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The novel in high school: a sourcebook

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY .

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

THE NOVEL IN HIGH SCHOOL: A SOURCEBOOK

. Submitted by

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(B.A., Boston University, 1947)

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

1962

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

A problem often involved in teaching the novel is that appreciation of literature is essentially a personal and intuitive process. The means for promoting growth in literary appreciation, however, must be practical and external. Therefore, the problem undertaken in this thesis is to organize a pattern of instruction for presenting the novel.

Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to provide a synthesis of the approaches recommended for the study of the novel in high school; and to compile a Sourcebook based on three novels to which these approaches are applied.

Justification

An immediate advantage of viewing the novel from one or a combination of approaches is that it allows the novel to be reduced momentarily to a more manageable unit. The teacher can control the learning experience he wishes to provide. This is of particular importance when the novel is presented to students who are poorly motivated or of low ability. For example, some students might find greater meaning in a novel through the historical approach rather than through the analytical or "literary" approach. By the same token, the teacher may deliberately

select an approach more literary and abstract in nature for students of greater ability.

A practical by-product resulting from a familiarity with definite approaches to the novel is that it gives the student a secure tool for discussion and evaluation. Once he decides which approach best suits the novel to be analyzed, it becomes easier for him to write constructively about it and to form a more competent personal opinion. It provides him with a means to organize the reasons why he likes a certain novel or, for that matter, why he dislikes it.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this thesis is limited in the following respects:

1. It is not a definitive or completely original study of how to read the novel. It is, rather, limited to a consideration of the six possible approaches suggested by J. N. Hook:¹ historical, analytical, emotive, paraphrastic, didactic, and socio-psychological.
2. The three novels included in this Sourcebook were written by American authors within the last forty years. They are:
 - a. The Great Gatsby² by F. Scott Fitzgerald
 - b. The Old Man and the Sea³ by Ernest Hemingway

¹J. N. Hook, The Teaching of High School English (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1959), pp. 157-188.

²F. Scott Fitzgerald, "The Great Gatsby," The Portable F. Scott Fitzgerald (New York: The Viking Press, 1945), pp. 1-168.

³Ernest Hemingway, The Old Man and the Sea (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952).

c. Point of No Return¹ by John P. Marquand.

3. The writer chose three novels arbitrarily from the point of view of appeal of theme, appropriateness to age and experience of a high-school student, and realistic development of character and plot.
4. Of the six approaches considered generally in Chapter II, the Sourcebook uses only four: didactic, socio-psychological, historical, and analytical.
5. The Sourcebook has yet to be tested in a classroom situation. The conclusions drawn are on the basis of the writer's personal opinion.

Definitions

1. The novel: An imaginative prose story of certain length which portrays fictional characters as they confront conflicts in their lives.
2. Approaches to the novel: Specific ways to examine different aspects found in the novel.
3. The historical approach: An emphasis on the happenings and influence of the era in relation to the novel and the author.
4. The socio-psychological approach: A consideration of human behavior and motivation and their effects on the individual and society in the novel.
5. The didactic approach: An attempt to discover the ethical concepts and intentions of the author in his novel.

¹John P. Marquand, Point of No Return (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1949).

6. The paraphrastic approach: A restatement of words or passages to provide a clearer interpretation.
7. The emotive approach: An emphasis on the emotions and senses to heighten reading enjoyment.
8. The analytical approach: A consideration of the nature of the literary aspects found in the novel: plot, characterization, setting, style, theme.
9. Plot: The main action in the novel.
10. Characterization: A portrayal of the distinguishing qualities of those persons in the novel.
11. Setting: The physical, moral, or temporal environment of the novel.
12. Style: The author's characteristic manner of expression.
13. Theme: The underlying and unifying point of view of life running through the novel.

CHAPTER II

APPROACHES TO THE NOVEL

Part I: The Goals of Education

A comprehensive view of the goals of education might be said to resemble the boxes in a Chinese puzzle. The subject of this thesis, teaching the novel, represents one of the smallest units of the puzzle. To recognize the continuity of purpose existing in the relationship of the goals, from general to specific, it would be well to note briefly how each goal actually forms an integral part of the other.

The Broad Goals of Education

The present atmosphere of world tension, change, and conflict challenges education to further the goal of active creativity, in addition to developing the inherent resources of its students. "The central task of education [has become a preparation] . . . not for the passive acceptance of the world, but for the creation of worlds."¹ Suspended between the heritage of the past and the exigencies of the future, the broad aims of education can best be fulfilled by "the building of an awareness and understanding of tradition . . . and the fostering of human striving to go beyond tradition."²

¹Robert Iglehart, "The Inconstant Child," Aesthetic Form and Education, ed. Michael F. Andrews (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1958), p. 21.

²Jerome Hausman, "Enrichment of Education Through the Arts," Aesthetic Form and Education, ed. Michael F. Andrews (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1958), p. 96.

Within the framework of education, the dichotomy of the arts and science, that is, one taking precedent over the other in the curriculum, has ceased to exist. The importance of both is apparent, for the present age of science insists upon a vigorous scientific training for our youth, and yet, "To think seriously about the task of education in a democratic society is to look for ways in which the creative arts can infuse the educational system with their own values."¹

The Goals of the Language Arts

The goals of the language arts fit within the broad goals of education, just as the second box of the puzzle fits within the first, by attempting to fuse tradition and experience with new ideas and innovations. Speaking, listening, reading, and writing leaven the minds of the young with the values, attitudes, and capabilities of humanity. Knowledge and understanding of these are necessary for an articulate synthesis of tradition, judgment, and creativity leading, in turn, to strengthened ties of communication which bind mankind together.

"Communication, then, is at the heart of the curriculum. It is not only the instrument of the miracle of shared living but the key to all learning and the means of transmitting the wisdom of the past to those who face the problems of the present."²

¹Harold Taylor, "The Creative Arts and Democratic Values," Aesthetic Form and Education, ed. Michael F. Andrews (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1958), p. 96.

²Dora V. Smith, The Miracle of Shared Living (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), p. 62.

Goals of Literature Within the Language Arts Program

Within the language arts program, the study of literature specifically welds together the old and the new. Literature, the tangible record of man's creativity, can be guide and mentor in the shaping of the mind and spirit of youth.

"In an age of science and mechanical development, it is almost inevitable that the importance of intangibles should be minimized or obscured. It is all the more imperative that the values of the study of literature should be clear not only to teachers of English in high schools, but also to the gadget-minded of the populace, short-sighted in their enjoyment of the immediate, the noisy and crowded, the active and unreflective."¹

As an artistic interpreter of man's experiences, literature fulfills many purposes and offers many satisfactions.

"Much that in life itself might seem disorganized and meaningless takes on order and significance when it comes under the organizing and vitalizing influence of the artist. The youth senses in himself new and unsuspected emotional impulses. He sees the adults around him acting in inexplicable ways. In literature he meets emotions, situations, people, presented in significant patterns. He is shown the causal relationships between actions, he finds approval given to certain kinds of personalities and behavior rather than to others, he finds molds into which to pour his own nebulous emotions. In short, in literature he finds meaning attached to what otherwise would be for him merely brute facts."²

The goal of the literature program is to broaden the experience and thinking of the student by providing him with the means of living

¹The Commission on the English Curriculum of the National Council of Teachers of English, The English Language Arts in the Secondary School (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1956), p. 124.

²Louise M. Rosenblatt, Literature as Experience (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1938), p. 52.

more fully than the limitations of his direct and youthful experience would otherwise allow. It should permit young people to test their emotions, their weaknesses and strengths, and their values by projecting themselves into the literary experiences of others. For these reasons, the literature program seeks to develop a student's interest and pleasure in reading and to foster a strong desire to read which will carry over into the adult years.

Specific Goals of Teaching the Novel

In senior high school, the student is introduced, perhaps for the first time, to literature of maturity and sophistication. The need becomes apparent to understand the forms of literature in order to understand and appreciate the meanings. That is, the student must recognize the nature of the form used by the author in order to understand fully what the author has to say. "Because the novel or short story is a particular way of reconstructing experience, the special way in which the author has used the form may be important for the meaning or significance of the selection."¹

The novel is a distinct literary form setting forth in fiction the experiences of man for the judgment and appreciation of the reader. Part of the goal of teaching the novel is acquainting the student with the demands made upon him by this literary form in order that he may derive the greatest enjoyment and profit from the meeting of his mind and experience with the meaning and intent of the author.

¹Dwight L. Burton, Literature Study in the High School (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1959), p. 121.

"It is vital, first, that the student be made aware of the things that are important to think about when one reads fiction. Then, naturally, the student must be given much practice--criticized practice--in applying these processes of thought to fiction appropriate to his level of experience, for the constant relation of one's experience to the printed page is essential to any true comprensión."¹

Teaching the novel, furthermore, involves three learning or thinking processes:

1. Development of the higher reading skills. It is assumed that the basic skills, such as word recognition, adapting the rate to purpose and to material, reading for the main idea, reading to draw conclusions and to note organization, have been adequately mastered. The novel provides an opportunity for teaching the reading skills of a higher level: further development of vocabulary; reading to determine theme, relationships, and unifying elements; reading to evaluate and draw inferences.
2. Development of the ability to find conceptual meanings. The student learns to generalize and to transfer experiences and ideas discovered in the novel to other literary or personal experiences. Familiarity with symbolism is one aspect of this goal.
3. Development of a higher standard of taste and appreciation. Although standards of taste and appreciation are intangible and personal and not easily subject to tests and measurements,

¹Ibid.

it is of great consequence that those teaching literature, and in this particular the novel, attempt to raise each student's standards of judgment to his fullest potential.

Just as the contingency of the boxes in the analogy of the Chinese puzzle depends upon a single concept, that of gradation of size, so too the goals of education, to be most effective, depend upon a concept; that is, a continuity of intent from their broadest aims to their more specific. The extensive goal has been described as one which educates all children to go beyond their present world. The more specific goals are the tools operating within and reinforcing the broad goal of education toward a creative, productive, universally orientated citizenry.

Part II: The Novel as a Literary Form

Definition

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines the novel as "A fictitious prose tale of considerable length in which characters and actions professing to represent those of real life are portrayed in a plot."¹ But a novel, particularly if it is artistically written, does not adjust well to technical description. There is, in fact, more to be said about the meaning of the word novel than is suggested in the dictionary.

Brooks and Warren point out the difficulties inherent in exact literary definitions as follows:

"This is a book about the reading of fiction, and it might seem desirable to begin with a definition of the subject.

¹Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (10th ed.; Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1958), p. 574.

But in one sense a definition is unnecessary, because everyone feels that he knows what fiction is. It is a story, a made-up story, about characters. (Even when the 'characters' are animals, it is the human trait read into the animal which makes it a character at all.) But the trouble with this definition is that it is too easy, too simple, and throws little light on the stories which one encounters."¹

The truth of a too-easy, too-simple definition becomes clear when the novelist's definition is compared to the one given by the dictionary. For example, Stendhal called the novel "a mirror carried along the roadway."² The difference in definition is striking, but perhaps this is the only way that the novel can be defined; a prose story of certain length with the moving spirit of the artist as he interprets real life.

"The true novel (I am not concerned with the run-of-the-mill variety) is like pure poetry, an act of birth, not a device or an invention. It awaits its own time and has its own way to be born, and it cannot, by scientific methods, be pushed into the world from behind. After it is born, a separate individual, an organic structure, it obeys its own vital impulses. The heart quickens; the blood circulates; the pulses beat; the whole body moves in response to some inward rhythm; and in time the expanding vitality attains full stature. But until the breath of life enters a novel, it is as spiritless as inanimate matter."³

The power of the novel can be found in what Ellen Glasgow calls "the breath of life," for it is not only the artistic spark of creativity

¹Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, Understanding Fiction (2nd ed.; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1959), p. 1.

²Frank O'Connor, A Mirror in the Roadway (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), Title Page.

³Ellen Glasgow, "One Way to Write Novels," The Saturday Review Treasury, ed. John Haverstick (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), pp. 44-45.

that she speaks of but also the "breath of life" which comes from the writer's own experience. The mind of the novelist is stored with half-remembered sensations, emotions, reactions; with long-ago conversations; with images of people and customs and places. These impressions are woven into a novel and become fiction.

"Yet in this endless remembering which surely must be the main occupation of the writer, events are changed, reshaped, interpreted again and again in different ways. . . . So I feel that this story [Noon Wine] is 'true' in the way that a work of fiction should be true, created out of all the scattered particles of life I was able to absorb and combine and to shape into a living new being."¹

Criteria

Many novels fulfill the demands of length and representation to life and, yet, are not worthwhile examples of the form. Certain criteria and tests of a good novel further define the novel.

Ralph P. Boas and Edwin Smith propose that an important novel must contain the elements of artistry, vitality, and significance.

They interpret these three qualities in the following way:

Artistry--Great novelists know how to tell their stories so as best to serve their purposes. They can present and develop character, make the background of time and place seem real, develop the theme so that it seems related to both character and real life. They have sufficient command of the language to enable them to make the whole texture of their novel alive, eloquent, true, and sometimes even beautiful.

Vitality--Really great novels have a vital reality--a gusto.

¹Katherine Anne Porter, "Noon Wine: The Sources," Understanding Fiction, eds. Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1959), pp. 610-611.

Significance--It must have something to say that is worth saying. It must penetrate deeply enough into life so that the reader emerges with a sense of having lived and felt with human beings, and thought about them."¹

W. Somerset Maugham movingly illustrated these criteria in his classic, Of Human Bondage,² a novel based to a great extent on his emotions and experiences as a young man searching for a way of life. As a working artist, his theories concerning the good novel would seem particularly pertinent. He has written:

Theme

"Now I will specify what, in my opinion, are the qualities that a good novel should have. It should have a widely interesting theme, by which I mean a theme interesting not only to a clique, whether of critics, professors, highbrows, truck drivers or dish washers, but so broadly human that it is interesting to men and women of all sorts. . . .

Coherence

The story should be coherent and persuasive; it should have a beginning, a middle, and an end, and the end should be the natural consequence of the beginning.

Realism

The episodes should have probability and should not only develop the theme, but grow out of the story. The creatures of the novelist's invention should be observed with individuality, and their actions should proceed from their characters; the reader must never be allowed to say: So and So would never behave like that; on the contrary he should be obliged to say: That's exactly how I should have expected So and So to behave. I think it is all the better if the characters are in themselves interesting. . . .

Dialogue

. . . and just as behavior should proceed from character, so should speech. A fashionable woman

¹Ralph P. Boas and Edwin Smith, Enjoyment of Literature (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1935), p. 259.

²W. Somerset Maugham, Of Human Bondage (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1915).

should talk like a fashionable woman, a street walker like a street walker, a soda jerker like a soda jerker and a lawyer like a lawyer. The dialogue should neither be desultory nor should it be an occasion for the author to air his opinions; it should serve to characterize the speakers and to advance the story.

Narrative The narrative passages should be vivid, to the point and no longer than is necessary to make the motives of the persons concerned and the situations in which they are placed clear and convincing.

Style The writing should be simple enough for anyone of ordinary education to read it with ease, and the manner should fit the matter as a well-cut shoe fits a shapely foot.

Enjoyment Finally, a novel should be entertaining. I have put this last, but it is the essential quality, without which no other quality is of any use. No one in his right senses reads a novel for instruction or edification. If he wants instruction or edification he is a fool if he does not go to the books written to instruct and edify."¹

Aesthetic Appreciation

Consideration of the novel as a literary form would be incomplete if an attempt were not made to understand the nature of aesthetic appreciation. Not only is it a difficult concept to convey to the direct, active adolescent who is not always eager to contemplate the beauty of an abstract idea or to react to the impact of a perfect piece of imagery, but it is a hard term to define even for those who are interested in the nature of the experience. In spite of its subjectivity, aesthetic experience must be accounted for because it is the experience which gives the reader the deepest intellectual and spiritual pleasure.

Michael F. Andrews defines the nature of aesthetic form as a

¹W. Somerset Maugham, Great Novelists and Their Novels (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company, 1948), pp. 5-7.

"distinguishing attribute which describes the integration of the extrinsic self and the intrinsic self."¹ By extrinsic self he means that self which is "conditioned by the conscious self and relies strictly on the past practical experiences of others."² The intrinsic self is the unconscious.

"Aesthetic action is the natural unfolding of what is individual in each human being. It leads to openness of the unconscious, the integration of the rational and nonrational, and the distillation of integrity and self-evaluation from cultural traditions and conventions. This transformational process is one in which the individual becomes one with the world. He becomes a part of the universe and still remains an entity."³

This same concept of aesthetic experience was expressed by Susanne K. Langer when she defined the primary function of art to be that of objectifying feeling so that it can be contemplated and understood.

"There is one other function of the arts that benefits not so much the advance of culture as its stabilization; an influence on individual lives. This function is the converse and complement of objectification of feeling, the driving force of creation in art; it is the education of vision that we receive in seeing, hearing, reading works of art--the development of the artist's eye that assimilates ordinary sights (or sounds, motions, events) to inward vision, and lends expressiveness and emotional import to the world. Wherever art takes a motif from actuality--a flowering branch, a bit of landscape, a historic event or a personal memory, any model or theme from life--it transforms it into a piece of

¹Michael F. Andrews, "The Dynamics of Aesthetic Form," Aesthetic Form and Education, ed. Michael F. Andrews (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1958), p. 58.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 56.

imagination, and imbues its image with artistic vitality."¹

Aesthetic experience, then, is seemingly derived from the interrelation of the creative action and the response of the reader, from the integration of experience found in literature (or any art form) with those contributed by the individual.

"Just as the author is creative, selective, so the reader is also creative. Out of the interaction between what the author presents and the reader's own personality, his own fund of past experiences, may come that moment of balanced perception, a complete aesthetic experience."²

It is important for those teaching literature to recognize that although a student might not be able to define his subjective response to art, he would respond to a work of art if it touched upon experiences which he could understand and which were already a part of his life in some form.

"A vivid response to a work will have its roots in capacities and experiences already present in the personality and mind of the reader. This principle is an important one to remember in the selection of literary materials to be presented to students. We need to know that it is not enough merely to think of what the student ought to read. We must also base our choice on the possible links between those materials and the student's past experience and present emotional level."³

¹Susanne K. Langer, "The Cultural Importance of the Arts," Aesthetic Form and Education, ed. Michael F. Andrews (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1958), p. 8.

²Rosenblatt, op. cit., p. 43.

³Ibid., p. 51.

Part III: Approaches to the Novel

"In the junior high-school years readers are absorbed largely in plot narrative. Excitement, thrills, entertainment, suspense--such are the principal rewards of reading done at this stage of development. In the senior high-school years these satisfactions are by no means dispensed with, but students come by a gradual process to see beyond and through narrative elements, a variety of broader, deeper, and more subtle values--implications and relationships of personality growth and development, of the larger frame of environment and social setting, of fundamental and incidental ideas and theme, of author's personality, attitudes, and outlook on life, and so on."¹

In the senior high school, students, it is true, come to a more certain realization that there is usually more than the simple narrative elements in a novel. Sometimes the perceptive and sensitive reader has developed a high competence for seeing beyond and through, but more often a growing awareness of the implications and relationships, mentioned by Elbert Lenrow, results from organized and systematic literary training.

J. N. Hook in The Teaching of High School English² has suggested six approaches to teaching the novel: historical, socio-psychological, emotive, didactic, paraphrastic, and analytical. These are sound and practical categories from which to view the novel, and give a student the basic preparation he must have before he can discover the deeper, more satisfying elements in any novel.

The Historical Approach

Definition. The historical approach shows ". . . the continuity

¹Reader's Guide to Prose Fiction, ed. Elbert Lenrow (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1940), p. 13.

²Hook, op. cit.

of literature . . . and the relationship between history and literature."¹ It is one in which the reader superimposes the background of an era upon the fictional action within the novel. Many times a novel is predominantly historical in character, but the historical approach can also be applied to novels which only suggest a period of history. A valuable aspect of this approach is the exploration of an author's background.

Example. The historical approach is unavoidable in the case of a novel based on some historical event, for example Barabbas by P'a'r Lagerkvist, a study of Christ's passion and death told through the character of the thief, Barabbas. This novel would depend for its emotional impact upon a knowledge of the events surrounding the crucifixion and its religious aftermath. Such a novel should properly be approached by means of the historical point of view.

Certain novels do not immediately appear as typically historically orientated works; for example, The Great Gatsby² by F. Scott Fitzgerald is not based on a particular event in history, yet the historical approach could be used to create added interest in theme and characterization. The twenties reflected a period of changing national philosophy. The characters in The Great Gatsby were a product of this change. Understanding the temper of the time would help the student to understand the motives and conduct of the characters.

¹Ibid., p. 137.

²F. Scott Fitzgerald, "The Great Gatsby," The Portable F. Scott Fitzgerald (New York: The Viking Press, 1945), pp. 1-168.

Events in an author's life cannot help but have a profound effect on his writing. The use of a continual variation of a single theme often stems from an identifiable influence in the author's background. In a study of Ernest Hemingway, for example, note must be taken of his involvement in the First World War.

Methods for using the historical approach. J. N. Hook¹ suggests the following methods for relating an author and/or novel to its historical background:

1. The use of clues from the literature itself. Mark Twain is offered as an example of an author whose writing revealed many characteristics of his own and of his time. For instance, to help a student recognize the often caustic but always practical philosophy of the author himself in Tom Sawyer, it might be suggested that he read, in conjunction with the novel, some of Twain's monologues such as Sketches, New and Old² or listen to the excellent recording by Hal Holbrook,³
2. The use of wide reading pertaining to the period. This method has been called by Atwood Townsend⁴ "following the literary trail." Its advantage is that the more the student knows about a certain period, the more interested he will be; each

¹Hook, op. cit., pp. 158-161.

²Mark Twain, Sketches, New and Old (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1917).

³Hal Holbrook, Mark Twain Tonight, Columbia Records, OL 5440, 1959.

⁴Atwood Townsend, Good Reading (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1948), p. 89.

book serves to enrich another. Reading Bret Harte's The Luck of Roaring Camp and Other Sketches,¹ for example, would give added enjoyment to the reading of Mark Twain. The students should be encouraged to share their supplementary reading.

3. The use of biographies. A variation of "following the literary trail" is that of reading biographies about the author whose novel is being taught from the historical approach or about an important figure who lived during the time described. Jean Gould's Young Mariner Melville,² for example, would add much to the reader's understanding and enjoyment of Moby Dick.
4. A correlation and integration of history and literature. It is possible to place the novel in its historical niche under the system of teaching history and literature as a unit. Such a method would unquestionably ". . . show literature to be bound to the social, economic, political atmosphere of the time."³ However, weaknesses are inherent in this method. The scope of literature would necessarily be limited because of two factors: (a) It is not always expedient to study the history of all countries even though, in some cases, an omitted country's literature is important; (b) conversely, there are some periods of history which are singularly fallow

¹Bret Harte, The Luck of Roaring Camp and Other Sketches (Boston: Osgood, 1871).

²Jean Gould, Young Mariner Melville (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1956).

³Hook, op. cit., p. 141.

in literature of any consequence.

A modification of the system of teaching history and literature as a unit is, perhaps, more desirable. Under today's more relaxed and flexible scheduling, it is often possible to combine two or even three subjects for a limited time (one or two periods) in order to emphasize the interrelation between subjects. For example, a planned program could be set up under the aegis of the English, history, and music departments to study the period of the Civil War. The value of such a program would be reflected in the teaching of a novel of that period. Clearly the boy in Stephen Crane's The Red Badge of Courage¹ would become more real and his moral battle more touching if this novel were taught in conjunction with the historical facts of the war and its haunting music.

Limitations in the historical approach. Literature, after all, is not history in its true sense, and the danger facing the teacher who wishes to use the historical approach is that literature might be viewed factually instead of creatively.

Advantages in the historical approach. The historical approach is beneficial in the enrichment of a novel and the creation of added interest for the reader. "At its best, it has brought a recognition that each writer is an outgrowth of his age, that his characteristics were shaped by the time in which he lived."²

¹Stephen Crane, The Red Badge of Courage, Modern Library College Edition, Intro. Robert Wooster Stallman (New York: Modern Library, 1951).

²Hook, op. cit., p. 138.

The Socio-psychological Approach

Definition. The socio-psychological approach has been termed the least literary of the approaches. Its emphasis is on those elements in the novel which will add to the student's understanding of human motivation and behavior in relation to himself and society. If the novel can properly be thought of as the distillation of human experience, then the value of this approach for the adolescent, with his necessarily limited experience, can be quickly perceived.

The problems of the adolescent are often egocentric. The youngster needs assurance that he is normal and that the things which concern him are not uniquely his. He needs to know that his emotional growth parallels the growth of others his age.

The problems of the adolescent, also, often result from his desire to understand and get along with others. Yet, because his age has confined his experience, he is not prepared to meet the varied scope of human relations.

"Often the reader finds his own motives, his own quirks of thought or action, in the people he meets in books. In the objectifying of his own experience, he is able to look at himself in a new light. He begins to understand the reasons for his own behavior. He feels less lonely because others have had the same experience."¹

The value of the socio-psychological approach, then, is the enhancement of the reader's sensitivity to the cause and effect of his own response as well as those of others.

"Through literature the individual may develop the habit of sensing the subtle interactions of temperament

¹Smith, op. cit., p. 37.

upon temperament; he may come to understand the needs and aspirations of others; and he may thus make more successful adjustments in his daily relations with them."¹

Method. J. N. Hook suggests that although children unconsciously absorb understanding of human characteristics as they read, the following methods in applying the socio-psychological approach to the novel will help the student to understand more about people both as individuals and as members of society.²

1. The assignment. "The good assignment provides a reason for doing the work, specific information concerning what the work is, and suggestions for accomplishing it efficiently."³ The assignment of study guides can be particularly helpful. They direct the student's attention to details which will have importance in the final analysis of the novel, and they tend to make the many facets of character, theme, plot more obvious and coherent.
2. Class discussion. Class discussion is a natural method for probing the socio-psychological aspects of the novel. The young student is not always sufficiently mature to make a precise interpretation. It has

"value in stimulating thought and in helping students to see more than one side of controversial issues and to draw conclusions from the evidence."⁴

¹Rosenblatt, op. cit., pp. 217-218.

²Hook, op. cit., p. 163.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 164.

3. Questions. The following questions, touching upon characters or the interaction between characters, have been compiled by J. N. Hook.¹ They resemble the study guide in that they direct the student toward discovering the elements of cause and effect in the novel and they require the student to document his findings.

Understanding Character

- a. What kind of person is -----? What is your evidence?
- b. If ----- were living today, what kind of clothes would he choose? What books, magazines, movies, and music would he like?
- c. What is there in -----'s character that makes him disliked (or liked, feared, laughed at, etc.)?
- d. What would ----- do if he found himself in (a certain hypothetical situation)? How does this differ from what you would do?
- e. Is ----- actually true to life, or is he only a stereotype?
- f. Does ----- usually reason out what he should do, or does he merely react emotionally? Your evidence?
- g. How and why does ----- change in the course of the story?

Understanding the Character's Relation to His Environment

- a. Why do you suppose ----- is the kind of person he is? What clues concerning his background are included in the story? How has his background contributed to making him what he is?
- b. If ----- had lived in a different country, would he have been the same kind of person?
- c. If ----- had lived in such and such a country, how would his thoughts and actions have differed?
- d. If ----- had been of the opposite sex, how would his or her decisions and actions have varied? Would he (or she) then have faced the same problem?
- e. How does -----'s economic status affect his attitudes and his actions?
- f. How has -----'s occupation affected his life?
- g. Is ----- entirely responsible for what happens to him,

¹Hook, op. cit., pp. 164-166.

or do outside circumstances beyond his control determine his fate?

- h. Could this story have happened in the same way in a country with a different form of government?
- i. If you were a native of another country and read this story, which customs would seem strange to you?

Understanding the Interaction of Characters

- a. Which of these characters would you rather have as a close friend? a parent? a teacher? a brother or sister? an uncle or aunt? a companion on a desert island? a wife or husband? Which would you like least? Why?
- b. What does the selection show about family relationships?
- c. What is -----'s attitude toward the opposite sex?
- d. Is it fitting that ----- should be married to -----? What are some of the factors that determine whether a couple are well-matched?
- e. What is the real cause of conflict between ----- and -----? Could it have been prevented?
- f. Why do ----- and ----- react toward one another as they do? How does ----- influence -----?

Understanding General Principles of Human Behavior

- a. What similar incidents have you experienced or heard or read about? What historical incidents are parallel?
- b. Is the ending of the story in harmony with the portrayal of the characters?
- c. Ten years after the end of the story, what has probably happened to the chief characters? What makes you think so?
- d. What evidence is presented in the story to show that a group of people who share a difficulty tend to cooperate better than they otherwise would?
- e. Who are usually responsible for human progress--people who try to be exactly like everyone else or people who dare to be somewhat different? Your evidence? May differentness be carried too far?
- f. What are some of the major problems faced by all human beings?
- g. What are some of the problems peculiar to people of the twentieth century? of twentieth-century America?

Limitations of the socio-psychological approach. There is apt to be a tendency to overemphasize the socio-psychological approach because, dealing as it does with people, it has a strong appeal for most readers.

Class discussion or student examination of human behavior should be limited before it can exceed the immediate learning purpose.

Advantage of the socio-psychological approach. If the socio-psychological approach is used with discrimination, the student will benefit from a reinforced experience ("That is just how I expected that character to react.") and a widening knowledge of human behavior ("Is that what happens to people under those circumstances?").

The Didactic Approach

Definition. Didactic is, perhaps, an unfortunate word to describe this approach. It does not mean, as one might first suspect, a teacherish or pedagogical approach. It more nearly tries to describe a preceptive or ethical approach, and as such is a valuable method for studying the novel.

Clayton Hamilton has defined the purpose of fiction as an embodiment ". . . of certain truths of human life in a series of imagined facts."¹ The didactic approach seeks these truths. In the teaching of literature, didacticism involves

". . . the conscious or unconscious indoctrination of ethical attitudes. It is practically impossible to treat in a vital manner any work of fiction, and indeed, one might say of literature in general, without becoming involved in some problems of ethics and without speaking out of the context of some social philosophy. The ideal personal and social goals that a man sets for himself, the values to be sought in any of the innumerable relationships between people, or between the individual and society, in short a framework of values, is essential

¹Clayton Hamilton, The Art of Fiction (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1939), p. 3.

to any discussion of human life."¹

Strangely enough, the didactic approach is one which often creates a misunderstanding between teacher and student or between teacher and parent. A conflict often arises because this method is most appropriate to those novels which appear to be too frankly written. Many times a novel becomes exceedingly controversial because the reader does not read carefully enough to see, through the author's realistic technique, the ethical application of the story.

Example. A classic example of a controversial novel is The Catcher in the Rye by J. D. Salinger.² Few teachers would dare assign this book as required reading, yet the reactions and emotions of its hero, Holden Caulfield, are typical of many adolescents. Usually, all a teacher can do to encourage reading a novel of this type is to mention it and infer that, although it is candidly written, it is a book that many young people have been able to identify with themselves.

If it were possible to teach The Catcher in the Rye as part of the curriculum, the didactic approach would permit the student to discover much more than the socially non-acceptable language and behavior of the characters. He would come to understand that Holden, perhaps like himself, is in truth a battered idealist, and that he

" . . . longs to do good in a dream world. When he broods about dirty words on the walls where little children can see them or feels compassion for a prostitute, he is not protesting against 'the system' or

¹Rosenblatt, op. cit., p. 21.

²J. D. Salinger, The Catcher in the Rye (New York: Modern Library, 1951).

the adult order; he is merely suffering from the way things are, always and everywhere, in a world of insufficient love."¹

Method. The didactic approach to the novel is best introduced through the give-and-take of class discussion. The author's point of view, often subtly disguised in the action of the novel's characters, is revealed many times through the expression of student opinion. Questions such as the following might be used as a guide for discovering the author's philosophy:

1. "What does the author show about life?
2. How does he show it?
3. Why do you agree or disagree?"²

Because of its very nature, the didactic approach encourages differences of opinion. Discussion allows these differences to be aired and resolved. An outgrowth of the class discussion could be the assignment of these or similar questions as essay questions in which the student is asked to justify his opinion or judgment from the didactic standpoint.

Advantage of the didactic approach. The didactic approach encourages the reader to interpret the author's real purpose. Too often, the young reader will merely accept the surface realities in a novel as a reflection of an author's attitude. He should know that morally reprehensible action in a novel is often meant by the author to be a condemnation of such action.

J. N. Hook indicated the merits of the didactic approach in

¹"Sonny, An Introduction," Time (September 15, 1961), 78:11:84.

²Hook, op. cit., p. 152.

this way:

"It teaches the student to read between the lines, it makes him think, and it contributes to the building of his personal philosophy of life. An author seldom makes a bald statement of his purpose; the student must put together clues to discover what the purpose is. That is, he must read thoughtfully, and then he must relate what he has read to other bits of his knowledge. From wide reading and much thinking, he eventually formulates a philosophy which may serve him in the manifold decisions of his present and later life."¹

Limitations of the didactic approach. The didactic approach, valuable though it is, must be used perceptively if it is to avoid two innate disadvantages:

1. A moralizing or sermonizing attitude may produce a deadening effect. Although adolescents can be devastatingly moralistic themselves at times, they strongly resent any species of sanctimonious preaching.
2. The student should be discouraged from indiscriminately judging the moral and ethical values in a novel.

"Certainly, the teacher of literature will be exerting an important social influence through his success or failure in making the student self-conscious and self-critical concerning the tendency to pass judgment. Given the strong pressure toward such snap judgments in the ordinary influences acting upon the student, it is particularly incumbent upon the teacher to make the student aware of how often judgment should be deferred until the hidden source of motivation or the special circumstances surrounding the action are understood. Our approach to literature should be dominated by the desire to understand before attempting to pass judgment."²

¹Ibid., p. 153.

²Rosenblatt, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

The Paraphrastic Approach

Definition.

"Particularly useful in the study of difficult selections is the paraphrastic approach, which requires the translation of sentences or paragraphs of longer passages into language readily comprehensible to the student."¹

Many times novels contain ideas too advanced or a style too complex for a student's ready understanding. Novelists, whether for purposes of style or suspense, sometimes withhold information about happenings which took place before the opening paragraph. An author might conceal such information until later in the plot and then reveal it in flashback, or the information might never be openly stated but rather left for the reader to infer. In spite of the fact that the author feels this approach to be necessary in his novel, it does, unfortunately, leave some readers lost and confused.

Again, an author's individualistic use of words can cloud his meaning for some readers. Or, perhaps, a novel written in a different era contains an overwhelmingly large number of words that are no longer familiar, as in George Eliot's Silas Marner.² Discouraged at what appears to be an impossible task of deciphering, the student may refuse to bother.

Some novelists depend for effect or internal meaning upon unusual sentence structure. James Gould Cozzens; with each new novel, displays a more pronounced form of convolution in style. This, it is

¹Hook, op. cit., p. 153.

²George Eliot, Silas Marner (New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1961).

true, has an appeal for many readers but for others it becomes a decided reading hazard.

The paraphrastic approach can do much to present material in such a way that it is within the reach of the student. Certainly, the student should first be persuaded to try to find his own interpretation. If, however, he is confused and his motivation to understand has been destroyed, or if the material is plainly too advanced, the paraphrastic approach can often be the help needed.

Example. The paraphrastic approach is most commonly associated with the teaching of poetry. The lines of Shakespeare, for example, must often be paraphrased if the student is to become aware of situation and meaning within the play. The Elizabethan language, the meter, the images and puns all contribute to placing a barrier between the reader and true enjoyment of Shakespearean poetry.

Paraphrasing can be used for the purpose of exposing meaning in the study of prose as well as in the study of poetry. William Faulkner is a modern author whose style can be extremely complex. Paragraphs in some of his novels course on, page after page. He makes up new words to define his meaning, and he often uses common words in their uncommon sense.

Difficult as he may be, Faulkner can be introduced to high-school students through his less obscure works. Many of his short stories, besides being brilliant examples of their genre, are readily comprehensible. The Unvanquished,¹ a novel of the Civil War, contains the basic theme

¹William Faulkner, The Unvanquished (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1960).

to be found in his more obscure novels; yet it is well within the realm of understanding of the average student. Passages which might cause misunderstanding could be paraphrased.

Method. The Unvanquished opens with this paragraph setting the scene and introducing the characters:

"Behind the smokehouse that summer, Ringo and I had a living map. Although Vicksburg was just a handful of chips from the woodpile, and the river a trench scraped in the packed earth with the point of a hoe, it [river, city, and terrain] lived, possessing even in miniature that ponderable though passive recalcitrance of topography that outweighs artillery against which the most brilliant of victories and the most tragic of defeats are but the large noises of the moment."¹

Faulkner has set the scene for his novel in these two sentences.

They may be paraphrased to provide the following information:

This story takes place during the Civil War, and more particularly during the years 1862-1863. We know this because of the reference to the seize of Vicksburg. Furthermore, there is an indication that the story will concern two characters, "Ringo and I." "Ringo" is, perhaps, a negro because of the connotation of his name. There is also the strong possibility that these two characters are boys because of the juxtaposition of "living map" (one in which the markers could be moved to suit the movement of troops or battles) and "behind the smokehouse." It is reasonable to assume that it would be youngsters who might indulge in such activity.

But there is more to this paragraph than the bare facts of who and where. Paraphrasing the more difficult words will help to illuminate a subtle condition in which these two characters find themselves.

"Ponderable though passive" can be paraphrased as having weight or "enduring though not acting upon"; "recalcitrance" as "stubbornly rebellious"; "topography" as the "description"

¹Faulkner, op. cit., p. 13.

of physical features of a region on maps or charts. Then it should be noted that "It" refers to the living map; the map possesses these qualities, not Vicksburg.

In summary, the paragraph may be paraphrased in this manner:

The story takes place during the time of the Civil War. Two boys are improvising a map by using small pieces of wood as markers to reconstruct the Battle of Vicksburg. This map, although only sketchily scratched on the earth, seemed more real to the boys than the actual battle. The physical features of the region were drawn out in front of them; these features had a weight and a being for the boys greater than all the defeats or victories which had really taken place but which seemed unreal because they were at a distance.

Limitations of the paraphrastic approach. Two disadvantages to this approach are immediately apparent:

1. "This approach has the disadvantage of leading to boredom if long continued."¹ Nothing could be more tedious than a continuous substitution of words or a rephrasing of sentences. "Often an entire passage does not need paraphrasing, but only a word or two requires explanation."²
2. It is conceivable that the teacher unintentionally imposes his interpretation of a segment in the process of paraphrasing. In such a case, the student would be deprived of discovering an acceptable meaning for himself, a meaning which would provide greater satisfaction and which would have greater value.

Advantage of the paraphrastic approach. The paraphrastic approach should be used to supply the student with information or definition when

¹Hook, op. cit., p. 153.

²Ibid., p. 156.

needed. Its value consists in aiding the student through difficult passages in the novel in order that he may continue the reading with understanding and confidence.

The Analytical Approach

Definition.

"The most literary of the approaches is the analytical, which entails an analysis of literary characteristics, an examination of the ways in which an author achieves his effects. It involves investigation of the interrelationships among setting, style, characterization, and plot, and the effect of each of these upon theme."¹

The analytical approach is concerned not only with the interrelationships between setting, style, characterization, and theme but also with what Brooks and Warren call "the truth of coherence."² By this they mean that the analytical approach must consider:

- "1. The consistency and comprehensibility of character.
2. The motivation and credibility of action.
3. The acceptability of the total meaning."

These aspects of the novel (characterization, setting, plot, style, theme) are, it is true, important, but in many novels they are important in widely varying degrees. It would be unnecessary, for example, to expend much effort on the study of the style of Sinclair Lewis; style, on the other hand, is important in the novels of Thomas Wolfe. It seems appropriate, then, to weigh the components of the analytical approach separately before reaching a conclusion about their interrelationships. For this reason, characterization, plot, setting, style, and theme will be considered individually in the following section.

¹Ibid., p. 157.

²Brooks and Warren, op. cit., p. 27.

I. The Analytical Approach: CHARACTERIZATION

"In the classroom consideration of characters, the analytical and socio-psychological approaches are likely to overlap. The distinction, though, is that the socio-psychological approach emphasizes human beings and their interrelationships, whereas the analytical stresses the author's technique."¹

Presentation of character through the analytical approach would, therefore, be mainly concerned with the mechanics of characterization. Since "the characters are usually the most interesting as well as the most profitable source of study in any story of permanent worth,"² it is necessary that the student be familiar with the types of characters to be found in the novel, their relation to plot, and ways in which an author reveals character.

Boas and Smith define the types of characters as either static or kinetic.

"A novel usually takes its characters over a critical period of their lives and tries to show the effect that the circumstances of the story have upon them. In a novel, therefore, the principal characters are usually of the kinetic type, and only the subordinate ones static."³

Static characters are those who do not change as a result of circumstances in their lives; they reveal the same qualities throughout the novel. Thus, in romantic fiction the hero might be described as courageous in the first chapter, and courageous he remains to the very end. There is little realistic development or growth, and the character is,

¹Hook, op. cit., p. 161.

²Boas and Smith, op. cit., p. 214.

³Ibid.

in fact, a caricature.

If a novel is being analyzed from the point of view of its important characterization, the student's first step is to decide if the author has created kinetic characters. He does this by tracing the circumstances which have changed the characters and then coming to a judgment on the realism and validity of the change.

Next, the student should consider how the types of characters are related to the plot. He will know immediately the role which the principal character plays in the plot, for the plot revolves about the life of the principal character. Subordinate characters, however, fill many roles. Boas and Smith suggest the following categories in which subordinate characters can be analyzed:

- "1. Subordinate characters as instruments in the plot.
2. Subordinate characters as comic relief.
3. Subordinate characters as fill-in.
4. Subordinate characters to contribute local color or reveal the setting.
5. Subordinate characters used as commentators.
6. Subordinate characters used as foils."¹

In addition to knowing the possible types of characters in the novel and their possible relation to the plot, the student must also be introduced to the means the author uses to reveal character. Boas and Smith suggest six criteria by which a student may come to a fuller realization of characterization: description, analysis, conversation, incidents, motives and reactions, and indirect effects.

As an introduction to the criteria of character revelation, the teacher might ask the students how they themselves judge the people

¹Ibid., p. 215.

they meet. Such answers as "by the clothes they wear," or "by what they say," or "by what others say about them," or "how they act" will surely be forthcoming. It can then be suggested that authors, too, depend on these cues to reveal character.

Description is a method many authors use to make their characters real to the reader.

" . . . [It is] a favorite with authors with a strong sense of visual impressions, like Hawthorne, Stevenson, and Conrad. It must not, however, be confused with analysis, which is concerned with the inner motives of a character. Description is a word picture of the character's appearance. To reveal character, description must do more than tell us what people look like; it must suggest the qualities which go with outward appearance."¹

Analysis is another technique an author may use for revealing character. In this method, he exposes the essential meaning of his characters through psychological probing. It is as if he were standing in the wings, telling the reader specifically what is going on in the mind of the character.

Conversation and isolated incidents which may occur in the course of the action are trenchant means through which the author highlights the qualities of his characters.

The motivation of the characters should be carefully observed.

"Motives are the reasons which impel characters to act as they do. Reactions are the things they do or say because of these motives. The two greatest flaws possible in the characterization of any story are to make the characters act without natural or credible motives and to make them react unnaturally to a situation just to satisfy the demands of the plot."²

¹Ibid., p. 221.

²Ibid., p. 223.

Indirect effect. The methods of revealing character discussed to this point are ones the student can discover with careful reading and guidance. Asked to back up his judgment of a character, he might quote a telling conversation or trace a reaction found to be typical. The last method of revealing character, however, concerns an intangible factor. Just as the basic skills in reading literature sooner or later meet with the elusive aspect of appreciation, so, too, definite methods of discovering the author's skill in character portrayal sometimes brilliantly defy definition. Such a method is indirect effect.

"It is a process hard to define but easy to recognize, generally so subtle in its artistry that it is not often found in the ordinary competent novel. Examples of this elusive, indirect suggestive characterization are found more in Walter De La Mare's stories than anywhere else in fiction. One is never quite sure of oneself as one reads, but one never doubts that one is under a spell."¹

Many times a student is able to come to a conclusion concerning the dominant quality of a character without bothering with any process of analysis, but usually the quality will be defined in such vague terms as kindness, unhappiness, wickedness. The following questions can guide the student toward a truer and deeper realization of character through a demand for substantiation of judgment.

1. What words does the author use to describe the character? How does he use them? In your opinion, how do these words make the character real or unreal? Why does this method of revealing character often create a static character?
2. In what ways does the author's description of the character's

¹Ibid., p. 225.

clothes, personality, or setting suggest what sort of a person the character really is? What details has the author given that serve as clues to the character's personality? Why would such a method of description be likely to create a kinetic character?

3. What has the character done that would lead to a possible analysis of his character? In what ways have his actions been consistent?
4. What have you discovered about a character through his conversation? Where, in this novel, did the character reveal himself to you in something he said? How did the character expose his personality in the manner or topic of his conversation?
5. What perception of character were you able to gain by means of how other people spoke to the character? What were some typical attitudes of speech taken by subordinate characters in conversation with this character? What conclusion did you come to as a result of what others said about this character? What reasons can you give for the conflicting things people said about this character?
6. What were people's reactions to the things this character did? Give examples. In what ways has the author revealed the character through his reactions to others? How does the reaction of the character, in the climax of this novel, help us to judge his motivation?
7. How has the author helped the reader to understand the character? Give examples of passages in this novel in which the character

tells us things about himself? Give reasons why the character is or is not appraising himself realistically or truthfully.

Analysis of character in a novel is, in reality, an analysis of the author's mechanical ability to build a character, a question of how and why and how well a character comes to exist. Yet, the end purpose of analyzing character in a novel is to strengthen the reader's ability to transpose the necessary mechanical aspects of analysis into a less conscious application of characterization as a creative performance. In this regard, a certain danger in the analytical approach should be avoided.

"Teachers often complicate reading by asking a class to keep a list of characters in the order of introduction, or to do similar artificial and interrupting acts. It is of no great significance that a character appears on page 60 and another on page 65. If characters are discussed in terms of what they think and do, that should be sufficient."¹

The Analytical Approach: PLOT

The relationship between plot and character in the novel has undergone a sharp revision during the last century. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the novelist's characters were created as a means of working out a story. Today, plot is assumed to be a natural consequence stemming from the effect certain situations have on the character. The characters are not set within a pattern of events; rather they are faced with a particular series of happenings designed to pro-

¹Lou La Brant, We Teach English (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1951), p. 269.

voke a conflict. The plot develops as the character works out the conflict. "The plot is the structure of the action as presented in a piece of fiction. It represents the treatment the story teller makes of events of his action."¹

Young readers are more interested in action for its own sake than they are in action as a realistic effect of certain conditions, but when they move on to novels that do not rely heavily on plot, they must develop insight into the relationship between character and plot. Such insight might result if the student is asked, "What events confront the character?" and "In what way does the character solve the conflict?" The emphasis would not be on the cataloging of action throughout the novel, but rather on a combination of emphases on the initial events and then on character reaction to these events.

This point of view, it is true, relegates the study of plot per se to a minor role. The writer justifies this de-emphasis by suggesting that students are usually well acquainted with the elements of plot before they reach high school. They are not so well aware of the importance of character in relation to plot, perhaps because their level of maturation has been insufficient to grasp the complexities of this relationship of cause and effect.

A second justification stems from the writer's belief that plot is "character in action."² For these two reasons, it would seem reasonable to approach the teaching of plot analysis in conjunction with char-

¹Brooks and Warren, op. cit., p. 70.

²Ibid., p. 80.

acter analysis. If the student were shown that the course of the plot traces the "aspects of instability as they move toward stability"¹ within a framework of beginning, middle, climax, and denouement, then characterization and plot development can be effectively studied together.

Setting. How important is setting in the novel? It is a common teaching practice in the study of drama to stress the significance of setting. Although setting is not so obviously stated in the novel as in the drama, it has importance. A well-defined reason for giving weight to the novel's setting has been suggested by Clayton Hamilton?

"Any given story can happen only in a given set of circumstances, and . . . if the setting be changed, the action must be altered and the characters must be differently drawn."²

Many readers overlook the role setting plays in the novel for at least two reasons:

1. Setting is usually thought to consist mainly of where the action occurs. Place is just one aspect of setting. Other aspects are "time and moral environment."³ For example, Long Island was the scene of action in The Great Gatsby, but place is less important here than time or moral climate. Knowing the exact location of the action would mean less than understanding the era which was noted for its atmosphere of disillusionment, easy money, fast living, and corruption. There-

¹Ibid.

²Hamilton, op. cit., p. 160.

³Hook, op. cit., p. 157.

fore, approaching The Great Gatsby from the point of view of setting, and particularly the aspect of setting as moral environment, might be one effective way to introduce the student to setting as something more than place.

2. If the student has come to depend upon setting as an explicit inventory of descriptive details, he may miss the importance of a setting such as that symbolically suggested in Conrad's Heart of Darkness,¹ which evolves from an implied association of ideas. Asking why some details are emphasized and why some seemingly important ones are not pursued is one way of helping a student to become aware of a setting that appears to be only insinuated.

The author reveals his setting in certain ways. Boas and Smith have proposed six kinds of setting to be found generally in the novel.²

1. The scenic setting: This "merely helps us to visualize the scene of the action. It is usually revealed by casual description and is not of great importance to study."
2. The strongly localized setting: This shows something about the lives of people in a certain part of the world that is indigenous to those people in particular. "Such a setting exercises great charm over people who are interested in the scene. Numbers of people read stories just because they happen to be about Cape Cod or the French Revolution, etc. . . . even when plot and character are conventional and commonplace."
3. The essential setting: This was mentioned above as being absolutely necessary to the coherence of a

¹Joseph Conrad, "Heart of Darkness," Tales of Land and Sea, Intro. by William McSee (Garden City, New York: Hanover House, 1953), pp. 33-104.

²Boas and Smith, op. cit., pp. 231-234.

novel. "Some stories have an essential setting, that is, they could not be laid elsewhere because in them plot and characters depend for their very existence on the element of time and place." For example, the plot and characters in The Leopard by Giuseppe di Lampedusa¹ exist only in the time and place set in the novel (Sicily during the Risorgimento).

4. Setting revealed by dialogue: This can be detected by the use of dialogue or nuances of speech. The harsh New England colloquialisms quickly identified the setting in The Rise of Silas Lapham,² for example.
5. Setting revealed by historical background: This makes use of historical scenes and characters. Costume description would be an important point of setting in this case, as in Dickens' Tale of Two Cities.³
6. The symbolic setting: This is used to emphasize the significance or even the theme of the story. For example, the symbol flaming on Hester's breast, hidden in the minister's heart, and streaking the night sky in The Scarlet Letter⁴ represents a symbolic setting.

The Analytical Approach: STYLE

Definition. Defining style in the novel is reminiscent of the writer's earlier attempt to define the aesthetic experience. It is possible to find academic explanations of both style and aesthetic experience, but the exact nature of heightened communication between

¹Giuseppe di Lampedusa, Il Gattopardo, trans. Archibald Colquhoun (New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1960).

²William Dean Howells, "The Rise of Silas Lapham," Selected Writings of William Dean Howells, Intro. and ed. Henry Steele Commager (New York: Random House, 1950).

³Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1942).

⁴Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1950).

author and reader which occurs as a result, remains a mystery. The teacher can and should consider carefully the evident mechanics of an author's style. Eventually the student will be able to distinguish between various styles which will add a great deal of pleasure to his reading. The final rapport, however, between reader and author results from a subjective acceptance on the part of the reader of the author's own expression of himself.

"Matters of style should be touched rather lightly in the high school. Unlike setting, style is elusive and abstract. . . . Such ingredients as choice and arrangement of words, sentence structure and sentence length, and tricks of expression are commonly recognized, but over and above all these is the mysterious element of personality which led Buffon to state, 'Le style est de l'homme meme.'¹

The idea of style being but an extension of the author seems to find credence with many critics in their approach to a definition.

E. B. White wrote:

"Style is an increment in writing. When we speak of Fitzgerald's style, we don't mean his command of the relative pronoun, we mean the sound his words make on paper. Every writer, by the way he uses the language, reveals something of his spirit, his habits, his capacities, his bias. This is inevitable, as well as enjoyable. All writing is communication; creative writing is communication through revelation--it is self escaping into the open. No writer long remains incognito."²

How can style be approached in the novel on the basis of the above definition? Perceiving an author's style is analogous to observing an acquaintance's outward appearance. One might quickly note that

¹Hook, op. cit., p. 159.

²E. B. White, "An Approach to Style," The Elements of Style, ed. William Strunk, Jr. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), p. 53.

the acquaintance is addicted to odd colors in his dress, yet one does not necessarily know how this eccentricity came about. So, too, the student can come to identify the outstanding stylistic characteristics in such authors as Thomas Wolfe or Ernest Hemingway without carrying the identification any farther than an awareness of differing sentence structure. Observation of appearance or style does not guarantee understanding of what lies behind the facade. It is, however, a beginning, and this is where the study of style must start.

Method. One way of approaching style is to consider the environmental factors which influenced an author's writing. Generalizations can be made about the effect certain times had upon authors. For example:

"Each age of literature has its own habits of thought and expression. The Elizabethans loved extravagant figures of speech, hyperbole, violent contrasts, intricate plays on words, good mouth-filling curses, denunciations, and other outbursts of feeling."¹

Another very general analysis of style might be made on the basis of the author's race, as, for example, a comparison between English understatement and some Russian "orgies of self-analysis and self-abasement."²

Hook has suggested a few practical ways to bring a student's attention to style:

"An average class sometimes may profitably analyze the ways in which an author achieves a particular effect. They read, perhaps, Chekhov's 'Grief,' the

¹Boas and Smith, op. cit., p. 243.

²Ibid.

account of the driver of a horse-drawn cab who could find no one to listen to his lamentations over the death of his son. They read the concluding sentence: 'Iona's feelings are too much for him, and he tells the little horse the whole story.' They note the simplicity of that sentence, its shortness, its restraint; they see that a less competent author would have gone on and spoiled the effect. They wonder about the use of the present tense throughout the story, and comment upon how the use of that tense makes the action seem nearer and more real. Little things, they discover, make the difference between a good story and a great one--the selection of a word, the sound of a sentence, the emotional burden of a phrase, the color of a clause."¹

In the discussion of a novel, the teacher can direct the student's notice to

". . . how the author makes his work real by the use of sensory impressions of sound, odor, taste, touch, and color; how he gains beauty or eloquence or suggestiveness by his choice of figures of speech; how he searches for the exact word to express his meaning; how his imagination or humor or pathos or power to create atmosphere makes him superior or inferior to others of his calling."²

E. B. White³ suggests that students rewrite a familiar sentence such as "These are the times that try men's souls." He then gives a few possible variations:

"Times like these try men's souls.
How trying it is to live in these times!
These are trying times for men's souls.
Soulwise, these are trying times."⁴

These variations are grammatically free from error. "Each version is correct, and each, for some reason that we can't readily put our finger on, is marked for oblivion."⁵

¹Ibid., p. 159.

²Ibid., p. 244.

³E. B. White, op. cit., p. 53.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

Students benefit in two ways from the task of rewriting a nearly flawless sentence:

1. Confronted with a piece of superior prose and the presumed inferior imitation, they are forced to observe the power of the just-right word, the simplicity of expression, or that which makes the original sentence meaningful.
2. The student may recognize the mysterious stylistic magic, so difficult to imitate, occasionally created by a literary master. The delightful style of E. B. White, incidentally, lends itself to this very exercise.

The Analytical Approach: THEME

Definition.

" . . . what a piece of fiction stacks up to. It is the idea, the significance, the interpretation of persons and events, the pervasive and unifying point of view of life which is embodied in the total narrative. It is . . . what we are to make of the human experience rendered in the story."¹

The analytical approach to theme, then, is in reality an attempt to fulfill the primary goal in teaching literature; that is, to enable the student to create meaning in life through the common experiences of mankind.

Method. How can the teacher approach this aspect of the novel, so important and yet so abstract in nature that many students find it incredibly difficult? Two methods for discovering theme, deductive and inductive, will be considered here.

¹Brooks and Warren, op. cit., p. 273.

1. The deductive approach can be used with students of high ability and uncommon perception. The emphasis is not so much on reading to discover the threads of theme as much as it is on recognition of a point of view known to belong to a particular author.

"A good writer does not offer us, for instance, a glittering variety of themes. He probably treats, over and over, those few themes that seem to him most important in his actual living and observation of life."¹

Thus, this approach to Hemingway would start with his general philosophy, dominant throughout his fiction, and would then consider the particular elements in his work which reflect his attitude. An example of this approach might be as follows: A student, reading The Old Man and the Sea,² first becomes familiar with the theme found to some extent in all Hemingway literature: man, although continually defeated in life, is defeated only within his own ethical standard; that defeat can illustrate the highest form of bravery; and that destruction does not have to mean defeat. Then as the student reads this short classic, he would note and appreciate how the endurance and courage of the fisherman is a working out of Hemingway's individual preoccupation with "the gallantry of defeat."³

¹Ibid., p. 312.

²Ernest Hemingway, The Old Man and the Sea (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952).

³Brooks and Warren, op. cit., p. 309.

2. The inductive approach would start with the particular elements contributing to theme in a novel before considering theme as a whole. For example, Conrad's The Secret Sharer¹ can be divided into at least four levels of meaning. If it seems feasible, the student can move from the elementary element of theme up to the aspect of universality as follows:

First Level: This is the story of a man who murdered a shipmate and later found refuge on another ship. Theme: Trying to save his ship in a storm, a man inadvertently commits murder.

Second Level: The main character in this story is really not the murderer. It is, instead, the unnamed captain who shielded the murderer. Theme: the generosity and understanding of one man for another.

Third Level: This is a double story in which one comes to see that the murderer represents the irrational and unconscious self of the captain. Theme: Man has two levels of being, the conscious and the unconscious.

Fourth Level: This story is an illustration of Conrad's universal theme: No man can realize his potential for good until he looks into himself (the irrational murderer) and evaluates his potential for evil. At this level it is possible to discuss how this theme permeates all of Conrad's work, particularly The Heart of Darkness.²

The inductive method is more effective with high-school students because it does provide some understanding of theme even if the author's meaning is not realized in universal terms. Also, the chance of success-

¹Joseph Conrad, "The Secret Sharer," Tales of Land and Sea, Intro. by William McSee (Garden City, New York: Hanover House, 1953), pp. 349-382.

²Joseph Conrad, "The Heart of Darkness," ibid., pp. 33-104.

fully reaching a universal understanding is greater if the climb is made in steps.

Disadvantages of the analytical approach. Character, theme, plot, setting, and style have been treated as separate entities. For purpose of his own, the teacher, too, may wish to consider any one of these to the exclusion of the others. However, "successful fiction always involves a coherent relating of action, character, and meaning."¹ While it is true that many novels fall naturally and emphatically into such categories as thematic or environmental, it is also true that a continual sacrifice of the unifying relationship to the stressing of its parts constitutes a decided disadvantage. The analytical approach should be viewed, for the most part, as a means of relating character, setting, plot, theme, and character.

Furthermore, when, through excessive individual stress, the parts become separated from the fabric of the novel, it is often difficult to put them back together again.

"Analysis divides the living attention, diverts the mind from the most vital apprehension, breaks the pearl into halves. Care should be taken that each element inspected in disunity from the whole shall be presented in the light of its own minor unity, shall be seen, that is, to have its own life."²

Advantage of the analytical approach. The advantage of this approach is ". . . through its use, students can discover that true lit-

¹Brooks and Warren, op. cit., p. 27.

²Brewster Ghiselin, "Art for Life's Sake," Aesthetic Form and Education, op. cit., p. 76.

erature does not just happen."¹ They can learn that actions develop realistically from character; that theme embodies a deeper meaning behind the action; that style contributes to the effect and atmosphere as does the setting. Such discovery and understanding of the harmony and coherence of the parts cannot help but bring a pleasurable involvement in the novel itself.

The Emotive Approach

Definition. The emotive approach is a paradox among approaches; it is the most and the least important. The dual nature of this approach becomes apparent in its definition: "Reading for fun," "reading for individual interest," or "reading for greater appreciation" have been a few attempts to cover its nebulous meaning. Such explanations are almost as beclouded as the word emotive itself.

Another definition might be the respectable but complete generalization that the emotive approach seeks to involve the student emotionally and intellectually in his reading. However, this definition is not helpful because, although the intent is worthy, it begs the question of how to go about it.

J. N. Hook offers the following passage as an example of the emotive approach:

"The teacher may, however, take his cue from any skillful novelist. A writer does not tell the reader that the hero is brave and handsome, that the heroine is intelligent, that the view from the mountain top is beautiful, that the old house is haunted. The writer tells little,

¹Hook, op. cit., p. 125.

but shows much. He shows the hero climbing the mountain in a heavy snowstorm to carry medicine to a sick child. He does not tell the reader that this is a brave and humanitarian although somewhat reckless act; he presents the evidence and lets the reader draw the conclusion himself. The teacher likewise may point out the evidence, help the student to see the careful architecture involved in plotting, the choice of details which describe setting, the selection of the means of revealing character, the use of precise or vivid language; he may do all this without becoming exclamatory and sentimental."¹

Margaret Early's point of view on this subject is:

"They [the students] learn that recognizing the 'rightness' of a word, a phrase, a metaphor, or a symbol brings richer delight than unconscious enjoyment of the total effect."²

These suggestions for improved reading enjoyment merely seem an extension of the other approaches. The analytical approach was also concerned with helping the student to find greater understanding of style, plot, setting, theme, characterization. The historical and socio-psychological approaches, too, were means of allowing the student to find areas of individual interest.

The emotive approach appears to be of little value as a distinct category. It would be difficult to imagine a situation wherein a teacher would say, "Ah, this novel calls for emphasis on the emotive approach." It is here that the paradoxical nature of the emotive approach emerges, for while it is unrealistic if used by itself, it is completely necessary as a complement to the other approaches.

¹Hook, op. cit., p. 146.

²Margaret Early, "Stages of Growth in Literary Appreciation," The English Journal (March, 1960), 49:3:165.

The emotive approach has meaning in the sense that it reflects the teacher's attitude toward the novel under study. Through the use of this approach there will spring an honest response whether it be enthusiasm, delight, or disappointment.

"What the teacher does and does not do, the substance and pace of his behavior, will affect the development of his students through leading them to understand what it is to live and to live as an artist."¹

It is fitting that a consideration of the approaches to the novel should conclude with the emotive approach. It is literature's appeal to the spirit of man that makes it worthwhile. How, in the final analysis, can the student better approach the novel than through the teacher's ability to create an emotional and aesthetic atmosphere?

¹Ghiselin, op. cit., p. 75.

CHAPTER III

A SOURCEBOOK: THE APPLICATION OF APPROACHES TO THE NOVEL

Part I: The Great Gatsby, F. Scott Fitzgerald

For many years, after an early spectacular success, F. Scott Fitzgerald's work suffered an almost complete eclipse. His books were out of print; no one recognized him. It would be difficult to say whether this literary and personal decline during the nineteen-thirties was the cause or effect of the author's unstable temperament. The reasons for this fallow period, however, are not the point of interest here. What is important is that at the time of his death Fitzgerald left a partially finished manuscript, The Last Tycoon, which many critics feel vindicates the author's earlier acclaim.

A Fitzgerald renaissance began in 1945. Unfortunately, Fitzgerald, who depended upon a materialization of his dream and recognition of his work to give it reality to himself, was no longer alive. Rediscovery of an author is not an unusual literary phenomenon, but in Fitzgerald's case, it is particularly sad that he could not observe the inspection and approval given his work during the middle forties. The course of his life had all but extinguished his belief in himself.

The reappraisal of Fitzgerald began as a small groundswell among the avant-garde. Dusty shelves in bookstores were avidly disturbed for nearly forgotten Fitzgerald novels. Critical approval began to appear in respected literary magazines such as The Kenyon Review and the Sewanee

Reviews. The Portable F. Scott Fitzgerald, published in 1945, gave impetus to the new interest. Then, in 1951, a biography, The Far Side of Paradise by Arthur Mizener, was published.

Today, twenty years later, Fitzgerald's position seems well established. The Great Gatsby is read increasingly. This novel, whether or not it is, as many critics believe, his best work, seems the most appropriate of his works for study in the high school. The beauty of its stylistic form, the nearly perfect literary construction, the insight into human motivation provide an example of Fitzgerald at his best.

"The pervasive personal quality which marks all Scott Fitzgerald's work may be no greater here than elsewhere, but Jay Gatsby is a giant who tugs at your heart, even as he utters his banalities, capped with 'old sport.' The tragedy is the American tragedy in its essence."¹

In the study of The Great Gatsby, the first novel to be included in this sourcebook, the historical and the didactic approach seem particularly appropriate. The Great Gatsby is both strongly reflective of its historical era and representative of certain ethical concepts held by its author.

Historical Approach

Background. Although the historical approach sometimes suffers from a certain dullness, The Great Gatsby spans years of unusual interest. It contains social commentary on the Roaring Twenties, the Jazz Age, an era that fascinates and fills even those born several generations

¹John Cournos and Sybil Norton, Famous American Authors (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1959), p. 114.

later with a sense of nostalgia.

The Jazz Age lasted from the end of World War I to the crash of the stock market. Fitzgerald called it ". . . an age of miracles, an age of art, an age of excess, an age of satire."¹ The twenties might be said to represent the adolescent years of our country, contradictory, exuberant, naive.

Many idealistic people had felt that America's participation in the First World War would strike a blow for democracy and contribute substantially toward making this the best of all worlds. When it became apparent that this war would not be the war to end all wars, a widespread attitude of cynicism developed. Fitzgerald's novel clearly reflects this attitude.

A tremendous surge in literary expression characterized this era. Many men who had been sent to France to fight stayed to write. Today, the list of these expatriots who found their "home away from home" at Harry's American Bar in Paris sounds like America's literary honor roll: Hemingway, Faulkner, Wilder, Cummings, and Fitzgerald.

It was an age of

". . . extravagance, excitement, and sadness which mirrored America's post-war disillusionment. It was the day of woman's new-found freedom--with suffrage, cigarettes, short hair, and short skirts; of oil scandals and come-easy money; of the 'flivver' and the back seat; of schoolboys with hip flasks; of bright young people adrift."²

¹F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Crack Up (New York: A New Directions Paperbook, 1956), p. 14.

²A Treasury of Short Stories, ed. Bernadine Kielty (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1947), p. 639.

The American population as a whole was not acquainted with gangsters; nor did it patronize "speakeasies" nor attend tea dances at the Biltmore, but some did. And it is these people who gave the era its color and its name. Fitzgerald was a prominent member of this society.

"Here was a new generation, shouting the old cries, learning the old creeds through a revery of long days and nights; destined finally to go into that dirty grey turmoil to follow love and pride; a new generation dedicated more than the last to the fear of poverty and the worship of success; grown up to find all gods dead, all wars fought, all faith in man shaken."¹

Relation of the author to his background. Some readers do not enjoy Fitzgerald. They find him shallow in the sense that many of his characters seem purposeless and much of his action concerns the aimless searching for pleasure. If one finds meaning in Fitzgerald's work and wishes others to discover something more than a chronicle of the idle rich, it may well be done on the following grounds:

1. The student should be aware of the fact that the atmosphere of the twenties was largely materialistic. Fitzgerald observed with a reporter's eye the scene about him, and he was superb; if analysis stops here, the criticism of shallowness has some basis.
2. But Fitzgerald was more than an observer. If his work is approached with sensitivity it becomes clear that the things he wrote about had happened to him and give poignancy to his work.

"One of the most remarkable things about Scott Fitzgerald as a writer is the dual character of his self-

¹F. Scott Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1920), p. 304.

knowledge, the curious way in which he combined the innocence of complete involvement with an almost scientific coolness of observation, so that he nearly always wrote about deeply felt personal experience, and nearly always as if the important use of personal experience was to illustrate general values. . . . This curious sense of experience is everywhere in Fitzgerald's work because it was the permanent foundation of awareness of experience."¹

Pursuit of pleasure and materialistic success did not necessarily produce happiness. Fitzgerald knew this on the grounds of his own involvement. Behind the facade of the gaitly he reported are tragic undertones: "In a real dark night of the soul it is always three o'clock in the morning, day after day."²

The historical approach to The Great Gatsby provides an understanding of the era and of the author's point of view. It can show that Fitzgerald detached was, at the same time, Fitzgerald involved, and this is the important aspect if the reader is to find a deeper meaning in Fitzgerald's writing.

Suggestions for the application of the historical approach. The youthful reader is likely to view Fitzgerald and his era as a matter of ancient history, as remote as the Crusades, unless his reading pertains to both the author and to his period.

I. Biographies. Perhaps, more than any other source, a biography of Fitzgerald would supply the background and understanding of the author in relation to his work and to his time. A student

¹F. Scott Fitzgerald, Afternoon of an Author, Intro. by Arthur Mizener (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), p. 3.

²Cournos and Norton, op. cit., p. 116.

reading about Fitzgerald's flamboyant and tragic life would be more likely to approach The Great Gatsby with a deeper capacity to understand and feel compassion for the characters. Listed below are four such biographies.

- A. The Far Side of Paradise by Arthur Mizener¹ helped to spark the revival of interest in Fitzgerald.
- B. Scott Fitzgerald by Andrew Turnbull² is a recent, highly acclaimed study of Fitzgerald's personality rather than his work.
- C. Beloved Infidel by Sheila Graham³ provides insight into the tragic years spent in Hollywood before Fitzgerald's death.
- C. The Disenchanted by Budd Schulberg⁴ is a thinly fictionalized novel about Fitzgerald's emotional and physical disintegration when he was a script writer for the movies.

II. Supplementary Reading. The usual individual reading assignment of one book a month might be based on the following lists of books which will illuminate more fully the background of Fitzgerald and The Great Gatsby and introduce the reader to other important authors who were writing at the same time.

¹Arthur Mizener, The Far Side of Paradise (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1950).

²Andrew Turnbull, Scott Fitzgerald (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962).

³Sheila Graham and Gerold Frank, Beloved Infidel (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1958).

⁴Budd Schulberg, The Disenchanted (New York: Random House, 1950).

A. "The four representative novelists of the younger generation are Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and Thomas Wolfe."¹

1. FAULKNER, William. Soldier's Pay.
New York: Boni and Liveright, 1926.
2. _____ . Sanctuary.
New York: Smith and Haas, 1931.
3. FITZGERALD, F. Scott. This Side of Paradise.
New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1920.
4. _____ . The Beautiful and the Damned.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922.
5. _____ . Tender Is the Night.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925.
6. _____ . The Portable F. Scott Fitzgerald.
New York: The Viking Press, 1945.
7. HEMINGWAY, Ernest. The Sun Also Rises.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926.
8. _____ . In Our Time.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930.
9. WOLFE, Thomas. Of Time and the River.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926.
10. _____ . You Can't Go Home Again.
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1934.

B. The following list is representative of fiction of the
nineteen-twenties:

1. BENET, Stephen Vincent. The Beginning of Wisdom.
New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1921.
2. BOYLE, Kay. Short Stories.
Paris: Black Sun Press, 1928.

¹J. B. Priestley, Literature and Western Man (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), p. 433.

3. DOS PASSOS, John. Manhattan Transfer.
Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1953.
 4. DREISER, Theodore. An American Tragedy.
New York: Liveright, 1925.
 5. FABIAN, Warner (Samuel Hopkins Adams). Flaming Youth.
New York: Macaulay, 1923.
 6. LARDNER, Ring. Round Up.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924.
 7. _____. How to Write Short Stories.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924.
 8. LEWIS, Sinclair. Babbitt.
New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1922.
 9. _____. Arrowsmith.
New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1925.
 10. LOOS, Anita. Gentlemen Prefer Blondes.
New York: Liveright, 1925.
 11. MARQUIS, Don. archy and mehitabel.
Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1927.
 12. PARKER, Dorothy. After Such Pleasures.
New York: Viking Press, 1933.
 13. _____. The Collected Stories of Dorothy Parker.
New York: Random House, Inc., 1942.
 14. RUNYON, Damon. Guys and Dolls.
New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1929.
 15. WILDER, Thornton. The Cabala.
New York: Boni, 1926.
- C. Nonfiction, too, might be used for supplementary reading.
1. BENCHLEY, Robert. Of All Things.
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1921.
 2. _____. Pluck and Luck.
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1925.
 3. _____. My Ten Years in a Quandry.
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1926.

4. ELDER, Donald. Ring Lardner.
Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1956.
5. GIBBS, Woolcott. Bed of Neuroses.
New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1937.
6. HARRIMAN, Margaret Case. The Vicious Circle: The Story of the Algonquin Round Table.
New York: Rinehart and Co., 1951.
7. MENCKEN, H. L. Prejudices.
New York: Alfred A. Knopf. Six Series, 1919-1927.
8. _____. The American Credo.
(with George Jean Nathan). New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1920.
9. NATHAN, George Jean. The Autobiography of an Attitude.
New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925.
10. _____. The New American Credo.
New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927.
11. _____. The Intimate Notebooks of George Jean Nathan. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1932.
12. NOWELL, Elizabeth. Thomas Wolfe: A Biography.
Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1960.
13. SCHORER, Mark. Sinclair Lewis: An American Life.
New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1961.
14. SKINNER, Cornelia Otis. Our Hearts Were Young and Gay.
New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1942.
15. SULLIVAN, Frank. Innocent Bystanding.
New York: Liveright, 1925.
16. _____. Broccoli and Old Lace.
New York: Liveright, 1931.
17. THURBER, James. The Years with Ross.
Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1959.

III. Newspapers are an ideal source for acquainting the student with some of the factual events of the nineteen-twenties. An assignment in this area might be as follows:

- A. As background for The Great Gatsby, read at least one issue of a newspaper published during the period of 1920-1929 to get a general idea of the events and attitudes of that era.
- B. Choose one interesting area of news as the basis for an oral or written report. The subject might be one of the following:

1. architecture
2. art
3. automobiles
4. aviation
5. economics
6. entertainment
7. famous people
8. fashion
9. literature
10. medicine
11. movies
12. music
13. politics
14. prohibition
15. radio
16. scientific discoveries
17. society
18. sports
19. woman's suffrage
20. world affairs

- C. In the report, which may be an individual effort or a group project, relate the selected topic to the period of 1920-1929, showing its importance and influence. Use examples from the newspapers.
- D. Prepare the report as a supplement to the reading of The Great Gatsby. Relate the subject of the report to events and references in The Great Gatsby.

IV. Magazines help place the author in his time. Many published during the period 1920-1929 are quickly recognizable on news-stands today. The more able student might prefer to read a

magazine rather than or in addition to a newspaper. A magazine would not, perhaps, offer as great a feeling of immediate involvement with the times, but it would provide an opportunity for the student to analyze in more depth such subjects as literature, theater, or critical opinion. A written or oral report could be a result of this reading.

The following are titles of magazines which were read during 1919-1929. They represent magazines which appealed to the readers then and might be expected to hold some interest for the modern student.

ATLANTIC MONTHLY
 AMERICAN MERCURY
 COLLIERS
 CONTEMPORARY REVIEW
 DELINEATOR
 DIAL
 ESQUIRE
 HARPERS
 LADIES HOME JOURNAL
 NEW YORKER
 SATURDAY EVENING POST
 SATURDAY REVIEW
 SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE
 ST. NICHOLAS
 THEATRE ARTS
 WOMAN'S HOME COMPANION
 WORLD OUTLOOK

Advantages of the historical approach.

1. The nature of the period and the personality of Fitzgerald appeal to many students. Enthusiasm and motivation for reading The Great Gatsby could be created by providing knowledge of the period.
2. The Great Gatsby is a particularly obvious example of an

author's involvement in his work. Fitzgerald's apparent point of view reflects the temper of the era in which he wrote.

3. The twenties fostered many authors of note in American literature (see supplementary reading, pages 62-63). An understanding of the period in general could be carried over to other literature written during or about the same era.

Limitations of the historical approach.

1. The purpose of the historical approach would be defeated were it stressed to the exclusion of the other approaches. It is intended as a means of adding interest. The Great Gatsby is literature, not history, and it should be read and understood as such.
2. The reader would not benefit if he assumed that The Great Gatsby could be understood fully on the basis of his reading about the period. An awareness of the events creates interest but it does not necessarily create an understanding of the circumstances of character and motive of Jay Gatsby, nor insight into the novel as an art form.

The Didactic Approach

Previously, the didactic approach was defined as an attempt to uncover the ethical or perceptive aspects in a novel. James Baldwin, speaking as a novelist, wrote: "In my mind, the effort to become a great novelist simply involves attempting to tell as much of the truth as one can bear, and then a little more."¹

¹James Baldwin, "As Much Truth as One Can Bear," The New York Times Book Review, January 14, 1962, p. 1.

An author describes the truth as he sees it. The reader is not obliged to accept the author's concept of truth, but he must try to understand it. Fitzgerald felt that he had spoken truthfully about life in The Great Gatsby, and years later he wrote this to his daughter: "I wish now I'd never relaxed or looked back . . . but said at the end of The Great Gatsby: I've found my line. . . ." ¹

The didactic approach to The Great Gatsby has been selected for two reasons:

1. Fitzgerald's style is extremely readable, and a young reader might be content merely to skim through the novel, following the plot and frivolities of the characters, without realizing that they were intended to clothe an underlying philosophy.
2. As a complement to the historical approach, the didactic approach moves on into the ethical ramifications stemming from the point of impact between author and environment. Together, the two approaches would help the student to go below the surface meanings. He would, then, properly place Fitzgerald's almost obsessive concern with the rich, the social, the profligate as a smooth cover the the "emotional involutions . . . the coiled emotions" ² lurking below the observable plot. He would perceive the big parties, not as an historical fact alone, but as Edmund Wilson described them, ". . . the big parties at which

¹Arthur Mizener, "Gatsby, 35 Years Later," The New York Times Book Review, April 24, 1960, p. 46.

²Maxwell Geismar, The Last of the Provincials (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1947), p. 291.

Fitzgerald's people go off like fireworks and which are likely to leave them in pieces."¹

Background for the didactic approach. What are some of the ideas in The Great Gatsby? Two general areas of meaning are possible: (1) the parallel illusion of Jay Gatsby and his era; (2) a commentary on the values held by that segment of society closed to Jay Gatsby.

1. The parallel illusion

Geismar has written that

" . . . he [Gatsby] is more than a class symbol. He is a sort of cultural hero, and the story of an age's illusion, too. The bare outlines of his career . . . the upward struggle from poverty and ignorance; the naive aspirations toward refinement and the primal, ruthless energy of these aspirations; the fixation of this provincial soul upon a child like notion of beauty and grace and the reliance upon material power as the single method of satisfying his searching and inarticulate Spirit. . . ."²

From the historical point of view, the illusions of the age were manifold. The world was a much smaller world than it is today, and the American sense of power, of all things being possible, much greater. There was the certainty that life was intended to be pleasant; that the good life whether social, material, or aesthetic could be achieved if a man were smart enough and worked hard enough. "Evil had not entered the American scene."³ Evil in this meaning is reality.

The similarity between the personal illusions of Jay Gatsby and

¹Ibid., p. 289.

²Ibid., p. 319.

³Baldwin, op. cit., p. 38.

those of the Twenties has been noted by Marius Bewley. He described The Great Gatsby as

" . . . an exploration of the American dream as it exists in a corrupt period, and [as] an attempt to determine that concealed boundary that divides the reality from the illusions. The illusions seem more real than reality itself."¹

The historical approach might be used to show that this was an era of illusion and unreality. The didactic approach might then concentrate on the idea that many of the age's illusions were shared by Gatsby and were, in fact, responsible for his final, inescapably tragic moment of awakening.

Fitzgerald's personal conception of reality should now be observed as the theme in his novel. He believed that

"The whole burden of this novel [The Great Gatsby] was the loss of those illusions that give such color to the world so that you don't care whether things are true or false as long as they partake of the magical glory."²

At this point it is well to focus on the character of Jay Gatsby and to understand that he and his creator were both ". . . gifted with a hint of reality, a promise that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy's wing."³ The following analysis might be one possible approach:

¹Marius Bewley, The Eccentric Design (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 270.

²F. Scott Fitzgerald, Afternoon of an Author, p. 9.

³Bewley, loc. cit.

The substance of Jay Gatsby's dream was contained in all the possibilities that life seemed to hold. The tragedy of Gatsby was that he could not foresee that these possibilities were only his dream and that his illusion was no more than an inner vision which, in the end, would destroy him.

One example of Gatsby's illusion. The ultimate possibility for Gatsby was that Daisy would leave her husband and return to him. She promises to be the fulfillment of his illusion, but instead she shows the "intolerable cheapness of his dream and illusion."¹ In this connection, it is well to note the development of Daisy's characterization. The reader observes Gatsby, unable to distinguish the real from the unreal, clinging to a dream without substance. An almost dreamlike quality permeates the beginning action of the novel. The atmosphere of unreality surrounding the shadowy Gatsby persists to the end of the story, but the character of Daisy develops subtly from this gossamer-like mood, emerging finally as the antithesis of a dream.

Here is the reader's introduction to Daisy:

"I looked back at my cousin [Daisy], who began to ask me questions in her low thrilling voice. It was the kind of voice that the ear follows up and down, as if each speech is an arrangement of notes that will never be played again. Her face was sad and lovely with bright things in it, bright eyes and a bright passionate mouth, but there was an excitement in her voice that men who cared for her found hard to forget: a singing compulsion, a whispered 'Listen,' a promise that she had done gay, exciting things just a while since and that there were gay exciting things hovering in the next hour."²

¹Ibid., p. 260.

²F. Scott Fitzgerald, "The Great Gatsby," The Portable F. Scott Fitzgerald, p. 143.

Slowly, the shallow texture of Daisy's character begins to appear. A gradual awareness of the real Daisy comes into being through such scenes as the one at Gatsby's party. Entranced, Daisy had been watching a famous actress, "a gorgeous, scarcely human orchid of a woman, who sat in state under a white-plum tree."¹ A passage from this scene provides a chilling insight. Nick, Daisy's cousin and the commentator in the novel, says:

"Almost the last thing I remember was standing with Daisy and watching the moving picture director and his Star. They were still under the white-plum tree and their faces were touching except for a pale, thin ray of moonlight between. It occurred to me that he had been very slowly bending toward her all evening to attain this proximity, and even while I watched I saw him stoop one ultimate degree and kiss her cheek.

'I like her,' said Daisy, 'I think she's lovely.'²

Bewley comments on this scene as follows:

"Daisy likes the moving picture actress because she has no substance. In effect, this passage is Daisy's confession of faith. She virtually announces here what her criteria of human emotions and conduct are. Fitzgerald's illustration of the emptiness that we see curdling into the viciousness of a monstrous moral indifference as the story unfolds. . . ."³

The total vacuousness of Daisy's character is now apparent to the reader, but Gatsby's illusions remain intact. Had he been satisfied merely to recapture his past in his imagination and to recognize and accept Daisy as she was, he might yet have escaped his final tragedy. However, Gatsby refused to discard any part of his dream. In a later

¹Ibid., p. 99.

²Ibid.

³Bewley, op. cit., p. 139.

scene between Daisy and Tom, her husband, and himself, Gatsby tells Tom that "Both of us [he and Daisy] loved each other all the time, old sport, and you didn't know."¹ Daisy might well have left Tom for him at this time, but Gatsby must have everything. The dream must be complete, and he must pursue his vision to the extreme; he insists that Daisy tell her husband that she really had never loved him. Such emotional intensity has no appeal for Daisy.

"Suddenly, she threw the cigarette on the carpet.

'Oh, You want too much]' She cried to Gatsby.
'I love you now--isn't that enough? I can't help what's past. I did love him once--but I loved you too.'²

This scene, a party in New York, broke up shortly after this incident. Gatsby and Daisy, driving home in one car, hit and killed Tom's mistress. Gatsby takes the blame, but the reader knows that Daisy was driving at the time of the accident. Daisy does nothing to absolve Gatsby of the blame even though she knows that the dead woman's jealous and apparently grief-stricken husband will eventually destroy him. In fact, the entire episode with Gatsby has become for her a mere interlude, and she settles back into her old life with the tranquility of the unconcerned. This, then, is the final tragic irony. From the very beginning, the possibility that this dream existed was completely unreal; Gatsby had never known what she was like.

2. The illusion of Jay Gatsby leads into the other area of meaning in The Great Gatsby; that is, an appraisal of human values. Fitz-

¹The Great Gatsby, p. 121.

²Ibid., p. 123.

gerald describes two segments of the social scene. One is illustrated by the socially acceptable Buchanans, Tom and Daisy; their money was inherited, their background solidly "ivy," their sophistication supreme. Gatsby, on the other hand, had earned his money. The fact that it came from racketeering is not so important as that it was not inherited. Although secretive about his background, his manners belie the Oxford education he boasts. It is a curious fact that Fitzgerald combined both these social strains within himself; he was a bit of Gatsby and a part Buchanan, and that is why he could write with such authority about each.

"Fitzgerald usually portrays the meeting of the Western restlessness and fluidity with the repose of Eastern security and social rigidity. His young men come out of the West, and as he himself came from St. Paul, momentarily to astound and captivate, but finally to succumb to the imponderable weight of social restriction. Like Jay Gatsby, they all believed in the green light, the orgiastic future that year by year receded before them."¹

Gatsby could be tolerated by the Buchanan social strata as long as he did not expect to become a member. He was convenient; he supplied abundant food and liquor and entertainment at his parties, and best of all, he very seldom appeared. Daisy could even believe that she loved him for a little while until he tried to force her to reveal a feeling she was incapable of possessing. Fitzgerald evaluated the Buchanans on the one hand and Jay Gatsby on the other. Nick Carraway indicated his conclusions in this way:

¹Ray B. West, The Short Story in America (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1952), p. 67.

"They were careless people, Tom and Daisy--they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made."¹

The Buchanans are the hollow ones, almost childlike in their artificiality and completely, ruthlessly selfish.

"Scott Fitzgerald had learned that the rich are inclined to shake their skirts and disappear when unpleasantness threatens their security, sacrificing anyone foolish enough to get in their way."²

But what did Fitzgerald think about Gatsby? Again speaking through Nick, he wrote:

"[Gatsby's responsiveness] . . . was an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again. No--Gatsby turned out all right at the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and shortwinded elations of man."³

Gatsby dreamed about the possibilities in life and was deluded, but the dream was one with Gatsby and it was incorruptible.

Suggestions for Study

The didactic approach allows the student to draw personal conclusions and to find meaningful ideas which may be introduced into his own expanding philosophy of living. Help and direction may be supplied in the following two ways:

¹The Great Gatsby, p. 166.

²Cournos and Norton, op. cit., p. 115.

³The Great Gatsby, p. 2.

1. Guide sheets can direct the student toward clues in The Great Gatsby which, when pieced together, make up the underlying motif in Fitzgerald's thought. For example, the following questions might be used to call attention to one of the two obvious literary symbols in the novel: the sign of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg:

- a. What words are used to describe the sign of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg?
- b. How does the terrain contribute to the prominence of the sign?
- c. What contrast in atmosphere is there between the sign and the actions of the characters?
- d. In your opinion, what purpose did Fitzgerald have for introducing the sign in the story?
- e. How does the sign serve as a point of reference?
- f. What evidences in the novel would lead you to believe that a pattern in life was part of Fitzgerald's philosophy?

Another example of guide questions might be those to point up characterization. No one knows very much about Jay Gatsby. If the development of Gatsby's character--what he says or does not say, what others say about him, what things are important to him--is noted while the novel is being read, it will be possible to arrive at an understanding of Gatsby himself and the related philosophy shared by character and author.

- a. How is Gatsby first described?
- b. How are suspense and mystery built around Gatsby?
- c. What do you learn about Gatsby through the descriptions of his parties?

- d. What clues to Gatsby's character are given in the incident with Mr. Wolfsheim?
- e. How does Gatsby act during his first meeting with Daisy?
- f. What relationship is there between Gatsby's favorite expression, "old sport," his showing off of his possessions to Daisy, and the telling of the story of his life to Nick?
- g. In what terms does Gatsby think of Daisy?
- h. What are the attitudes of Tom, Daisy, and Gatsby in the New York hotel room scene?
- i. Why did Daisy not leave her husband?
- j. What can you infer about the sort of man Gatsby really was from his covering for Daisy's part in the accident? Why do you think he acted as he did?
- k. What points of contrast were there between Gatsby and the Buchanans? between Nick and Jordan Baker?
- l. In what ways can you find significance in Gatsby's funeral?
- m. At the end, what do you think Fitzgerald's attitude is toward the Buchanans?
- n. What did the green light mean to Gatsby?
- o. Why was Gatsby's dream, so close to fulfillment, beyond his grasp?

A variation on the guide questions would be a sheet set up in the following way:

Gatsby is the American tragedy in essence.

Note under each heading evidences found in your reading in support of the statement.

The Illusion of the Age

1. The purpose of life is pleasure

The Illusion of Gatsby

1. Gatsby's aspirations toward refinement and beauty

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 2. All men with drive can succeed | 2. Gatsby's struggle upward from poverty |
| 3. Money, in quantity, is necessary to live the good life | 3. Gatsby's reliance on materialistic power |
| 4. This American dream existed in the midst of corruption | 4. Gatsby is both dreamer and racketeer |
| 5. The reality of the American dream was disillusionment | 5. The final disillusionment of Gatsby |

This sheet would accomplish two purposes: the student would become aware of the steps leading to the premise of the parallel illusion, and he would have an outline of the events of the novel for which he himself had been responsible.

2. Group discussion can be used to advantage in the didactic approach. Varying abilities can often provide a stimulating setting for the exchange of ideas and opinions culled from the reading by all the students. The more perceptive students, by sharing their insights into The Great Gatsby, can help to spark an interest in and concern for the more figurative or symbolic meanings in the novel. Students of lower ability can often provide a more factual approach to certain meanings which will be of value to the total perspective of the class. Whether defending his own opinion or carefully considering the conclusions reached by his classmates, the student will find his own understanding has been enriched.

In this respect, Lou La Brant validly points out that the student's own opinion, be it consistent with accepted critical analysis or not, should be encouraged.

"Beware of telling a class that a book is or is not great, that it has or has not certain attributes. Remember that the best adult critics judge in terms of what they know about life and that an adolescent knows less than he will when he is older. It is more important that the judgment be honest than that it agree with critical opinion. As teacher, you may point out some matters which seem to you important, but you are on unsafe ground when you try to set up fixed standards."¹

Disadvantage of the didactic approach. An unattractive aspect of the didactic approach is the possibility that it be used to preach a sermon. Although Fitzgerald was a moralist by nature, his writing should never be considered moralistic. It is more important to foster an understanding of a character's moral strengths and weaknesses (and Gatsby, like all truthfully drawn characters, has both) than to seek examples of fast rules for human conduct.

Advantage of the didactic approach. The didactic approach helps to point out that authors do not necessarily define good and evil in stated terms. An author often creates a very moral story through the actions of non-moral characters. Gatsby, for example, is not to be admired for his materialism or for the manner in which he acquired his wealth, but an estimation of his capacity to care in contrast to the emotionally devoid Buchanans would allow the student to draw from the novel a very moral conclusion on values.

¹La Brant, op. cit., p. 275.

Part II: The Old Man and the Sea, Ernest Hemingway

Nobel Prize winner, inimitable stylist, Ernest Hemingway is read with particular esteem throughout the entire world. American students, too, should have an opportunity to become acquainted with his writing and with the influence his writing has had on modern literature. The Old Man and the Sea is included in this Sourcebook because it is a fine introduction to Hemingway; it contains the essence of his reoccurring theme and style, and it speaks of courage and human dignity in terms of individual and universal meaning.

Background. Unlike Fitzgerald, whose writings were concerned mainly with the nineteen-twenties and who died more than ten years ago, Hemingway had been part of the public scene until his death in July, 1961. Indeed, critics have unkindly commented on the almost indistinguishable line between his writing and his life. The element of bravura found in his writing and in his personal adventures, although annoying to some, is, however, a distinct advantage in the classroom because it can be used to generate interest and immediacy.

The facts of Hemingway's life are important because they reflect and explain the development of theme and style found to some degree in all his writing. It is often thought that writers should be essentially observers, or "God's spies," as Keats called them, but

"Hemingway was not a watcher; he was an actor in his life. He took part. . . . What he took part in was a public--even a universal--history of wars and animals and gigantic fish. And he did take part. He could never go to war--and he went to every war

available to him--without engaging in it."¹

These wars Hemingway took part in (the First and Second World Wars, the Spanish Civil War, and, inadvisably, the Cuban Revolution under Castro) form the historical basis from which his literary theme emerged. "His philosophy--essentially a profound pessimism about the human situation and a stoic sense of tragedy--grew out of war."²

During World War I, Hemingway made his way to the Italian front as an ambulance driver. He then enlisted in the Italian infantry, and, only eighteen, was so badly wounded at Fossalta that ". . . he felt life slip from his body like you'd pull a silk handkerchief out of a pocket by the corner."³ It was at this time that he "picked up a fear of his own fear and the life-long need to test his courage."⁴

Granville Hicks⁵ notes that Hemingway's almost fatal wound received at Fossalta was an experience which colored his whole life, and certainly its influence can be seen in his writing. He cites the passage from The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber in which Harry Wilson quotes from Shakespeare's Henry IV, Part II:

"By my troth, I care not; a man can die but once; we owe God a death and let is go which way it will he that dies this year is quit for the next."

¹Archibald MacLeish, "His Mirror Was Danger," Life Magazine (July 14, 1961), 71.

²Time Magazine, "The Code of the Hero" (July 14, 1961), 87.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Granville Hicks, "A Feeling About Life," Saturday Review of Literature (July 29, 1961), 30.

Hicks notes further that Hemingway came to this philosophy concerning death when he accepted the idea that nothing would ever happen to him that didn't happen to all men.

"With the aid of Shakespeare, he conquered the fear of dying, but it was as if, from that time on, he had to test himself again and again to make sure the victory was still his."¹

If a student has read Fitzgerald, particularly from the historical point of view, he will be able to start reading Hemingway with greater understanding. Although the two authors did not share the same literary path, they were both members of the Lost Generation; lost in the sense that the ideals which seemed worthwhile before World War I had later lost their luster. Fitzgerald had written that the new generation had "grown up to find all gods dead, all wars fought, all faith in men shaken."² Fitzgerald traced the illusion of those who did not know this to be true, and, in so doing, illuminated the line of his own disillusionment. Hemingway, too, came to the conclusion that the pre-war gods would not do, but in the process he created a new set of values by which he felt life could retain meaning.

"Out of a long practice in the art of discovering what his inmost self truly felt, Hemingway came eventually to certain moral convictions of his own. He had deliberately discarded the inherited ones; they were not to be trusted; one's deepest experience, when honestly observed, did not bear them out. What mode of conduct did it make valid? Jack Barnes, the narrator of Hemingway's first novel, says he wants to behave well and not make a nuisance of himself, no matter how painful the circumstances. This is clearly

¹Ibid., p. 38.

²F. Scott Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise, p. 304.

Hemingway's ideal, to show 'grace under pressure,' as he put it on another occasion. If the grace is to be genuine, the situation that produces the pressure must be fully experienced and completely understood as only the Hemingway expert, the insider, can experience and understand it."¹

The Analytical Approach

Although the historical and didactic approaches were appropriate to The Great Gatsby, the use of the socio-psychological or the analytical might have been justified. Hemingway offers no such choice; the analytical approach should be used in the study of his writing. Theme and style, two aspects of the analytical approach, will be applied to The Old Man and the Sea in this section.

A. Analytical Approach: THEME

It has been suggested that a novel grows out of a reshaping of the author's own experience. How, then, does Hemingway's particularly empirical philosophy set the theme found, to some extent, in all his writing?

Hemingway, it has been noted, discarded the old values. The experience of war had made a belief in universal standards of virtue or morality untenable. In place of the old standards Hemingway substituted the Code and created the Code Hero.

" . . . the test of the code is courage, and the essence of the code is conduct. Conduct, in Hemingway, is sometimes a question of how one behaves honorably toward another man or woman. More often,

¹Arthur Mizener, "The Two Hemingways," The Great Experiment in American Literature, ed. Carl Bode (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1961), p. 147.

it is a question of how the good professional behaves within the rules of a game or the limits of a craft--how to land a fish, how to handle guns, how to work with a bull--have behind them the professional pride of skill."¹

Hemingway's characters find themselves in a world which has little stability and meaning, but they,

" . . . at least those whose story Hemingway cares to tell, make one gallant effort to redeem the coherence and meaninglessness of this world: the technique of the bullfighter or sportsman, the discipline of the soldier, the code of the gangster, which, even though brutal and dehumanizing, has its own ethic. . . . The form is never quite adequate to subdue the world, but the fidelity to it is part of the gallantry of defeat."²

Hemingway felt that one must discover for oneself the nature of reality achieved through experience. Once discovered, reality must be accepted with the greatest possible dignity. Hemingway's characters accept it within the code of "grace under pressure."³ The more fortunate have a prop; a dedication to some ethic of their own. The short story, The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio,⁴ is an example of the way three different characters achieve their "grace under pressure." The nun had the love of God; the gambler, the ritual of gambling. The man in pain was unlucky; he had to discover his own rules of grace by turning up his radio each night to cover from others the sounds of his physical agony.

¹Time, July 14, 1961, p. 88.

²Brooks and Warren, op. cit., pp. 308-309.

³Mizener, "The Two Hemingways," op. cit., p. 150.

⁴Ernest Hemingway, "The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio," Winner Take Nothing (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933).

"When Hemingway's novels succeed, they have the same final values as his best stories . . . a pattern of unlike characters who are all alike insofar as they have learned, through loving something completely, all there is to know about it and have thus acquired the strength, the dignity, and the grace of unillusioned dedication."¹

The concept of "grace under pressure" leads into theme. For example, what good did following the code do the bullfighter in The Un-defeated,² or the prize fighter in Fifty Grand,³ or Santiago in The Old Man and the Sea? To Hemingway, the code allowed for destruction but not defeat.

"Hemingway's typical characters are usually tough men, experienced in the hard worlds they inhabit, and apparently insensitive. . . . They are also usually defeated men. Out of their practical defeat, however, they have managed to salvage something. And here we come upon Hemingway's basic interest in such situations and such characters. They are not defeated except on their own terms; some of them have even courted defeat; certainly, they have maintained, even in the practical defeat, an ideal of themselves formulated or unformulated, by which they have lived."⁴

Hemingway, like William Faulkner, usually develops his basic theme on one of two levels: the story of recognition or the story of initiation. The story of recognition is that in which the main character has already recognized and takes for granted the conditions under which he must live, and he has adopted the terms of his code. The story of initi-

¹Mizener, "The Two Hemingways," op. cit., p. 151.

²Ernest Hemingway, "The Undefeated," The Best Short Stories of 1926, ed. E. J. O'Brien (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1926).

³Ernest Hemingway, "Fifty Grand," The Hemingway Reader (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), pp. 154-175.

⁴Brooks and Warren, op. cit., p. 307.

ation portrays the progress of a character from innocence to knowledge. Knowledge is the recognition of evil and disorder in the world, and the character is described in this type of story as leaving the state of innocence and taking the beginning steps toward finding his own code of ethics. The Killers¹ combines these two levels in one story, for example. Ole Andreson knows his role in the world of evil; Nick Adams is just discovering his.

Hemingway's theme of defeat only on the character's own terms, that is, terms which preserve the identity of the defeated, results in several levels of meaning within a story. For example:

"We might say that a story such as Hemingway's The Undefeated presumes a knowledge of right conduct in the face of physical danger and possible death. Within this generality of belief, however, there exists a separate code governing the behavior of the bull-ring. Our awareness of these concepts governs our reaction to the events of the story and the judgment we make concerning the actions of the characters. Thus, we begin by fearing the attempts of Manuel Garcia to obtain employment as a bull-fighter. He is too old. He has been inactive too long. Indeed, as the story progresses, he does fail according to our understanding of the particular kind of performance which the successful matador is expected to provide. . . . Yet there is an important sense--a sense which we understand because of our general knowledge of how a brave man acts in the face of danger and defeat--in which Manuel is not defeated. Despite his age and his loss of skill, he retains the courage and bravery which we recognize as a mark of a successful--an undefeated--man. . . . There are, likewise, other levels--level upon level of meaning, penetrating to the heart of the action, all relating to this central meaning, organizing and controlling the materials in such a way that they will contribute to the enrichment of the central theme. All are disclosed in the same manner: by referring to the common body of belief, by pre-

¹Ernest Hemingway, "The Killers," Understanding Fiction, ed. Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1959).

senting the materials in such a manner that we may consciously or unconsciously recognize not only the principal intentions, but all of the minor, contributing intentions of the book as well."¹

The Old Man and the Sea is appropriate for high school because it clearly and beautifully represents Hemingway's conception of how man can continue to exist with dignity in an often tragic world. Furthermore, it may be studied on several levels, and this means that every student, according to his own powers of understanding, can feel some kinship with the strength and dignity of the old man, or, if he wishes, with all men.

Suggestions for study. The Old Man and the Sea can be approached through levels of meaning in answer to the question, "How far can you dive into the meaning of The Old Man and the Sea?" This approach would accomplish several purposes:

1. It will not spoil the pleasure of a very good adventure story for those students who cannot cope with abstract thought to any appreciable degree.
2. It can emphasize certain aspects on each level which might have value. For example, today one is aware of the tremendous problem of teaching children from extremely poor environments. The first step in the education of these children is an attempt to give the child a sense of his own personal worth. For many students, the middle class values of the classroom do not make sense in the world they inhabit after school hours. The Old Man

¹West, op. cit., pp. 91-92.

and the Sea is a story of a desperately poor man who nevertheless has deep pride in himself because he knows he does what he considers worthwhile, and he knows in his heart he does it well. This should mean something to those readers who have very little except themselves, and for such students this level of meaning could be more than enough.

3. The Old Man and the Sea can be a challenging experience for those who are able to weave their way from the level of the plot to the level of the allegory.
4. Although there should be some pre-teaching of theme and Hemingway's theme in particular, progression through the levels of meaning might include at each stage the development of Hemingway's code. Thus the student could see for himself how the old man's ritualistic conduct of fishing carries out Hemingway's code of behaving well professionally.

Four levels of meaning will be considered here: the plot, the theme, a universal theme, and an allegory.

Level One: The Plot

This level will be concerned with the surface incidents of the plot and an understanding of the characters. A sequence similar to the following might be elicited in discussion:

The old man, Santiago, has gone eighty-four days without taking a fish. A young friend, Manolete, had been with him for the first forty days, but the old man is considered unlucky, and Manolete's parents make him fish on luckier boats. Santiago now goes out alone.

Manolete loves and respects the old friend who has taught him all he knows about fishing. Although he cannot go out with him, he supplies him with bait, prepares his meager meals, and keeps his pride alive with the promise of the big catch which will come soon.

In the morning of the eighty-fifth day, the old man puts out to sea. In the manner of men who are used to being alone, he talks to himself about the things he sees and the things he feels. "He always thought of the sea as La mar which is what people call her in Spanish when they love her."¹ The old man lowers his bait and rows to where the man-of-war bird drops, where the dolphin are, and he catches a small tuna. Later on the first day, he hooks his fish.

"He reached out for the line and held it softly between the thumb and forefinger of his right hand. He felt no strain nor weight and he held the line lightly. Then it came again. This time it was a tentative pull, not solid nor heavy, and he knew exactly what it was. One hundred fathoms down a marlin was eating the sardines that covered the hook where the hand-forged hook projected from the head of the small tuna."²

Then the fish sounds, and all the rest of that day and night, Santiago works the fish. "Fish, I'll stay with you until I am dead."³ But the fish, wonderously game, does not tire, and the old man forces himself to eat the tuna he had caught, to keep up his strength.

On the second day, the fish jumps. The real struggle between the old man and the fish now begins.

"And now he has jumped more than a dozen times and filled the sacks along the back with air and he cannot go down deep to die where I cannot bring him up. He will start circling soon and then I must work on him."⁴

On the third day, the old man sees his fish at last. "He saw him first as a dark shadow that took so long to pass under the

¹Ernest Hemingway, The Old Man and the Sea (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), p. 32.

²Ibid., p. 45.

³Ibid., p. 58.

⁴Ibid., p. 92.

boat that he could not believe its length."¹ The fish begins to circle the boat, and with each circle, the old man tightens the line. On the final circle, the old man harpoons him. He ties the fish to the bow and stern, and wondering at his catch, he heads for shore.

"They sailed well and the old man soaked his hands in salt water and tried to keep his head clear. There were high cumulus clouds and enough cirrus above them so that the old man knew the breeze would last all night. The old man looked at the fish constantly to make sure it was true. It was an hour before the first shark hit him."²

It was not long after the first shark hit that the others come. The old man fights them off as best he can, but he knows they have beaten him when his knife blade snaps. The sharks destroy his fish.

When the old man reaches shore, there is nothing left but the great skeleton of his fish. The old man ties up his boat and goes home, but word of Santiago's catch spreads, and all the fishermen come to look. "What a fish it was. There has never been such a fish."³

Manolete comes to see how the old man is.

"The boy saw that the old man was breathing and then he saw the old man's hands and he started to cry. He went out to go to bring some coffee and all the way down the road he was crying."⁴

Later, when he returns to the old man, he tells him to get well quickly because he wants to go out with him again. The boy speaks out of love and the old man listens out of hope, and "as the boy went out the door and down the worn coral rock road he was crying again."⁵

¹Ibid., p. 99.

²Ibid., p. 110.

³Ibid., pp. 135-136.

⁴Ibid., pp. 134-135.

⁵Ibid., p. 92.

Level Two: Theme

This complicated concept may represent an experience too mature for many high-school students, especially when it is clothed in esoteric symbolism. The student, unable to grasp the concept of theme as an underlying idea, may reject this opportunity to delve which would make his reading much more meaningful. The Old Man and the Sea is a fortunate choice for the teaching of theme because the basic thread is an experience commonly met in life which almost all students can appreciate: courage in the face of great odds.

The values of approaching theme on levels of meaning become apparent at this point. For some classes, it is the second level which will be most heavily emphasized, and, indeed, may be as far as theme is investigated. The better student will be able to go on to the third and fourth levels, universal theme and allegory. Students who would find further abstract concepts too difficult, and therefore useless, can halt here on the second level and still appreciate the author's intent. This may be the reason even a seventh grader can enjoy some part of theme in The Old Man and the Sea.

If the chronological events of the novel are viewed thematically, they help the student to build his own conception of theme as he sees the surface incidents of the plot leading to an underlying idea. Here again, a Study Guide would emphasize those happenings as substantiating theme. A possible arrangement of such a Study Guide is as follows:

Study Guide: Find the theme in The Old Man and the Sea.

Directions: 1. Answer the following questions.

2. Summarize the main thought in each section of questions.
3. Be prepared, on the basis of your summaries, to state in your own words the theme in The Old Man and the Sea.

A. The conversation between Santiago and Manolete (pages 1-30)

1. Why is Manolete forbidden to fish with the old man?
2. What examples of Manolete's kindness to the old man can you find?
3. How and why does Manolete take care not to hurt the old man's pride?
4. In your opinion, has the old man become discouraged? What examples substantiate your opinion?
5. From your reading of the first thirty pages, what terms best describe the character of the old man?
6. What is the relationship between the old man and the boy? Why does this relationship exist?

B. The start of the day's fishing (pages 30-45)

1. How does the old man feel about the sea? Find quotations to back your opinion.
2. The old man's skill as a fisherman is important to the theme. How does the author get across the idea of the old man's skill?
3. What are the implications of danger as well as beauty in la mar?

C. The catching of the marlin (pages 45-110)

1. Why does the old man pity the fish?
2. What atmosphere is provided in the battle which the old man feels is between himself alone and the fish alone?
3. Why does the old man feel he must eat the tuna he had caught earlier?
4. What examples are given to show that the old man has to fight physical weaknesses as well as the fish?
5. How does the old man tire the fish?

6. In fishing terms, a marlin is a game fish. He has great courage and great heart. He is taken with light line, and unlike tuna fishing, marlin fishing is a sport. In light of this, what comparisons can you make between the old man and the fish?
7. Why does the character of the fish make the old man's job so difficult?
8. What are the examples which show the old man's feeling of closeness to the fish?
9. The old man says that he is only better through trickery than the fish. What does this mean in terms of the odds which were against him?

D. The destruction of the fish by sharks (pages 110-133)

1. What is your reaction to the appearance of the first shark?
2. How is the Mako described?
3. What measures does the old man take to preserve his fish?
4. The old man knows from experience what sharks can do. Why, in your opinion, does he not give up?
5. Although the fish is eventually destroyed by sharks, the reader does not feel that the old man has suffered defeat. Why is this so?

E. Return to the setting between the old man and the boy (pages 133 to end)

1. What is Manolete's reaction to the destroyed fish?
2. What does Manolete mean when he says the fish didn't destroy the old man?
3. What irony is contained in the woman's remark when she sees the skeleton of the fish?
4. What conclusion can you draw from the last line of the book?

The purpose of the Study Guide is to help the student recognize, as he reads the novel, the implications of the old man's courage and skill in a battle which had very little chance of success against a

respected adversary. By evaluating the character and behavior of a man who increased the odds against himself by going too far out to sea, the student will come gradually to understand the idea that the old man has great courage and does not give up even though he be destroyed. The student will then be able to view the theme, not as some mysterious literary concept, but as one he has discovered to be the underlying idea.

Level Three: Universal Theme

On the previous level, theme was uncovered by relating the surface incidents of the plot to the underlying idea. To delve more deeply into universal theme, the underlying idea must be taken out of the story in order that it may be explored and expanded. In The Old Man and the Sea, universal theme might be explored in the following sequence: I. Definition; II. Universal theme in this novel; III. Universality of theme in Hemingway.

- I. Definition. For those who come to the term universal in this context for the first time, a defining process might follow along this progression:
- A. What does the familiar noun universe mean?
 - B. What is a university? What relationship exists between the meaning of universe and university?
 - C. Universal is an adjective. It describes those objects which have something in common, or can be fitted into a like category, or be turned into one. What is meant by a universal language?
 - D. Universal also describes ideas which can be universally true or universally false. "All men are mortal" and "All men have two

eyes" are two statements. Which is universally true?

- E. Universal describes human experience, too. An experience not limited by time nor place can be shared and is called universal. In literature, universal theme tells of an experience which, because it is true and real for most men, is universally understood. What ideas in The Old Man and the Sea would have been just as true if Hemingway had chosen to write about a different man in a different century?

- II. Universal theme in "The Old Man and the Sea." Definition of terms can now lead into a consideration of universal theme in this novel. It may be done by relating the ideas and experiences to be found in the novel to some similar examples known to the students. This method would serve two purposes: it would permit an abstract concept to be approached through a concrete, personal experience, and it would show how an experience can be the same even though the conditions under which it exists are vastly different. The Hungarian uprising might be one example of similar experience, and its application is suggested below:

- A. What elements were found in the basic theme of The Old Man and the Sea?
1. The courage and dignity of Santiago.
 2. A battle of man against tremendous forces of nature.
 3. Santiago's refusal to give up in spite of his adversary.
- B. What elements were involved in the recent Hungarian uprising?
1. The courage and spirit of a proud people.
 2. The possibility of winning was very slight.

C. What do these two examples of courage have in common?

1. The destruction of the marlin meant Santiago's inevitable destruction.
2. The Communist force meant certain destruction for many fighters.

D. But on what terms were Santiago and the Hungarian fighters destroyed?

1. They were destroyed, but they are not defeated. "A man is not made for defeat--a man can be destroyed but not defeated."¹
2. Destruction may descend upon a person (outside) but defeat comes only if a man does not try (inside).

E. What is the universal theme in *The Old Man and the Sea*?

III. Universality of theme in Hemingway. Universal theme in *The Old Man and the Sea* may be determined as: man can be destroyed by forces over which he has no control, but he cannot be defeated if he resists with courage and spirit and skill. He can, in effect, be destroyed only on his own terms. Armed with this specific understanding, the student is ready to appreciate the reworking of the same theme to be found in all of Hemingway's work.

The material cited in the Background section might provide a basis for discussion of the author's philosophy of the Code and the Code Hero. A writing assignment might be appropriate in which the student is asked to make some critical judgments on the integration of Hemingway's outlook on life with *The Old Man and the Sea* and/or another Hemingway story. Such an assignment might be set up in the following way:

¹Ibid., p. 114.

A. Read either a novel or two short stories from the list below:

1. Novels

HEMINGWAY, Ernest. A Farewell to Arms.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929.

_____. Across the River and into the Trees.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950.

_____. For Whom the Bell Tolls.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940.

_____. The Hemingway Reader. Preface by Charles Poore.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953.

_____. The Sun Also Rises.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954.

_____. To Have and Have Not.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937.

2. Short Stories

HEMINGWAY, Ernest. The Fifth Column and the First Forty-nine Stories.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939.

_____. In Our Time.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958.

_____. Men Without Women.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955.

_____. The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954.

B. Prepare a written report on one of the topics listed below.

1. Hemingway's Code Hero has certain characteristics. In what way does the main character in the story you read exhibit the qualities of the Code Hero?
2. Compare Santiago in The Old Man and the Sea to the main character in the story you read in terms of the Code Hero.
3. What qualities in common does Hemingway have with Santiago

and/or the main character in the story you read?

4. How does the character of Santiago and/or the main character in your story fulfill the requirements of the professional?
5. In what ways does the world of Hemingway's characters reflect the author's philosophy?
6. In what ways do Santiago and/or the main character in another story conform to the Code?
7. Discuss the importance of the element of luck found in Hemingway's stories.

Level Three: Allegory

The Old Man and the Sea, although not a political or moral satire, presents indirectly characters, settings, and ideas as standing for something beyond themselves and may, therefore, be considered in allegorical terms. The allegory of mankind as found in The Old Man and the Sea might be approached in the following way:

1. Each person, action, and idea stands for something else in allegory. Make a list of the characters and actions and ideas which you found in reading this novel.
2. Consider Santiago's statement: "I will show him what a man can do and what a man endures."¹ In your opinion, does Santiago mean only himself or does he speak of all men?
3. If the old man stands for mankind, what in the story stands for mankind's environment? Just as the sea "gives or withholds great favors,"² can we not think of life as doing the same thing?

¹Ibid., p. 73.

²Ibid., p. 33.

4. The great fish was an important part of the story. What did he represent to the old man? If he represents the old man's goal, what would he represent to mankind?
5. Recall the relationship between Manolete and Santiago. How does Manolete take care of his friend? What is his motivation? ambition? love? What universal concept is involved in Manolete's compassion for the old man?
6. The tourists were not like Manolete. They are not interested in knowing who caught the fish that had been destroyed or what had happened to him. Describe the kind of people who do not really care; people who look at things superficially and do not think of what they mean to someone else.
7. The action in this novel can be summed up in the old man's trip. If the old man stands for all men and the sea stands for life, what could the trip stand for? Think of the different aspects of the trip: some parts were very beautiful; some were rough and cruel.
8. In your own words, how do the actions, characters, and ideas (universal theme) reflect the life of all men?

B. Analytical Approach: STYLE

Some critics have felt that Hemingway's obsession with violent action and the conduct of the professional under pressure has produced a literature of extremes. Furthermore, the fact that his characters do not fully understand their fate indicates to them that Hemingway's work lacks the qualities of true tragedy. "That this universe is also blind,

or that Hemingway is blind to it, is the defect of this writer's singular virtues."¹ Those critics who may disapprove of Hemingway's theme, however, do not generally extend to criticism of his style. Thus, in reviews which are sometimes less than kind to Hemingway's intellectual power, there is usually a reference to Hemingway as a master stylist. For example, "Whatever Hemingway's merits or demerits as a thinker, he had the greatest technical command of English of any modern writer except Joyce."²

In the same vein, J. D. Scott praised Hemingway's style in this way:

"Despite its great virtues, its lucidity, its brilliantly compact evocation of the sea, of physical endurance, of the power of the great fish, its compassion and its impact, it does not plumb those depths of primitive tragic simplicity at which it obviously aims."³

Whether there is unanimous approval of Hemingway's theme is not the crucial point here. What is important is that the intensity and originality of his style cannot be denied.

"The style remains as surely as the fame. It has been praised, imitated and derided for 30 years, but it endures: the one intrinsic style our century has produced."⁴

¹Maxwell Geismar, American Moderns (New York: Hill and Wang, 1958), p. 64.

²Time, July 14, 1961, p. 88.

³Saturday Review of Literature, July 29, 1961, p. 36.

⁴MacLeish, op. cit., p. 71.

Background. What is there in style that proclaims its author? How does a reader know Frost's wind¹ ("Where had I heard this wind before change like this to a deeper roar?") from Sandburg's wind² ("Who can ever forget listening to the wind go by counting its money and throwing it away?")?

Recognition and understanding of style come with the recognition that the style and the man are one. It is possible to be familiar with the superficial aspects of an author's style. For example, Faulkner usually uses long, involved sentences such as

"You just keep moving, then suddenly you know that the set is about you, beneath you, overtaking you, as if the slow and ruthless power became aware of your presence at last, had dropped back a tentacle, a feeler, to gather you in and sweep you remorselessly on."³

Hemingway depends upon short, staccato sounds such as

"They sat on the Terrace and many of the fishermen made fun of the old man and he was not angry. Others, of the older fishermen, looked at him and were sad."⁴

To analyze style, however, the reader must relate to the author and his ideas the way his words are chosen and arranged.

An approach to Hemingway's style. If the premise that style is non-detachable from the man is valid, then the study of Hemingway's style should start by returning to the same sources which were observed to be

¹Robert Frost, "Bereft," Modern American Poetry, ed. Louis Untermeyer (6th ed.; New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1942), p. 223.

²Carl Sandburg, "Wind Song," Ibid., p. 245.

³Faulkner, The Unvanquished, p. 83.

⁴Hemingway, The Old Man and the Sea, p. 11.

the basis of his central theme. His personality and the era in which he lived are important factors in his manner of expression, just as they are to his characteristic philosophy. The following sequence is suggested as a basis for discussion whereby the student can consider the components of Hemingway's uniquely original style. This, in turn, will lead to an appreciation of the innate appropriateness of Hemingway's style to his material.

I. The effect of Hemingway's personality on his style

A. What were Hemingway's physical characteristics as a young writer?

"Hemingway was a big, self-assured, engaging fellow with black hair and a small mustache, with a boyish grin that bared a good set of teeth and dark eyes that glanced about him with a hunter's acumen. Lounging in the bistros of Montparnasse, he seemed a bit of a roughneck, but he was genial and relaxed. He reveled in his senses; the world of sport and nature was open to him as it never could be to an essentially indoor person like Fitzgerald. Hemingway was an expert fisherman, a good skier and boxer. . . . As he padded about the streets in a patched coat and sneakers, he would often be feinting and jabbing, but no one noticed him except to smile. If you were his companion, you didn't josh him either. He would ask you whether you wanted to make something out of it if you did."¹

B. What were Hemingway's interests?

Unlike Fitzgerald, Hemingway was not interested in inner, emotional violence or the destructive flaw beneath the shining surface of wealth and beauty. Rather he was interested in physical violence: bullfighting, boxing, hunting, war. In order to

¹Andrew Turnbull, "Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway," Esquire (March, 1962), 115.

test the limits of his fear, he sought physical situations in which they could be tried.

"Fitzgerald had the dangerous Athenian qualities of facility and grace as against Hemingway's Spartan virtues of ruggedness and perseverance."¹

C. How is Hemingway's personality reflected in his style?

Hemingway wrote about subjects which were important to him: bullfighting in The Green Hills of Africa; war in For Whom the Bell Tolls; game fishing in The Old Man and the Sea. The qualities of grace under pressure that delighted him in a Spanish bullfighter or in a white hunting guide took shape in his fictional characters. The topics Hemingway chose to write about demanded realistic description, and Hemingway, the former reporter, observed and recorded truly and directly.

Hemingway's style is also reflected in his approach to his material through the senses rather than through the intellect. He was attracted by the physical aspects in life, ". . . those involving sex, love, danger, and death, in which the instinctive life is foremost."² He was not interested in intellectualizing those fundamentals by sifting the effects; he was interested in the direct experience.

MacLeish relates that he said, when he was learning to write,

"I found the greatest difficulty aside from knowing truly what you really felt, rather than

¹Ibid., p. 118.

²Ernest Hemingway, The Green Hills of Africa (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935).

what you were supposed to feel . . . was to put down what really happened in action: what the actual things were which produced the emotion you experienced."¹

Hemingway tried to describe the actual experience as it happened in its proper sequence and not as it might be intellectually filtered and analyzed. In this, Hemingway's style reflects his personal participation in violent action. Yet, there must be more than mere reporting. If there were not, Hemingway would be indistinguishable from the many modern authors who attempt to imitate him. What, then, sets his style apart?

Hemingway's pursuit of physical experience was not a passive practice; it was intense, emotional, passionate. His style has the same quality of intensity, although understated, that can be found in his life. That he manages to make the reader feel and see as he does, and often as intensely, does much to explain the purity of his style. It is not easy to explain exactly how he does this.

"Who knows why certain notes in music are capable of stirring the listener deeply, though the same notes, slightly rearranged, are impotent?"²

A poet, disciplined by his art in the use of words, might come closest to some explanation. John Ciardi wrote:

"Hemingway's method was simply to talk around an emotion so carefully, and even so painfully that the reader cannot avoid feeling the omitted

¹MacLeish, op. cit., p. 72.

²White, "An Approach to Style," op. cit., p. 52.

statements about it. . . . To find the language that would not entrap emotion but release it, Hemingway had to evolve a superb instrument of style."¹

II. The effect of the era on Hemingway's style

A. Influence of realism during the nineteen-twenties

Hemingway's style developed coincidentally with the growth of naturalism in American literature. Although he did not originate the realistic approach, he contributed to its evolution.

"The first group of twentieth-century realists included Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, Jack London, Ellen Glasgow, and Theodore Dreiser."²

Rebelling against excessive romanticism and turning to the European example of describing people and places as they actually exist, these authors were the forerunners of American literary naturalism. This was the early period; later, during the nineteen-thirties, realism would express itself in terms of social reform.

In between were those writers who

". . . carried the literary revival in the United States to its flowering and created the second great renaissance in our letters."³

One of the writers in this middle period was Ernest Hemingway. Depicting life as it really is and not as a romanticist might wish was Hemingway's natural inclination. Consequently, this fertile

¹John Ciardi, "The Language of an Age," Saturday Review of Literature (July 29, 1961), 32.

²Geismar, American Moderns, pp. 22-23.

³Ibid., p. 24.

period of literary growth provided a perfect catalyst for his individualistic style.

B. Influence of the philosophy of the period

The nineteen-twenties were a strange blend of insouciance and disillusionment. Sir Osbert Sitwell remembers a visit to New York in 1926 as a time when

" . . . the city was as innocent as Adam and Eve before the fall. Sophistication showed already in individuals but not in whole sections of the people, as it does today. America had not grown used to her position as a great power."¹

In The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald emphasized this discrepancy between the dream and reality. The attempt to adjust to a world which now seemed unstable and often savage fostered a hedonistic attitude toward life.

"The twentieth century was primed for a philosophy of concrete things rather than abstract ideas, was ready for a psychology of sensations--for the brute fact, the tactile thrill, the stream of sensuousness that inundate the pages of Hemingway."²

All but the immediate was questionable, and the old, comforting philosophy of the conventional past could not be relied upon. Hemingway, writing about the concrete experiences in life, used a style suitably lacking in nicety.

"As a fledgling writer in Paris, Hemingway felt a double betrayal of language and ideals. The first thing the Lost Generation lost was its faith in words, big words."³

¹Sir Osbert Sitwell, "New York in the Twenties," The Atlantic (February, 1962), 38.

²Time, July 14, 1961, p. 87.

³Ibid.

Hemingway, along with other writers of this period, did not trust the pretentious phrase. Joseph Warren Beach noted that:

"He is one of the war generation who have learned to dislike big words because they were so much abused during the war and in the age that prepared the war."¹

He gives as an example the passage in A Farewell to Arms which pointedly reflects Hemingway's rhetorical opinion:

"I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain. We had heard them . . . and had read them, on proclamations that were slapped up by bill-posters over other proclamations, now for a long time, and I had seen nothing sacred, and things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it. There were many words that you could not bear to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity."²

III. What distinct qualities of style can be isolated in Hemingway's writing?

A. Use of words

Ornate description and generalization are not a part of Hemingway's style. His words are direct and appropriate to the subject.

For example, note the description of the old man:

"Everything about him was old except his eyes and they were the same color as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated."³

or of a shark:

¹Joseph Warren Beach, American Fiction (New York: Russell and Russell, 1960), p. 110.

²Ibid., pp. 110-111.

³The Old Man and the Sea, p. 10.

"The next shark that came was a single shovel-nose. He came like a pig to the trough if a pig had a mouth so wide that you could put your head in."¹

or of the seascape:

"The clouds over the land now rose like mountains and the coast was only a long green line with the gray blue hills behind it. The water was a dark blue now, so dark that it was almost purple."²

B. Sentence structure

Hemingway achieves a certain rhythm in repetition. His sentences are nearly always simple or compound. The direct experience is expressed in a style of co-ordinate sentence structure. For example:

"He no longer dreamed of storms, nor of women, nor of great occurrences, nor of great fish, nor fights, nor contests of strength, nor of his wife. He only dreamed of places now and of the lions on the beach. They played like young cats in the dusk and he loved them as he loved the boy."³

or:

"What I will do if he decides to go down, I don't know. What I'll do if he sounds and dies I don't know. But I'll do something. There are plenty of things I can do."⁴

C. The accurate simplicity of dialogue

Hemingway writes mainly of the unsophisticated, non-intellectual professional.

"The speech of Hemingway's characters is colloquial and lowbrow; but what is more remarkable

¹Ibid., p. 123.

²Ibid., p. 38.

³Ibid., p. 27.

⁴Ibid., p. 49.

is its edge and economy. His dialogues are lean and stripped. The number of things said is reduced to a minimum; and they are rendered in the smallest possible number of phrases chosen for their expressiveness and pertinence, and brought into relief by the device of repetition."¹

The blunt, quick, to-the-point dialogue is analogous to the character. There is, furthermore, a correctness of sound which can be caught when Hemingway's dialogue is read aloud. For example:

"'Tell me about the baseball,' the boy asked him.

'In the American league it is the Yankees as I said,' the old man said happily.

'They lost today,' the boy told him.

'That means nothing. The great DiMaggio is himself again.'

'They have other men on the team.'

'Naturally, but he makes the difference.

In the other league, between Brooklyn and Philadelphia I must take Brooklyn. But then I think of Dick Sisler and those great drives in the old park.'

'There was nothing ever like them. He hits the longest ball I have ever seen.'

"Do you remember when he used to come to the terrace? I wanted to take him fishing but I was too timid to ask him. Then I asked you to ask him and you were too timid.'

'I know. It was a great mistake. He might have gone with us. Then we would have that for all of our lives.'

'I would like to take the great DiMaggio fishing,' the old man said. 'They say his father was a fisherman. Maybe he was as poor as we are and would understand.'"²

¹Beach, op. cit., pp. 103-104.

²The Old Man and the Sea, pp. 23-24.

Suggestions for Study

I. Paraphrase

To paraphrase an author's words at great length is dulling, but this method may be used sparingly to emphasize both the deceptive difficultness and the undeniable rightness of Hemingway's style. A characteristic passage might be chosen. For example:

"The old man drank his coffee slowly. It was all he would have all day and he knew that he should take it. For a long time now eating had bored him and he never carried a lunch."¹

A. Rewrite this passage using

1. a more complex sentence structure
2. less simple words
3. more word modifiers

B. Compare the original passage to the rewritten passage. Decide what elements in Hemingway's style are responsible for the image he creates.

II. Comparison

Recognition of style can be achieved through comparison of the manner of expression of different authors. An obvious comparison would be between Hemingway and Faulkner, both realists and yet completely dissimilar. Such a comparison might be made in the following way:

A. Compare and contrast the two passages which follow.

¹The Old Man and the Sea, p.

1. Hemingway

"The sea was very dark and the light made prisms in the water. The myriad flecks of the plankton were annulled now by the high sun and it was only the great deep prisms in the blue water that the old man saw now with his lines going straight down into the water that was a mile deep."¹

2. Faulkner

"During the next three or four hours after the thunder and lightning had spent itself the skiff ran in pitch streaming darkness upon a rolling expanse which, even if he could have seen, apparently had no boundaries. Wild and invisible, it tossed and heaved about and beneath the boat, ridged with dirty phosphorescent foam and filled with a debris of destruction-- objects nameless and enormous and invisible which struck and slashed at the skiff and whirled on."²

B. Compare and contrast the two passages on the following elements of style:

1. types of words used
2. figures of speech
3. sentence structure
4. repetition of words
5. creation of mood
6. simplicity or complexity.

Although style has been isolated in this section, it should not occupy such a lonely setting in the actual study of the novel. Style

¹Ibid., p. 44.

²William Faulkner, "Old Man," The Faulkner Reader (New York: Random House, 1954), p. 380.

is the way the author expresses his ideas. It is colored by his bias and his enthusiasm. Often it can be only partly defined, but it is as distinctive to the author's book as his theme. Therefore, it should be considered throughout the reading of the novel and not as an afterthought.

Part III: Point of No Return, John P. Marquand

John Marquand took as his province the world bounded by New York, Boston, and Newburyport. With a sharply observant eye, he explored the motives, ambitions, attainments, and failures of society within this environmentally restricted universe.

"The world that Marquand gives us in his novels is one in which the rules are enormously important, and yet one no sooner learns them than they change. It is a world in which there are few spectacular tragedies and a good deal of quiet desperation, in which there are few ecstasies but many little satisfactions."¹

Background. Two obvious, although perhaps oversimplified, aspects of Marquand's work are: (1) a belief that environment is mainly responsible for character and degree of achievement; (2) a brilliant ability to report on a social scene with which he was intimately acquainted.

1. Marquand feels that the forces and conventions of the particular society in which a man might find himself are largely responsible for his drives and motives and, in the end, his chances for success.

Time quoted him as saying:

"Everybody says 'Life is what you make it' and it seems to me, by God, it's mostly environment you're coping with and you have mighty little chance to make it yourself. I don't see that many people are particularly captains of their fate. They bat it out, but do they really get what they want? I'm damned if I think so."²

¹Granville Hicks, "Marquand of Newburyport," Harpers Magazine (April, 1950), 200:1199:108.

²Time, March 7, 1949, 52:10:112-113.

In the same issue, he was further quoted:

"Mature people are happier. At least they can rationalize the world in such a way that they are not going to beat their heads against a wall. I certainly think that an understanding of other people and of your environment makes for happiness--at least it makes for repose."¹

The character, Charles Gray, in Point of No Return² may be taken as one example of the importance of environment. He was prevented from getting what he wanted in Clyde because of social restrictions. His ambition grew from his determination to be as different from his father, John, as possible. When he returned to his home town, after many years, he at last fully recognized those environmental factors which had shaped his early life, and he was then ready to accept, with some repose, whatever turn his business future might take.

Americans like to believe that theirs is a classless society, and some readers might object to the emphasis and detail Marquand gives to social strata as a shaper of men. Classes, however, do exist. It was Marquand's interest to write about a distinct social milieu (Northeastern seaboard) and to balance those possibilities of mobility within a social class against its demands for conformity.

2. Marquand put his precise observations skillfully to work in his novels. A comment made by Katherine Anne Porter helps to show how an author such as Marquand transforms reality as he sees it into literature. She was asked in an interview³ why

¹Ibid., p. 113.

²John P. Marquand, Point of No Return (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1949), p. 169.

³I've Been Reading, Alfred Duhamel, Channel 2, Boston, April 2, 1962, 9:30 P.M.

she had not included any Italians among the characters of many nationalities in her book, Ship of Fools.¹ She replied that it was simply because on that voyage of thirty years ago on which the book was based, there had been no Italians as passengers. She always starts with reality and then allows her observations "to set up a commotion in her brain."²

So, too, Marquand used his observations as a starting point and a basis for the working out of human motivation and character. The accuracy of his observations and the justification for the conclusions reached in his novels can be measured by his own experience. He investigated the influences in his life so closely that a reader of his novels sometimes feels that, in fact, he is reading Marquand's biography. The following brief outline of Marquand's life and of the development of Charles Grey's character in Point of No Return is an illustration of this point.

I. A comparison of John Marquand's life to that of Charles Gray

A. Early life

1. Marquand considered Newburyport, Massachusetts, as his home.

"Although he was born in Delaware and has lived in Boston and New York, strong ties have always held Marquand to the city of his ances-

¹Katherine Anne Porter, Ship of Fools (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1962).

²I've Been Reading, op. cit.

tors. He spent much of his boyhood there. . . .
He always had Newburyport relatives."¹

When Marquand's father lost his money in the panic of 1907, Marquand was sent to Newburyport to live with his aunts at Curzon's Mill. These were the formative years, and many of the towns which figure in his novels are drawn from the Newburyport he knew as a youth.

2. Charles Gray grew up in Clyde, a thinly-disguised Newburyport. His family, too, had lived there for generations and had occupied a similar status in the community.

B. Family

1. Until the panic of 1907, John Marquand's father did very well in the bond business. After the panic he was never able to recoup his wealth. He was not a practical man. His weakness can be summed up in this quotation:

"One morning, he [father] received a fifteen-hundred-dollar check in payment for a big order of chicks, put on his best hat and coat, selected his favorite walking stick, and announced, with a strange smile, that he intended to spend the day in Boston. . . . Nothing was heard from him for two days. He returned, dejected, on the second evening. The smile was gone from his face and the swagger from his walk. The fifteen hundred dollars was gone, too. Marquand asked what had happened to the money. 'I blew it in, and it's none of your damn business,' Philip Marquand said.

That was the way it had always been, Marquand remembered. Philip Marquand had always been a gambler; even if he won, he ultimately lost, since he would toss his winnings into one grand plunge."²

¹Hicks, "Marquand of Newburyport," op. cit., p. 101.

²Philip Hamburger, J. P. Marquand, Esquire (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1952), pp. 37-38.

2. John Gray, Charles' father, was a charming, optimistic, intellectual misfit. He spent his life dreaming of breaking the system, that is, the stock market. Like John Marquand, Charles developed a fear of gambling and a decided respect for financial security.
3. John Marquand's mother was the niece of Margaret Fuller, a member of a highly respected old New England family. She faithfully followed her husband on his various jobs across the country even though it meant leaving her son. She was a mild, gentle woman in contrast to her elegant, erratic husband.
4. Charles' mother was Esther Marchby, old Dr. Marchby's daughter, "and the Marchbys were good solid people, too."¹ She, too, was a sharp contrast to her husband. Although he lost every penny he could manage to get his hands on, Esther felt that someday he would do something to make everyone proud of him.

G. College

1. Because of his family's financial reverses, Marquand went to Newburyport High School instead of Groton or St. Paul's. He always felt that this had a great deal to do with his lack of social success at Harvard.

"Harvard was for him in many ways a lonely place, partly because of his natural shyness and reserve, and partly because he had very little money to spend, and as a consequence, . . . he did not mingle with the gay young blades of the Harvard social clubs such as the Fly and the

¹Marquand, Point of No Return, p. 169.

Porcellian. He was a member of no club, a fact that, if he thought about it at all, he attributed to his having come to Harvard from Newburyport High rather than from one of the numerous prep schools from which graduates poured into Harvard freshman classes, as from a cornucopia."¹

2. There was never any extra money in the Gray family, at least none that escaped John Gray's plunges. When it came time for Charles to go to college, he was sent by his Aunt Jane. For some obscure reason, she insisted on Dartmouth rather than Harvard. A Dartmouth education had serious drawbacks, both socially and in business, as long as Charles remained in the vicinity of Boston. It meant that he could never reach the top, because the top was always held by Harvard men. This inbred discrimination was a factor in Charles' ambitious determination to get ahead in New York.

D. Marriage

1. Marquand's first wife was Christina Sedgwick.

"The Sedgwick family, although it came from Stockbridge, Massachusetts, where the frogs in the spring were all said to sing, 'Sedgwick, Sedgwick, Sedgwick, Sedgwick,' was one of the intellectual prides of intellectual Boston--scholars, writers, teachers, ministers. They were among the select group who were final arbiters of taste. . . . They were a tightly knit group, proud, even arrogant, and to young Marquand from Newburyport and The Saturday Evening Post they had an indefinable awesome quality."²

Christina Sedgwick Marquand could never completely disengage herself from family tradition and influence, and they eventually were divorced.

¹Hamburger, op. cit., p. 45.

²Ibid.

2. Although Charles Gray did not marry his Christina Sedgwick, in the fictionalized form of Jessica Lovell, he thought for a time that he could. Many years after their engagement was broken, he could find reasons why marrying Jessica would have been ill-fated; the Lovells were the arbiters of taste in Clyde, and Jessica could not be parted from either her father or her father's traditions.

II. Conclusions reached from experience by John Marquand and Charles Gray

A. In China, Marquand came across the term "Feng-shui," which means "wind and water," but Marquand liked to think of it as meaning the balance of things.

"What one needs in life is a balance of things, he thought. But the minute you think you have it, there is some damn picture on the wall, and one glance and the balance is gone."¹

Marquand's eventual literary prestige balances the early years when he had not been recognized at Harvard or by his wife's family, who considered him a hack writer. When he was young, he had been turned down by Mr. Dodge of Newburyport for a scholarship to Harvard. Toward the end of his life, he was a famous figure, and provincial Newburyport was forced to realize it.

"He was home, among his own, an honored novelist, a world celebrity, and while he relished the idea of speaking to the Tuesday Night Club, he still felt a youthful inability to believe that it was he, John P. Marquand, who stood in this same Mr. Dodge's living room so many years ago and asked Mr. Dodge, in vain, for one of the Harvard Club scholarships to Harvard. Now he was not only one of them but perhaps

¹Ibid., p. 20.

--and the thought was one he honestly wished to dismiss--perhaps one of the most celebrated among them."¹

Yet, the satisfaction Marquand derived from this balancing force, success, was not constant. A backward glance could blur the image.

"After all, it was something to have best sellers behind one, to read a paper, to be among friends, to have made good. And yet, Marquand felt in his heart a sadness about the past. The past was there, and the past was real, and it could never be wiped out."²

B. How did "things balance out" for Charles Gray? Two examples might serve to illustrate.

1. Charles had followed the bundle of hay held out before him by Jessica Lovell. He had been deeply hurt and disappointed when she and her father had broken the engagement. The balance came after many years.

"Charles Gray can only be liberated from Clyde by returning there and finding that Jessica Lovell is about to save herself from middle-aged spinsterhood by marrying Jackie Mason, who was born further down the social ladder than Charles himself. The poor old past is now revealed to him in all its smallness and sterility."³

But the balance, if dwelled upon, could become distorted.

Given the opportunity over again, Charles would still make the decision to leave Clyde, work in New York, marry Nancy, and live in the suburbs. Yet, he felt oddly disconcerted at the

¹Ibid., p. 110.

²Ibid., p. 113.

³Louis Auchincloss, Reflections of a Jacobite (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961), pp. 147-148.

news that Jessica would marry Jackie Mason.

2. The balance between happiness and liberty is an important theme in Point of No Return. Charles has reached the stage in his career where he must advance; the comfortable house in the good neighborhood, a private education for his children, membership in a more exclusive country club all depend on his appointment as vice-president.

On the other hand, if he does become vice-president, Charles knows that further inroads will be made upon his liberty. He will have to continue to be the bright young man. He will have to conform to the image of Tony Burton.

"When I walk, I always walk like Tony, because Tony knows just how to walk, and when I talk, I always talk like Tony, because Tony knows just how to talk; and when I dress, I always dress like Tony, in a double-breasted suit. But no matter how I try, I cannot be like Tony. I can never make myself sufficiently astute."¹

Charles was aware that he was sacrificing liberty for happiness when he became vice-president. He could not have both.

"Well, I suppose everybody's pursuing happiness, and you usually lose your liberty when you do, and the best part of your life. Maybe that's what everything's about. Maybe. I don't know."²

The Socio-psychological Approach to Point of No Return

In Point of No Return, Marquand satirized various conventions and institutions: business, suburbia, small-town mores, to list a few.

¹Marquand, Point of No Return, p. 81.

²Ibid., p. 516.

Most pointedly, however, he aimed his satire at a study which had been made of the social shadings in Newburyport.

". . . there is another Newburyport: the one that W. Lloyd Warner and his team of sociologists and social anthropologists chose to call 'Yankee City.' Working under the auspices of the Committee of Industrial Physiology at Harvard University, Dr. Warner and his associates selected Newburyport for study because it was a well-integrated, reasonably autonomous community with a number of ethnic groups and a population under 20,000. From 1930 to 1934, Dr. Warner and his staff of thirty men and women collected data on virtually all of the 17,000 inhabitants of the city, and there were confirmatory researches at a later date."¹

"The Social Life of a Modern Community"² was the first volume of the five-volume Yankee City Series. It is a scientific study of class hierarchy in a community, and it shows how social behavior conforms to six isolated class strata: upper-upper, lower-upper, upper-middle, lower-middle, upper-lower, and lower-lower. It is considered a classic in the field of social anthropology.

Marquand viewed this scientific dissection of his town with amused tolerance. He had been aware all his life of the conclusions reached by the data-compilers.

". . . he has demonstrated again and again that he has a better understanding of the class structure of contemporary American society than Lloyd Warner and all his advisers, colleagues and assistants put together."³

¹Hicks, "Marquand of Newburyport," op. cit., p. 101.

²W. Lloyd Warner and Paul S. Lunt, The Social Life of a Modern Community (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941).

³Hicks, "Marquand of Newburyport," op. cit., p. 102.

Warner's study provided facts about the relationships within a certain society based on scientific observation and analysis. Marquand observed and analyzed the same material but from an emotional and creative approach. From Warner, for example, we learn that the upper-ups in Yankee City attend the Episcopal church. From Marquand we understand the consequences of belonging or not belonging to the Clyde Episcopal church. Clyde is drawn artistically and psychologically, "Yankee City" scientifically and sociologically; they both represent the same town, Newburyport. For this reason, the socio-psychological approach is suggested for the study of Point of No Return.

Justification for the socio-psychological approach. Part of growing up is the recognition of universal patterns of behavior and reaction to behavior. The ability to understand, and sometimes to withstand, the human condition is a necessary ingredient for maturity. A novel can often provide valuable insight into an experience which lacks defined standards.

"Increasingly our patterns of conduct are determined by observation of the way other people behave --often by vicarious observation, through movies, plays and novels. . . . There is a good deal of help in Marquand. Here we can discover what the values are for which there is current market demand."¹

Suggestions for study. Several socio-psychological aspects of Point of No Return are worth exploring. Each may be touched upon as contributing to the whole, or one might be selected as a point of emphasis. The following section will provide: (1) Various socio-psychological

¹Ibid., p. 103.

aspects found in Point of No Return; (2) questions pertaining to a specific socio-psychological aspect; (3) suggestions for oral and/or written work. A Study Guide arranged by chapters is in the appendix.

Socio-psychological Aspects Found in the Novel

I. Point of No Return: a business novel

A. The philosophy of business and the business novel in America

1. The philosophy of success in business in the early period of America hinged on the idea that God had predestined success for America. The rich man was the moral man; God gave good men wealth.

With the advent of the American Industrial Revolution, this philosophy underwent a turn in meaning. 1830-1890 represented years of great opportunity to make money. Men still felt that success came from God's will, but they now felt that all behavior was good if it made money. God wanted America to be successful, and dishonesty is not dishonest if America's success is fulfilled.

Two early business novels were:

- a. The Rise of Silas Lapham:¹ the story of a man who sacrificed business success for his moral values.
- b. The Titan:² the story of an American financier completely without a moral code, yet a man of great purpose and strength.

¹William Dean Howells, The Rise of Silas Lapham (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1928).

²Theodore Dreiser, The Titan (New York: The World Publishing Co., 1914).

2. The 20th century has witnessed still another change in the business concept; God is not usually called upon to justify success, nor is He given credit for the achievement of wealth. There has been a gradual decline in the belief of the power of the Protestant Ethic; that is ". . . that pursuit of individual salvation through hard work, thrift, and competitive struggle is the heart of the American achievement."¹ Big business for the past thirty years has meant big organization. In opposition to the Protestant Ethic is what Whyte calls the social ethic:

". . . that contemporary body of thought which makes morally legitimate the pressures of society against the individual. Its major propositions are three: a belief in the group, as the source of creativity; a belief in 'belongingness' as the ultimate need of the individual; and a belief in the application of science to achieve the belongingness."²

Point of No Return is an example of a business novel in the mid-twentieth century.

B. Point of No Return follows the business career of Charles Gray.

1. Charles starts to work in a small factory in his hometown of Clyde. When he begins to think of marriage to Jessica, he realizes that this job will never offer more than small-town financial success and prestige.

2. Charles moves to a fine, old brokerage firm in Boston. This

¹William H. Whyte, Jr., The Organization Man (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1956), p. 5.

²Ibid., p. 7.

job is socially satisfying, but it becomes clear that his future possibilities are limited by his Dartmouth education; only Harvard men make the top in Boston brokerage firms.

After Jessica breaks their engagement, Charles goes to New York.

3. Charles begins his New York career in the trust department of the Stuyvesant Bank. The bank had well-defined requisites for the success of bright young men. Charles met these and eventually becomes vice-president.
4. The novel raises questions on the nature and choice of success.
 - a. The loss of individualism. This involves conformity to the organization image and conformity to standards of success in suburbia.
 - b. The loss of personal liberty. Each plateau toward the top becomes a point of no return, with a consequent loss of personal choice. The organization demands a detachment of personality.
 - c. Success represents happiness. Loss of liberty is balanced against happiness. Although Charles will never be able to act with complete freedom, he has assured his family of the good life, and he has satisfied his own belief in himself.

The question left to the reader is: Does it even out?

Study Guide: The following questions pertain to the business aspect of Point of No Return:

1. Note the mention of Burton and Blakesley (page 13). What is their relationship to Charles? How are they important to his future?

2. Why was it important to Charles that Mr. Burton told him to call him "Tony"?
3. Why was Charles upset when Roger was also given that privilege?
4. What do you learn about the relationship between Charles and Roger (pages 22-23)?
5. What positions did Charles and Roger hold in the bank?
6. What purpose does the description of the Stuyvesant Bank serve?
7. What importance does Arthur Slade's death have for Charles and Roger?
8. Why is Charles asked to look into Mr. Eaton's loan?
9. What trap does Charles set for Roger (page 52)?
10. What social and personality characteristics separated Mr. Bert J. Selig from the usual Stuyvesant client?
11. Why had it already been decided that Selig would not get the loan?
12. What did Selig mean by "fronting for the crowd"?
13. Why did Selig offer Charles a job?
14. In what ways do people in the bank conform to the image of Tony?
15. How did Roger manage to get Charles away from the scene?
16. What are the essential differences between the Whitakers described in Chapter VI and the family founder, Mrs. Whitaker's father?
17. What qualities do the Whitakers have which make them valued clients in the bank?
18. Why did Charles leave Wright-Sherwin?
19. How does Charles' idea of getting ahead differ from Mr. Howell's?
20. What interpretation might Charles make of the conversation overheard between Mr. Rush and Mr. Garvin?
21. How does Charles differ from the other young men in Rush and Co.?
22. In your opinion, why does Charles insist on wearing a soft shirt to Tony's dinner party?

23. What explanation can be given for Charles' feeling of relief as he walks into the library with Tony?
24. What is Tony's estimate of Blakesley?
25. What is Charles' reaction to the news that he will be the new vice-president?

Suggested topics for oral or written reports:

1. Discuss advancement possibilities at Wright-Sherwin, Rush and Company, and the Stuyvesant Bank.
2. In what ways did these companies differ from each other?
3. What were the personal motives in each job change made by Charles?
4. For what specific qualities did the Stuyvesant Bank look in their young men? In what measure did Charles fulfill them?
5. What kind of person was Tony Burton? In what way did he influence the people in the bank?
6. What would Charles' business future be if he missed the promotion? Give evidence for your opinion.
7. Discuss the situation in the bank between Charles and Roger. Give your opinion of this rivalry.
8. Where does Charles meet his "point of no return" in business? Give evidence to substantiate your answer.
9. What are the personal values involved in Charles' desire for promotion?
10. It has been said that a woman stands behind every successful man. In your opinion, how much credit should be given Nancy for Charles' success?
11. What factors in Charles' early life contributed to his drive for success? Why?
12. Becoming vice-president will mean a loss of liberty for Charles and his family. Why is this true?
13. In your opinion, do the material advantages of the vice-presidency balance the disadvantages? Support your statement.
14. In what ways does the Stuyvesant Bank represent the modern concept of business organization? What attractions and dangers are found in working for the organization?

II. Point of No Return: An analysis of society

Analysis of the social structure is an obvious socio-psychological aspect of Point of No Return. Marquand is essentially a social satirist. Three useful approaches to this area of the novel are: A. The experience of the reader; B. Comparison with the conclusions drawn by Warner in The Social Life of a Modern Community;¹ C. The development of Marquand's characters.

A. The student's observation of the social shadings within his environment is often extremely perceptive. He will say that all men are created equal in the sight of God and under the terms of the Constitution, but he realizes that sharp social differences and inequalities exist. This fact has hurt many young people. Point of No Return gives an opportunity to understand society's distinctions objectively as they apply to the characters in the novel.

B. Selected sections from W. Lloyd Warner's The Social Life of a Modern Community would provide insight into the social aspect of Point of No Return and allow interesting comparisons to be made. Chapter VII² contains composite profiles of people in the various classes in Yankee City. Parts might be read to or by the class for the purpose of identifying characteristics which are also to be found in Marquand.

Several ideas need to be clarified before the student tries to find points of contrast or comparison:

¹Warner and Lunt, op. cit.

²Ibid., pp. 126-201.

1. The Social Life of a Modern Community is a scientific definition of social status. The investigators pride themselves on their use of scientific methods in their research.
2. The findings of this study seek to prove that people live in conformity to their position in the social classes in their community. Each of the six social strata defined has its own values and people can be classified accordingly.
3. Marquand did not believe that scientific methods could adequately explain society. Understanding could only come from personal experience and acute observation of human behavior.

Suggestions for study. The following sections, taken from The Social Life of a Modern Community, describe certain types to be found in the social strata defined as upper-upper, lower-upper, upper-middle, lower-middle, upper-lower, and lower-lower. Marquand has created characters with many of the same qualities. A group panel discussion might be set up at this point of study to discuss the significant differences or similarities between the profiles given below and characters in Point of No Return.

1. "My father sits in his study and reads nineteenth-century novels and studies old English ballads. He retired when he was thirty-five. Some people thought that it was wrong for a man with a New England heritage but Dad didn't say anything in reply. He's always said to us, 'Never defend what you do after you've done it. Other people's standards are never any better than yours and seldom as good.'"¹
2. "The men have always gone away from here, and the women have stayed home. I always remember my two

¹Ibid., p. 136.

aunts when I think of my own mess. They are old ladies now and neither of them has ever married. They live in lonely respectability in a house they inherited from father's great-aunt. . . . I have heard stories about Aunt Elizabeth and Aunt Janice wanting to marry young men who were 'beneath them,' but they say 'their mother rules them with an iron hand and stopped them from making a bad marriage.' It wasn't that the young men weren't nice, you know, but they were just a little common."¹

3. "John Aldington, elder brother of Henry Adams Breckenridge, was a tall rugged man, and when he walked down Hill Street people said he looked as 'straight as the mast of a sailing ship.' His white mustache and beard glistened in the late afternoon sunlight. When people of the town saw him they bowed respectfully and commented among themselves on how well he kept his age. His detractors said he was 'so lofty' that he was like the Lowells and spoke 'only to God.' But, to those who knew him, he was a 'directly spoken person who always said what he believed to be the truth.'"²
4. "At the last meeting, Mr. Starr had given his paper. He had talked on 'Henry Ford's Contribution to American Industry.' At the meeting before that, Mr. James Whitecotton's paper had not been too well liked. It was called "The Place of Modern Philanthropy in a Modern World."³
5. "The old families aren't as powerful as they used to be. The sons don't follow in their father's footsteps. New people keep coming in. They're the ones who get control. Not we. Old families used to run this town but not any more."⁴
6. "I'm afraid we feel ourselves superior. In fact, I sometimes think this town feels superior even to Boston and London. No one here would admit that New York is better than we are. New York is a good place to make money in and that's all. You hear of people talking of Middle Westerners as though they were country cousins. Many of us have never been west of the Connecticut River. Somehow we're proud of it."⁵

¹Ibid., p. 136.

²Ibid., p. 137.

³Ibid., p. 146.

⁴Ibid., p. 136.

⁵Ibid., p. 133.

C. The delineation of Marquand's characters

The literary world disdainfully ignored Marquand's early works as fit solely for the less sophisticated readers of ladies' magazines. The Late George Apley¹ was a surprise package. Critics were forced to take another look at an author who suddenly produced a novel in which the "upper-upper class was portrayed in one of its purest forms."² Since 1937, Marquand has written many novels. They have not all been of the highest quality, but they all show an amazing ability to trace the "subtle realities"³ in society. Weaving back and forth between past and present, cause and consequence, Marquand poked behind the social facade, and like a magician with a rabbit, produced for his reader changing people and changing values.

The three characters selected for study here are: (1) Malcolm Bryant; (2) Mr. Lovell; (3) John Gray.

1. Malcolm Bryant

Marquand took note of W. Lloyd Warner's study of Newburyport published under the title of the Yankee City Series. He was in disagreement with both its methods and its conclusions. In Point of No Return, he developed his own sociological study based on his knowledge of the town and his observation of the

¹John P. Marquand, The Late George Apley (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1937).

²Hicks, "Marquand of Newburyport," op. cit., p. 103.

³Ibid., p. 105.

people. In the process, he created the satirical figure of Lloyd Warner: Malcolm Bryant.

"If, however, Charles concedes that such researches have a certain validity, he does not think well of Malcolm Bryant, and neither does Mr. Marquand. Academicians have always fared badly in Marquand's novels--'pampered, preposterous creatures who lived on artificial life, who did not understand or want to be like other people.' Bryant is supposed to be an expert in human relations, but in dealing with other people around him he displays the unskillful ignorance of most dwellers in academic ivory towers."¹

Malcolm Bryant comes to Clyde as head of a team of sociologists who intend to probe the class structure of the town by means of questioning the inhabitants. This is exactly what Warner did, and Marquand found it offensive. Marquand felt that it was necessary to grow up in a town to understand it with any sensitivity. He showed Bryant's obtuseness in several ways:

- a. When Bryant first arrived in Clyde, he was delighted with the town. He viewed it scientifically, and as a subject for his study, it seemed to him ideal. However, when he began to perceive that there were many complicated undercurrents, his enthusiasm began to wane.
- b. Bryant's infatuation with Jessica was a telling satire on his complete and abysmal ignorance of the workings of society in the town under study. He had no understanding of the values of the upper-uppers, a class he was assiduously studying scientifically.

¹Hicks, "Marquand of Newburyport," op. cit., p. 102.

- c. Bryant had so little experience with human emotions, as opposed to the scientific observation of emotions, that he could only wonder at the strange attraction he felt for Jessica. Summoning all his forces, he put it down as an acceptable form of the biological urge. He could understand it only as such.
- d. Bryant was a respected anthropologist. He had made many forays into primitive cultures, and he had come away with the conviction that all men were essentially the same. His study was therefore slanted toward the fitting of human behavior into preconceived slots. Since this is not always possible, Bryant left Clyde not knowing many important things about its people.

2. Mr. Laurence Lovell

Mr. Lovell refused to accept Charles as a prospective son-in-law. Deviously he found a way to make his daughter break her engagement to Charles, a man she truly loved. Mr. Lovell believed his actions were for her good, but in reality they were responsible for an empty life.

In the social context of Point of No Return, Mr. Lovell plays the role of the George Apley of Clyde. Marquand was extremely adept in creating the bitterly satirical type of character, such as Mr. Lovell, who displays ". . . the mechanisms by which a social class enforces its standards and achieves the conformity of its members."¹

¹Ibid., p. 103.

Undoubtedly, this was so because he knew them so well but was not one of them. Marquand had observed at close range, and possibly with some longing, the qualities and values of the Brahmin class.

"When you come right down to it, he supposed, Boston was an acquired taste. One had to know these people, in order to appreciate them--people like good ole Gardi Fiske, who was the only World War I ace to fall out of an airplane, catch hold of the rear struts, and clamber back aboard, and who worried not at all about the hereafter, since, as he once remarked to Marquand, 'I know the bishop who is up there, and if there are any good clubs, he'll get me in.' Marquand marvelled at the manner in which aristocratic Boston conserved the principal of its acquired wealth, and marvelled as well at its public spirit and its lack of extravagance or vulgar display of affluence."¹

Marquand knew Mr. Lovell because he knew the inbred class characteristics which governed his actions and were responsible for his motivation. Two class values are important in this novel.

a. Wealth. It was inconceivable to Mr. Lovell that his daughter should marry a man without money. Perhaps this is understandable because Jessica had become used to money. However, money to Mr. Lovell meant inherited wealth, held over many generations, and, ideally, made in the early days of New England. Thus Charles was unacceptable to Mr. Lovell because he lacked wealth, and even if he were able to make sufficient money, it would be market money, not the same thing at all.

¹Hamburger, op. cit., pp. 76-77.

b. Family. It was expected that Jessica would marry into her own class. The Gray family was a good solid family, not far below the Lovell social standing, but the differences, slight as they might be, were important. Marquand indicated this in several subtle examples. One involved the visit of the prominent Miss Sarah Hewitt.

"'I forgot you had a picture of the Comet, too,' Miss Sarah said, 'not that you haven't a perfect right to have one'--and then they realized that she was referring to the oil painting of the brig above the mantelpiece. 'Grandfather always said that Captain Tom was his best Captain. . . . Susan and I were brought downstairs to meet him. Grandfather wanted us to see what one of his captains looked like. . . .'"¹

Miss Hewitt clearly cut the differentiation between the two families: her grandfather owned the Comet; Captain Tom Gray was a respected employee.

What were the purposes behind Marquand's portrayal of Mr. Lovell? At least two seem evident:

- a. Mr. Lovell was a hypocrite and a fake. He imposed his whim selfishly on his daughter under the cover of antiquated social restrictions. He blatantly presented himself as an educated man, and yet the books in his library had never been read. They were there to impress.
- b. Mr. Lovell's values were destructive and unrealistic. Marquand's thesis that everything changes becomes clear with the announcement that Jessica would marry Jackie Mason. The

¹Marquand, Point of No Return, p. 178.

old rules change, but often not before they have done a great deal of damage. This is especially true if they were sterile rules to start with.

Marquand probably remembered the slights he received from Newburyport's counterpart of Mr. Lovell, and when he became famous and was asked to speak before the Tuesday Night Club, he might have experienced the same sense of ironic justice as Charles did when he realized the extent of change time brings about.

3. John Gray

The character of John Gray is in interesting contrast to Laurence Lovell. His values, although eccentric, were more honest and admirable.

A balance is struck in Point of No Return between the hazards of complete conformity and complete lack of conformity. Mr. Lovell's unimaginative devotion to class standards resulted in disappointment and personal failure. John Gray, the non-conformist, did not fare much better; his death was an admission of failure.

Several characteristics emerge from the portrayal of John Gray which emphasize his disregard for the accepted social pattern.

John Gray spent his life trying to beat the system.

He paraphrased Byron's epigram,

"The world is a bundle of hay
Mankind are the asses who pull
Each tugs it a different way,
And the greatest of all is John Bull,

to define the system: "They," the people who run things, hold out a bundle of hay, as one does in encouragement before an ass. As one tries to reach it, it is slowly withdrawn.

The system flourished under several guises. Mr. Lovell held the bundle of hay just beyond Charles' reach. Tony Burton, on the other hand, allowed Charles to grasp it. John Gray's system was to make a killing on the stock market. He might have become interested in another system had he succeeded. He gambled each inheritance away, and it was with the same involved ritual of speculation that he lost each time.

Beating the social or business system entails, to some extent, conforming to the rules set up by those in charge. John Gray's attempt to beat the system contained no element of conformity. He avoided the conservative brokerage houses in favor of the more dangerous speculators. He never considered holding back any money but rather plunged with every cent he had.

John Gray had spiraled his investments into a fortune just before the crash. He had meant to put some money into a trust for his wife. When his fortune disintegrated, he took his life, leaving his wife penniless. Charles, the conservative conformist, secretly transferred his savings into a trust for his mother. He was repaid for this generous

gift by losing Jessica. Mr. Lovell felt justified in withdrawing his grudging consent to the marriage because Charles no longer had a financial backlog.

John Gray often puzzled and shocked his family. He belonged to the Pine Trees, a volunteer fire department. He enjoyed the company of the men at the fire house, and he loved to participate in the annual water-throwing contest. Charles was embarrassed to see his father involved in this event. John also delighted in ostentation. When he went to church for the first time in anyone's memory, he dropped a one-hundred-dollar bill in the collection plate with a gesture which could leave little doubt about his intention.

How may the contrast between Mr. Lovell and John Gray be interpreted? Mr. Lovell's biased, sterile values are obvious. They represent the extreme in a socially stifling environment. John Gray, in contrast, was an extremist in the opposite direction. By refusing to act as a man in his social segment should act, John Gray emphasizes the absurdities of a Mr. Lovell and a town. However, extremes are often dangerous, even when they are refreshing and admirable in intent. The character of John Gray is much less stereotyped than Mr. Lovell, and as a result the reader is forced to consider some of the unfortunate consequences of John Gray's unenlightened nonconformity.

Study Guide: The following questions pertain to the aspect of social analysis in Point of No Return:

1. On whom did Marquand base the character of Malcolm Bryant?
2. What is Charles' attitude toward Bryant?
3. What was Bryant's book about?
4. What is the purpose for the comment about Harvard (page 53)?
5. How did "Yankee Persepolis" define the social strata?
6. How does Marquand introduce Clyde and Charles' past into the novel?
7. Who are the Henry Smith's in Bryant's book?
8. What does Charles mean when he says, "You know about form and custom . . . but I don't believe you know as much about people as I do"?
9. Why was Charles disappointed by Bill's answer, "I want to go to Exeter"?
10. What differences are described between Hawthorne Hill and Oak Knoll Club?
11. Cliff Dunbarton was considered socially acceptable, but what kind of a person was he really?
12. How would you describe the atmosphere of Oak Knoll?
13. What is your opinion of this statement: "We're part of a system where there is always someone waiting to kick you in the teeth"?
14. How does this statement contradict Bryant's theories: "The way to learn about Clyde is to be brought up there"?
15. "Everyone had a place in that plan and everyone instinctively seemed to know where he belonged." In what terms did Bryant describe these places?
16. List the subtle differences in family status brought out by Miss Sarah.
17. What things does Jackie Mason consider necessary for success?
18. What opportunity is Charles given to renew his acquaintance with Jessica?

19. Why was John Gray accepted by the Pine Trees while Charles really was not?
20. What does Jessica mean by spiderwebs?
21. Why did Jessica suggest showing Charles the garden, and how do you interpret Mr. Lovell's, "Well, well"?
22. What basis does Bryant have for saying, "Men are the same everywhere"? What do you think the author's opinion is of this statement?
23. Why does Bryant consider Clyde a "wonderful" town?
24. What does falling in love mean to Bryant?
25. Why were the meetings between Jessica and Charles meant to seem accidental?
26. What does Bryant mean by an "empirical" approach to love?
27. Comment on Charles' statement: "Everyone in Clyde knows he's as good as everyone else."
28. Explain the references to Harvard and Dartmouth (pages 323-324).
29. What point did John Gray make by his contribution in church?
30. How do you account for Bryant's change of mind about Clyde?
31. Why is stock-market money different from inherited money according to Mr. Lovell?
32. Why, in reality, does Mr. Lovell object to Charles as a prospective son-in-law?
33. Has Jackie Mason broken the system or has the system changed?
34. What, in Tony's mind, was wrong with the people in Roger's Point?

Suggested topics for discussion or reports

1. In what ways did Warner's study differ from Marquand's observations of society? Give examples.
2. In what ways did Marquand satirize Warner's study?
3. What part did Malcolm Bryant play in Point of No Return?

4. Discuss in detail why Mr. Lovell objected to Charles as a future son-in-law.
5. Why did Jessica feel that if they had met elsewhere they might have made a go of their relationship?
6. Give two examples which show the difference in social positions between the Grays and the Lovells.
7. Consider the characterization of Jackie Mason and then interpret Marquand's meaning in his engagement to Jessica.
8. In what ways did John Grey and Mr. Lovell differ?
9. What did John Gray mean by the system?
10. How did John Gray try to beat the system?
11. Discuss the consequences of John Gray's behavior on his family.
12. In your opinion, was John Gray justified or not in his lack of concern for the conventions? Defend your opinion.
13. In your opinion, are Marquand's observations about the social system accurate or not? Defend your opinion.
14. In your opinion, what was the author's intent in describing in such detail the social characteristics of a town?

III. Point of No Return: A study in family relationships

The two aspects of the socio-psychological approach to the novel which have been considered (as a business novel and as an analysis of society) are appropriate and appeal to the young reader in a general way. It is, however, with the aspect of family relationship that most adolescents will find the most meaning.

Analysis of adolescent problems is in fashion today. Any adult who has been sufficiently fortunate to forget his own growing-up period can be quickly awakened by countless reports on the subject. Any parent worth his salt knows that young people are fearful about

their attractiveness and potential and that they are certain they are atypical in their emotional and growth patterns. The hardest blow comes, however, with the realization that adolescents often feel that their family is unquestionably the source of all their troubles. It is expected that adults will use their superior store of experience to survive this period, but how can a young person be helped through this most difficult time when his family corresponds in no apparent way to anyone else's family? Literature can be an invaluable aid. The young reader can find a fictional character's answers to some of his worrisome doubts by identifying with his problems and solutions.

The Gray family in Point of No Return provides an opportunity for understanding human relationships. When the novel opens, the reader meets Charles Gray, a New York bank executive, a father, a suburbanite, and comes to know more about him; that he is ambitious, conservative, devoted to his family, and worried about his future. After the first few chapters the reader knows what Charles Gray is like but not why he is as he is. Marquand provides this information in flashbacks to the time of his growing up in Clyde. The motivation of the adult can be understood against the background of his youth.

The Gray family, father, mother, two sons, and daughter, are developed in depth. The reader can find meaning in the delineation of each separate character, or, if he will, in the interaction of character. The most important relationship from the point of view of character development was that between Charles and his father. Listed

below are questions which could bring this relationship into focus and call attention to those factors which might have personal meaning to the student.

Study Guide: The following questions pertain to the aspect of family relationships in Point of No Return.

1. Describe the Gray family.
2. What sort of person is Nancy? Give reasons for your opinion.
3. What are some of the subtle indications of life in suburbia?
4. In what ways were Charles' father and Marquand's father alike?
5. Apart from playing the stock market, what were John Gray's interests?
6. Why was Bryant so fascinated by John Gray?
7. What is the author's purpose for including Charles' mother's speech and the discussion of the Historical Society?
8. In your opinion, why does John Gray make promises he cannot keep?
9. How did Sam and his father get along?
10. What are the reasons for this relationship?
11. What qualities does Charles admire in Mr. Mason?
12. What qualities does Jackie admire in Mr. Gray?
13. What does this statement mean: "Charles began to realize that no human problems are unique"?
14. How does John Gray reconcile the statement that "he did not gamble" with the facts of his investments?
15. Define John Gray's statement: "There's always the bundle of hay out ahead, for any ass who wants to get on, and they make it look like a very pleasant bundle."
16. Who is the "they" referred to in the statement?
17. What is the system according to John Gray?

18. Why does Aunt Jane want to leave her money outright to John?
19. What signs does Charles note which indicate that John has not changed?
20. Why does it embarrass Charles when his father wears his fireman's uniform?
21. What was the cause of John Gray's death?
22. Why does Charles decide to add his bonds to his father's estate?
23. What were the negative forces responsible for Charles' ambition?

Suggested questions for study

1. How did Esther Gray feel about her husband?
2. Why did Sam seem to have little use for his father?
3. What did a promise mean to John Gray?
4. What was John Gray's attitude toward conventional behavior?
How did his attitude affect his family?
5. What is the ironic element in Charles' attitude toward Mr. Mason as a father?
6. Why was Charles disturbed by his father's behavior?
7. In what ways were Charles' early years happy ones?
8. How did Charles feel about living on Spruce Street?
9. In what ways did the Gray family represent a normal family? In what ways an unusual family?
10. How did Charles get along with his father when he was very young?
11. Why did Charles feel his father was selfish?
12. How well did Charles understand his father as he grew up?
13. In your opinion, did Charles change his mind about his father after he became an adult?
14. What influence did John Gray's gambling have on his son's attitude toward money?

15. In your opinion, how much blame did Charles place on his father for his broken engagement?
16. What did Charles value as an adult? What had John Gray considered valuable?
17. If John Gray had been your father, what things would you have liked about him the most? the least?
18. What qualities in John Gray have you recognized in others?
19. In what ways does the relationship between Charles and his father seem realistic?
20. How does Charles as a parent differ from his father?
21. In your opinion, how do Charles' children feel about him?

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

The writer must make clear at the outset that this Sourcebook has not been put into classroom practice. It is not an experimental thesis, and actual evidences of its effectiveness as a tool for growth of appreciation are not yet available. However, the writer has drawn the following subjective conclusions concerning this method of study:

I. The use of the suggested approaches as a method for the study of the novel

A. The six approaches suggested by Hook¹ are sufficiently varied for use with any novel likely to be considered in the high-school reading program. In her research, the writer encountered no reference nor critical analysis which could not be part of at least one of the approaches.

B. The six approaches are not equally valuable.

1. The analytical approach considers the basic elements of the novel: theme, plot, character, setting, style. Attention must be given to these factors in the reading of all novels. Varied emphasis will come within the approach. For example, theme is revealed in The Ship of Fools² by means of character analysis. The plot is incidental.

¹Hook, op. cit.

²Porter, op. cit.

2. The socio-psychological approach to a novel having any degree of truthful character development has particular value for the young student. Observing human behavior in literature, he will perhaps come to understand himself and his society more fully.
 3. The didactic approach is not suitable for all novels, nor would the teacher wish to overemphasize it in any case. It is a worthwhile approach for such authors as Fitzgerald, a moralist at heart, who often concealed his values beneath a patina of trivialities.
 4. The historical approach is almost as essential to an understanding of the novel as the analytical. Even if the novel should deal with universal ideas, not subject to time and place, the author is a product of his era. In any serious study, the author must be considered as well as his novel.
 5. The least attractive is the paraphrastic approach. It should be used sparingly to help clarify difficult passages or ideas. A "remedial" approach, it is not conducive to reading enjoyment if used habitually.
 6. In the sense that enthusiasm is engendered, the emotive approach does heighten appreciation. Sustaining an emotional approach on a constant basis, however, is neither possible more desirable.
- C. It is possible to view the novel from a single approach (analytical, historical, socio-psychological), but a vastly superior

method emerges when a combination of approaches is used. In fact, the ideal would involve the use of all the approaches, allowing the reader to view the novel much as bifocals allow the viewer to look up and down and straight across.

- D. The approaches provide for individual differences. For example, the analytical approach might be used in the following way:
1. Students of high ability might concentrate on theme in a particular novel, the author's theme in general, and its similarity to other themes met in their reading.
 2. Students of average ability might find those elements in the novel which reveal theme.
 3. Students of low ability might read for credibility of plot and characterization. Theme might be considered only on its most obvious levels.

Using a combination of approaches, the emphasis might differ for each level of ability. For example, in a combination of the historical and analytical approaches, students of lower ability might find more meaning in a close study of the actual events which prompted the action in the novel. On the other hand, the interest of higher ability students might not be sustained on this emphasis, and they would move on more quickly to literary analysis.

II. Conclusions reached from application of the approaches to The Great Gatsby, The Old Man and the Sea, and Point of No Return

"The writer has only one legitimate concern, the conflicts of the human heart; if he writes of social conflicts, it is

only to show the solitary struggle in another way."¹

- A. In the analysis of the approaches in Chapter II, the writer attempted to evaluate their potential for revealing in the novel man's solitary struggle in a crowded world.
- B. The purpose of the Sourcebook, Chapter III, was to test the validity of those assumptions made in Chapter II. The writer's personal conclusions are that the approaches, although singularly different in scope and emphasis, provide methods through which the student can find meaning and lead to the perception of the "conflicts of the human heart"; that the application of the socio-psychological, analytical, and historical approaches uncovered the essence of Jay Gatsby, substantial only in his illusions; of Santiago, a symbol of the dignity and strength of man; and of Charles Gray, the man in the grey flannel suit.

¹William Faulkner, "Education," Newsweek Magazine, April 30, 1962, p. 58.

APPENDIX

STUDY GUIDE

PART ONE

Chapter I

1. Describe the Gray family.
2. How does Marquand move back and forth between past and present?
3. What sort of a person is Nancy? Give reasons for your opinion.
4. Note the mention of Burton and Blakesley. What is their relationship to Charles? How are they important to his future?
5. What are some of the subtle indications of life in suburbia?

Chapter II

6. Why was it important to Charles that Mr. Burton told him to call him "Tony"?
7. Why was it upsetting that Roger was also given that privilege?
8. What do you learn about the relationship between Charles and Roger on pages 22-23?
9. What positions did Charles and Roger hold in the bank?
10. What purpose does the description of the Stuyvesant Bank serve?
11. What importance does Arthur Slade's death have for Charles and Roger?

Chapter III

12. On whom did Marquand base the character of Malcolm Bryant?
13. What is Charles' attitude toward Bryant?
14. What was Bryant's book about?
15. Why is Charles asked to look into Mr. Eaton's loan?
16. Why is Charles reluctant to do so?
17. What trap does Charles set for Roger on page 52?

Chapter IV

18. What is the purpose for the comment (page 53) on Harvard and Yale?
19. How is the social strata of "Yankee Persepolis" defined?
20. How does Marquand introduce Clyde and Charles' past into the novel?
21. Who are the Henry Smiths in Bryant's book?
22. What does Charles mean when he says, "You know about form and custom . . . , but I don't believe you know as much about people as I do"?

Chapter V

23. What social and personality characteristics separated Mr. Bert J. Selig from the usual Stuyvesant client?
24. Why had it already been decided that Selig would not get the loan?

25. What did Selig mean by fronting for the crowd?
26. Why did Selig offer Charles a job?
27. In what way do people in the bank conform to the image of Tony?
28. How did Roger manage to get Charles away from the scene?

Chapter VI

29. What are the essential differences between the Whitakers described in this chapter and the family founder, Mrs. Whitaker's father?
30. What qualities do the Whitakers have which make them valued clients in the bank?

Chapter VII

31. What ways can you interpret the hide and seek discussion on page 101?
32. Why was Charles disappointed by Bill's answer, "I want to go to Exeter"?
33. What differences are described between Hawthorne Hill and Oak Knoll Club?
34. Cliff Dunbarton was considered very socially acceptable, but what kind of a person was he in reality?
35. How would you describe the atmosphere of Oak Knoll?

Chapter VIII

36. How does Molly Blakesley make Charles nervous?
37. What did Charles do to break up the comforting sense of conformity in the bar?

Chapter IX

38. How does the matter of fear come up?
39. Why is it pertinent?
40. Why does Charles tell someone to "go to hell"?
41. What is your opinion of this statement: "We're part of a system where there is always someone waiting to kick you in the teeth"?
42. In what ways were Charles' father and Marquand's father alike?
43. Apart from playing the stock market, what were John Gray's interests?
44. Why was Bryant so fascinated by John Gray?

PART TWO

Chapter I

45. What changes in setting take place in this chapter?
46. What is the author's purpose for including Charles' mother's speech and the discussion of the Historical Society?
47. What is your opinion of Mr. Lovell as seen in this chapter?

Chapter II

48. How does this statement contradict Bryant's theories? "The way to learn about Clyde is to be brought up there"?
49. "Everyone had a place in that plan and everyone instinctively seemed to know where he belonged." In what term did Bryant describe these places?
50. How did Stanley money differ from Lovell money?
51. List the subtle differences in family status brought out by Miss Sarah.

Chapter III

52. In your opinion, why does John Gray make promises he cannot keep?
53. How do Sam and his father get along?
54. What are the reasons for this relationship?

Chapter IV

55. What qualities does Charles admire in Mr. Mason?
56. What irony is contained in Jackie's attitude toward Charles' father?
57. What things does Jackie consider necessary for success?

Chapter V

58. What does this statement mean: "Charles began to realize that no human problems are unique"?
59. How does John Gray reconcile the statement that "he did not gamble" with the facts of his investments?
60. Define John Gray's statement: "There's always the bundle of hay out ahead, for any ass who wants to get on, and they make it look like a very pleasant bundle."
61. Who is the they referred to in the above statement?
62. What is the system, according to John Gray?

Chapter VI

63. Why does Aunt Jane want to leave her money outright to John?
64. What signs does Charles note which indicate that John has not changed?

Chapter VII

65. What opportunity is Charles given to renew his acquaintance with Jessica?
66. Why does the fireman's uniform embarrass Charles?
67. Why was John accepted by the Pine Trees while Charles was really not?
68. Why is Charles hesitant about what to call Jessica?
69. Why did Charles agree to wrestle Hugie Willis?

Chapter VIII

70. What does Jessica mean by spiderwebs?
71. Why did Jessica suggest showing Charles the garden, and how do you interpret Mr. Lovell's "Well, well"? (page 253)

Chapter IX

72. What basis does Bryant have for saying, "Men are the same everywhere"? What do you think the author's opinion is of this statement?
73. In your opinion, what is Mr. Lovell's feeling about Charles at this point in the novel?
74. Why does Bryant consider Clyde a "wonderful" town?

Chapter X

75. What does falling in love mean to Bryant? Comment.

Chapter XI

76. Why were the meetings between Jessica and Charles meant to seem accidental?

Chapter XII

77. "Not even in those days, he realized, did he wish to change the rules, although he could see their unfairness." How has this idea been retained in Charles' adult years?
78. What does Bryant mean by an "empirical" approach to love?
79. Why does Jessica feel that Clyde was the wrong place for them to have met?
80. Comment on Charles' statement on page 307: "Everyone in Clyde knows he's as good as everyone else."

Chapter XIII

81. Why did Charles leave Wright-Sherwin?
82. How does Charles' idea of getting ahead differ from Mr. Howell's?

Chapter XIV

83. Explain the references to Harvard and Dartmouth on pages 323-324.
84. Consider Mr. Lovell's attitude toward his daughter based on this statement: "Jessica's the only girl I have and I don't want her catching cold."
85. What is Jessica's reaction to this statement?
86. In what ways has Mr. Lovell shown Charles that he does not belong?

Chapter XV

87. What interpretation might Charles make of the conversation overheard between Mr. Rush and Mr. Garvin?

Chapter XVI

88. Why is the way his sister left her money so important to John?
89. What will he do with the money?

Chapter XVII

90. How does Charles differ from the other young men in Rush and Co.?
91. What point did John make by his contribution in church?

Chapter XVIII

92. What changes in circumstances were there while the Lovells were away?
93. Why did the future seem so uncertain to Charles and Jessica?

Chapter XIX

94. How do you account for Bryant's change of mind about Clyde?

Chapter XX

95. Why did the \$50,000 made on the stock market mean so much to Charles?
96. Why is stock market money different from inherited money, according to Mr. Lovell?
97. Why, in reality, does Mr. Lovell object to Charles?

Chapter XXI

98. What does "imbroglia" mean? Why is it an unfair word for Mr. Lovell to use?

Chapter XXII

99. What elements are used at the start of this chapter to build suspense?
100. What was the cause of John Gray's death?
101. Why does Charles decide to add his bonds to his father's estate?

Chapter XXIII

102. What does Nancy mean by "He wants to see how you use your knife and fork and whether you're housebroken"?
103. How and why did Mr. Lovell break the engagement?
104. What were the negative forces responsible for Charles' ambition?

Chapter XXIV

105. What is the purpose of the flashback in this chapter?

PART THREE

Chapter I

106. What brings Charles back to Clyde?
107. Why does Charles revisit the Historical Society?

Chapter II

108. What irony is there in the conversation between Charles and the Inn clerk?
109. What do you guess will be the important news Jackie's mother speaks about?

Chapter III

110. How does this statement apply to Charles: "Well, I suppose everybody's pursuing happiness and you usually lose your liberty when you do, and the best part of your life"?
111. What does Charles mean when he says Jackie has everything?
112. Has Jackie broken the system or has the system broken? Explain.

Chapter IV

113. In your opinion, why does Charles insist on wearing a soft shirt?
114. What are Charles' feelings about the promotion at this point?

Chapter V

115. What, in Mr. Burton's mind, was wrong with the new people in Roger's Point?
116. What explanation can be given for Charles' feeling of relief as he walks into the library with Tony?
117. What is Tony's estimate of Blakesley?
118. What is Charles' reaction to the news that he will be the new vice-president?
119. Where, in your opinion, was the point of no return for Charles?

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Thesis Abstract

Lois F. Beckwith, The Novel in High School: A Sourcebook, Unpublished A.M. Thesis, Boston University Graduate School, 1962.

Problem. The problem is to organize a pattern of instruction for the study of the novel. A heightened subjective response to the novel is a personal experience, but it can spring only from an objective understanding of the novel's form and content.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

I. This study includes:

- A. Consideration of the goals of education with particular emphasis on the integrated relationships between specific goals and broad goals.
- B. Examination of the novel as a literary form from the aspects of definition, criteria, and aesthetic appreciation.
- C. Analysis of the six approaches to the novel suggested by J. N. Hook.¹
- D. Application of the approaches to the following novels:
 1. The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald
 2. The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway
 3. Point of No Return by John P. Marquand

¹J. N. Hook, The Teaching of High School English (New York: The Ronald Press, 1959).

II. The study is limited to:

- A. Study of the novel.
- B. Six approaches suggested by J. N. Hook.¹
- C. Three novels written by American authors during the past forty years and arbitrarily selected by the writer from the point of view of appeal of theme, appropriateness to age and experience, and realistic character development.
- D. Specific application of four approaches to the three novels in the Sourcebook: historical, socio-psychological, didactic, and analytical.
- E. Subjective conclusions reached by the writer.

Procedure. The procedure in this study is threefold:

1. The continuity of purpose existing in the relationship of goals, from the broad goals of education to the specific goals of teaching the novel, is examined. To develop the inherent resources and creative potential of students defines the broad goal. Building upon the heritage of tradition, education seeks to challenge students to build a better world.

Within the broad goals are the goals of the language arts. Speaking, listening, reading, writing are the tools of communication which fuse the wisdom of the past to the needs of the future. Teaching the novel fits within the goals of the language arts and contributes to the creative meaning of the goals

¹Ibid.

of education. By drawing upon and interpreting the experience of mankind, the novel in turn offers the students an opportunity to create their own vision of life.

2. One possible method of teaching the novel is analyzed. In order to fulfill the goals of education, the experiences described in literature must strike a meaningful response in the reader. Such a response is creative in the sense that the reader, recognizing the truth of the literary experience, introduces it into his then changing and expanding personal experience. This subjective reaction can come only when the reader consciously and objectively understands the elements in literature, such as character, environment, intent of the author, historical influences, which contribute to the literary experience. The six approaches analyzed in this study (historical, analytical, didactic, socio-psychological, emotive, and paraphrastic) illuminate the many facets or the single strand found in a novel by means of distinct, objective methods capable of clear articulation. The interaction of the experience in the novel with the experience and personality of the reader may then take place.
3. This method is tested on a non-experimental basis by applying the approaches to three specific novels: the historical and didactic to The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald; the analytical (theme and style) to The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway; the socio-psychological to Point of No Return by John P. Marquand.

Major findings and conclusions. This is not an experimental thesis, and consequently the writer's findings and conclusions are subjective.

I. Major Findings

- A. The six approaches suggested by J. N. Hook are sufficiently varied for use with any novel likely to be considered in the high-school reading program.
- B. The six approaches are not equally valuable.
- C. It is possible to view the novel from a single approach, but a combination of approaches provides a superior method.
- D. The approaches provide for individual differences.

II. Conclusions

- A. The six approaches to the novel do provide a method for objectively viewing the novel.
- B. The six approaches to the novel lead to the perception and understanding of the conflicts of human experience.

Suggestions for further study:

- 1. An analysis in depth of one novel in which the six approaches are applied.
- 2. A Sourcebook of novels similar in intent in which one fully developed approach is applied.
- 3. The application of approaches to drama or biography.
- 4. An analysis of the short story and an appropriate revision of the approaches as a method of teaching the short story.