never take any form of action when angry.
Never show favoritism to a person because of his color.
Never take advantage of anyone.
Never look down on those less fortunate.
Never gossip unless the facts are known.
Never say harsh or foul words in front of elders.
Never copy unless stuck for an answer.
Never steal unless there's a chance you won't get caught.

FOOTNOTES

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7. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-23.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 166-167.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 246.
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12. Robert C. Blackmon, "Selected Papers on Values" (ERIC, Ed 024 128).
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INPUT AND INSIGHT
AN
ASSESSMENT OF ATTITUDE

by

RUTH SHULL

B. S., Kansas State Teachers College, 1935

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

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In primitive societies there was usually a definite maturity rite which signaled initiation into manhood. As the complexity of cultures increased, this significant point became increasingly more difficult to ascertain. In America today, the young person is often confused, constrained and contradicted by the social ethics he sees around him. He rebels against the heritage of value which the schools attempt to transmit. Traditional courses of action tend to seem neither relevant nor valid. Very often he either erupts with rebellion or dissolves into apathy.

Our nation, in earlier periods of time, has known exactly what it wanted and needed in the way of education for its youth. The Puritans wanted their children to learn to read the Bible; the post-World War II generation wanted to speed up programs in reading and health education. After Sputnik, national leaders found a great need for extensive programs of mathematics and science. But now things seem different, somehow. Electronic media, coupled with increasing family mobility among other things, has produced an entire generation whose experiences are not so limited as those of generations who came before. They are no longer willing to accept without question what the classroom has to offer. A Batuso proverb used as an epigraph in Robert Ruark's book about Africa, Something of Value, states, "If a man does away with his traditional way of living and throws away his good customs, he had better first make certain he has something of value to replace them."

What is the logical starting point in an assessment of the values needed by a young person today? How does he define their worth? What are values, anyway?

It seems only logical that any answer to these questions should come from that same classroom where traditional knowledge, beliefs and values are

transmitted. However, an attempt needs to be made to open the doors on this understanding in such a way that the student is better able to perceive himself and his relation to moral action within the structure in which he functions.

Therefore, a course in American literature with an endeavor to serve both relevance and the process of value assessment was developed and taught to an eleventh grade class in a high school of about 1100 students in north central Kansas.

Course objectives delineated a study of the heritage of American literature, with its parallel to the westward movement and historical development of the nation. Traditional testing was, for the most part, abandoned and grading was based upon reaction essays in which the student correlated earlier attitudes and beliefs with those he himself holds today.

Readings began with Thornton Wilder's play, Our Town, which the author describes as "an attempt to find a value above all price for the smallest events in our daily lives."

As the course progressed along the chronology of the development of America as a nation, the readings for each section of history were related to student opinions, ideas, and beliefs concerning events in their own daily lives. Thinking progressed along the lines of Colonial rebellion, Puritan morality, Emerson non-conformity, and so forth, right up to the philosophies of contemporary writers. In essence, again and again the concepts tied into the thinking of Mr. Wilder in the initial selection studied.

At the end of each unit, representative opinions were assessed and attacked or defended. A compilation of these opinions presented views on such subjects as the values of history and tradition, the cost of being misunderstood, religion in present day life, the suicide rate, drug use, sex educa-

tion, marriage customs, and many others.

Evaluation was subjective, based upon organization of ideas, clarity of expression, support of contentions and adequacy of mechanics.

Finally, the class provided feedback by judging the effectiveness of the course and the method of instruction. Most were favorable. A file of writings for each student evidenced growth in both frankness of statement and confidence of expression.

There were, of course, several apparent areas for improvement--a need for more stress upon composition skills, for one thing, and more student choice of materials, for another. There was also a need for more media. Hopefully, these changes may come about during the next school year.