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The construction and evaluation of a test of the appreciation of poetry for use in senior high school

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Holmes, R. W.
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BOSTON UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Thesis

THE CONSTRUCTION AND EVALUATION OF A TEST
OF THE APPRECIATION OF POETRY
FOR USE IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Submitted by

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(B.S. in Biology, Bowdoin College, 1942)

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
the Degree of Master in Education

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CHAPTER I
THE PROBLEM

Selection of the Problem

Purpose of the Study. - - The purpose of this study was originally to construct and evaluate the effectiveness of a test for measuring sensitivity to certain poetic values. However, the writer's attention has been concentrated largely upon devising suitable test items; and while some effort has been directed toward validation, further study in this direction is indicated. The test is intended for use in a typical senior high school.

Source of the Problem. - - While there are some tests of poetry appreciation available, none has been entirely satisfactory. Reviews of these tests reveal widespread agreement that the definitive instrument has not yet been devised. This acknowledged lack together with a strong conviction of the need for effective teaching of poetry have provided the goal and the stimulus for this study.

Justification for the Study. - - Despite widespread disagreement on the exact role of the American secondary school today, the stated philosophies of many faculties include these concepts: (1) Each pupil is an individual, the unique character of whose traits poses a specific challenge to the teacher; (2) A pupil's success in school

is a positive reflection of his growth in dealing with all aspects of his school activities in whatever ways are most effective and suitable for him. Today's teacher is concerned with where he is, where he is going, and how close he comes to arriving at his destination. Teachers are usually expected to state specific objectives in the courses they teach. To achieve these objectives they must first discover where they stand with a particular group of pupils in relation to the objectives. Once the status quo is discovered, teachers can suit their procedures to the needs and abilities of the individuals who comprise the group. Later the effectiveness of the teaching efforts can be evaluated by finding out how nearly the objectives have been reached by each pupil.

Such a process of accurate measurement has been slow to replace those methods of arriving at a status quo by a subjective, almost an intuitive, judgment. Of the many reasons for this lag one most pertinent to this study is the need for suitable instruments for measuring pupil growth. A vast amount of materials is now available in almost every area in education that lends itself readily to objective measurement. Certain educative processes, however, result in growth that is not easily appraised by objective methods. Some authorities maintain that the modern emphasis on the importance of objective testing has lead teachers and students to the overemphasis of educational outcomes most easily evaluated, with the result that

some of the very important ones, such as growth of attitudes and appreciation, have received a hit-or-miss treatment.

The situation might be simplified thus: How can you be objective about something that is almost essentially subjective? A number of tests and scales purport to be, some with considerable success. Various scales for judging excellence of composition, for example, the Hudelson Composition Scale,^{1/} have enabled teachers to achieve somewhat greater uniformity in evaluating student themes. They have also helped teachers to compare their standards of excellence with widely credited criteria. Still there is no true objectivity here, since the teacher must decide for himself whether a composition is superior or inferior to a standard specimen.

This weakness is fairly typical of the problems confronting the teacher who tries to evaluate subjective expression, whether in the field of literature or the other arts. This study has stemmed in part from a realization of the need for an instrument for measuring a student's awareness of the aesthetic, cultural, and social values inherent in superior poetry.

^{1/} Earl Hudelson, Hudelson's Typical Composition Ability Scale, The Public School Publishing Co., Bloomington, Illinois, 1923.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RESEARCH

A Survey of Some Available Tests and Related Materials Pertinent to the Problem

A Test of Poetry by Zukofsky.^{1/} -- The author presents the reader poems grouped for comparison and allows him to make a judgment of their relative merits. There are twenty-five main groups, for each of which the author suggests a "consideration" for criticism. (viz. translation, speech, definition, sight, measure, sound, worldliness, meaning, inevitability, intellection, conviction, grace, discourse, perception, energy, duration, impact, movement, recurrence, opulence, anonymity) Each group is divided into three parts, each having two or more poems. In Parts I and III the reader is asked to decide upon the relative merits without reference to the sources. In Part II the author gives sources and a brief criticism of each selection. He makes it clear that each criticism probes only one consideration, and the reader is invited to investigate any other considerations of human existence that the poetry suggests to him.

The material is chosen from a wide variety of good and great poetry -- Ovid, Virgil, Shakespeare, Whitman, Chaucer, William C. Williams,

^{1/} Louis Zukofsky, A Test of Poetry, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1952.

Keats, Blake, Browning, Burns, Lord Rochester, Crabbe, Jonson, Donne, Herrick, Swinburne, and many more. The passages are in no instances excerpted to the extent that they convey only fragmentary effects, although many are selectively cut to include only as much as is essential to the author's particular consideration.

Zukofsky states:

The test of poetry is the range of pleasure it affords as sight, sound, and intellection. This is its purpose as art.

To suggest standards is the purpose of this book.

...a means for judging the values of poetic writing is established by the examples themselves.

To "take" the Zukofsky test is not unlike writing and then grading one's own essay-type examination paper. While judgment of the merit of a selection is implied in Zukofsky's criticisms, the reader must arrive at his own value judgments quite subjectively. Also, the author's implied judgments are admittedly confined to a single "consideration" within any one group. It appears then that when one compares the merit of two poems, he is most likely analyzing only one dominant characteristic that strikes him as being intrinsically fine and appropriate in one of the poems. His scrutiny of its companion piece for this same characteristic may reveal it as being defective or completely lacking. Assuming the dominant characteristic to be a component of superior poetry, the reader, then, will be impressed with the superior merit of the selection most abundantly endowed with it.

If, however, this same superior poem were to be compared similarly with yet another selection possessing an entirely different dominant characteristic, it might well be judged inferior. Each reader will bring to his poetic judgment a very personal set of criteria. And so it is natural that two readers may disagree upon the dominant characteristics of any single poem. While taste in poetry is not the same thing as appreciation, it is certainly a part of it and cannot be ignored.

The Rigg Poetry Judgment Test.^{1/} - - This is a test of poetic discrimination (referred to also as "taste" and "judgment"). It consists of forty pairs of poetic selections. Each pair contains a passage of established reputation and a parody.^{2/} (Unlike the Abbott-Trabue test, which uses three parodies of each of thirteen selections.) The selections range in length from two to six lines, averaging about four. One is asked to indicate whether he considers the right or the left selection in each pair to be "the better poetry".

The following comments are taken from the Buros Third Mental Measurements Yearbook:^{3/}

"...it is whole poems that students should learn to judge.
We are still waiting...for a test of their skill in doing so."
John S. Diekhoff

^{1/} Melvin G. Rigg, The Rigg Poetry Judgment Test, Bureau of Educational Research and Service, Extension Division, University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1942.

^{2/} Abbott-Trabue, Exercises in Judging Poetry, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1921.

^{3/} Oscar K. Buros, The Third Mental Measurements Yearbook, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1949.

"The Rigg test has not improved upon the Abbott-Trabue Exercises, its acknowledged source....It is not designed to get at the central problem of a good interpretation of poetry...."

Louis C. Zahner

In fairness to the test it should be noted that it can be very easily administered. However, this advantage, inherent in alternate response items of this type, is more than offset by the serious failure to provide a chance to display degrees of discrimination.

Many of the selections lack adequate context. It is questionable whether they are truly poetry or merely poetic.

The norms appear to be based on rather small samplings.

Some of the samples "ring a bell". Some may even be well known to a student taking the test. Hence the test can become partly a memory test for anyone who is fairly well versed in poetry.

Prose Appreciation Test.^{1/} - - This test consists of twelve items, each involving four prose paragraphs. The pupil is asked to rate in order of literary merit the four selections in each of the items, which is devoted to one subject or theme. Validity is based upon superiority as determined by (a) source and (b) expert opinion. The most superior is usually from a recognized classic; the second ranking, from a second-rate novel; the third from a "pulp" source; and the fourth has been deliberately poorly written.

^{1/} Herbert A. Carroll, Prose Appreciation Test, Senior High School, Educational Test Bureau, Inc., Minneapolis, 1935.

In his review in the Buros Third Mental Measurement Yearbook^{1/} Chester W. Harris observes that the manual for the test does what is expected, viz.,

1. gives an explicit definition of what the test is expected to measure- --"power to differentiate the good from the less good, and the less good from the very bad." Harris calls this a "crucial index of the ability to appreciate prose."
2. describes how the test was constructed.
3. provides relevant data that enable one to make judgments of the test as a measuring instrument.

Harris criticizes, however, the shortness of the selections and goes on to suggest the need:

...in addition to technically better measures of this type -- is a technique for describing the principles and criteria that students use in making such judgments.

It seems to this writer that the deliberately inferior selections achieve their baseness less through cultural poverty than through illiterate, ungrammatical constructions, tending to make them less effective than they might be as distractors in a test of appreciation.

Cooperative Literary Comprehension and Appreciation Test.^{2/} - -

This test consists of fifteen short literary selections, about half prose and half poetry. The items are of the multiple choice type, each having five responses to choose from.

^{1/} Oscar K. Buros, op. cit., p. 241.

^{2/} Hyman Eigerman, Mary Willis, Frederick B. Davis, Cooperative Literary Comprehension and Appreciation Test, Provisional Form R, Cooperative Test Division, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey, 1950.

The following excerpt from a review of the test by Holland Roberts, Educational Director, California Labor School Incorporated, San Francisco, California (from Buros Third Mental Measurement Yearbook^{1/}) points to the major weaknesses:

These tests ... have not grappled with the underlying problems of appreciation.

As a whole this test illustrates both the great difficulty of measurement of appreciation and understanding on the higher cultural levels and the inability of test makers to conceive of measurement as an integral part of the entire process of learning and teaching. Such tests are based upon a miscellany of scraps of material, some of it with no pretension to literary quality. They attempt to test literary understanding and appreciation without providing the student with a literary experience of intensity or significance, or integrating literature with life. There is no over-all conception or unity and no opportunity for the development of emotion or insight into the profound human relationships portrayed by a Shakespeare or a Tolstoy. Instead of helping the student grow into an author's mood, the test is limited to quickness of perception, to surface aptness rather than broad grasp and depth of penetration. The conception held by Dickens and Hugo, and by Gorky and Rolland, of literature as a great force for man's betterment is almost entirely lacking.

English: Understanding and Appreciation of Poetry: State High School Tests for Indiana^{2/} - - The following remarks are taken from the Buros Third Mental Measurement Yearbook^{3/}. The review is by Chester W. Harris. "...attempts to measure...comprehending the mood...and the main thought of selections written in verse. (A limited concept of appreciation.)"

^{1/} Oscar K. Buros, op. cit., p. 242.

^{2/} G. S. Wykoff, English: Understanding and Appreciation of Poetry: State High School Tests for Indiana, Grades 9 - 12, Forms A & B, Division of Educational Reference, Purdue University, 1933-1944.

^{3/} Oscar K. Buros, op. cit., pp. 242, 243.

He questions that any "one term can adequately describe the mood of some of the selections..." The reviewer suggests: "...build the objective form from responses actually made by students in a free response situation." Implications for further study: "Measurement of a broader range of abilities than this test provides is needed, and the specific techniques need to be experimented with, criticized, and improved." One merit of the test: "...points away from the reliance on a measure of information about literature as the test of English achievement..."

Elements of English Related to the Judgment of Poetry in Grade
Eleven. ^{1/} - - ^{2/} Schachtman states that studies have "proved the thesis that the literature given to high-school pupils is too difficult for them...appreciation cannot take place without comprehension." He ^{3/} adds:

Many educators and teachers of English are opposed to testing appreciation of any kind of art, saying that it is a subjective matter and once the examination atmosphere is injected into it, answers are given to please the examiner.

He poses one objection - - a pupil's reply to a question on a piece of paper is an inadequate measure of his understanding and enjoyment.

^{1/} Joseph Schachtman, Elements of English Related to the Judgment of Poetry in Grade Eleven, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City, 1929.

^{2/} Ibid., p. 3.

^{3/} Ibid., pp. 3-4

And he quotes one answer by McCall:^{1/}

...there is never a quantity which does not measure some quality, and never an existing quality that is non-quantitative...It is possible to measure, at least crudely, an individual's love of a sunset or appreciation of opera... The measure of initiative, judgment of relative values, leadership, appreciation of good literature, and the like is entirely possible.

In his "Summary of Findings" Schachtman^{2/} states that there seems to be "...a low but positive relationship between a knowledge of grammar or good usage and the ability to judge poetry." He finds a fairly high correlation between comprehension of literary passages and ability to judge poetry, and concludes that mental ability correlates more highly with ability to judge poetry than do any of the elements of English tested.

Some Definitions of Poetry

There are so many excellent statements of the nature and function of poetry that an attempt to gather them all would be overwhelming. And just as certain poetry has its admirers and its critics, so will any single explanation of what poetry is offend some intelligent people. There are, however, qualities which seem to exist in most of the poetry that has stood the test of the ages. It is these qualities with which the study is concerned, for they constitute a common ground, relatively free of the controversies of literary experts.

^{1/} William A. McCall, How to Measure in Education, MacMillan, 1922.

^{2/} Joseph Schachtman, op. cit., p. 47.

Because poetry is almost as old as man's intelligence, its role in ancient culture is worth considering. Aristotle^{1/} saw poetry as the natural product of man's instincts for imitation and rhythm. He believed that the finest poets "imitated noble actions, and the actions of great men." He explained further: "Poetry...is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular. (IX, 3)" and "...the poet should be the maker of plots rather than of verses...(IX, 9)"

The Greek idea of art can be expressed as psychagogia, the developing and leading out of the soul. Horace^{2/} was later to minimize this function of poetry (a more typically Roman attitude) and stress the importance of the means whereby the poet sought to achieve his ideal. He spoke of the need for simplicity and unity, of giving novelty to a familiar word by using a skillful setting, and of beauty that affects and leads the hearer's heart. He went on to state: "...the ideal of poetic style is to mould familiar material with such skill that anyone might hope to achieve the same feat," and "The aim of the poet is to inform and delight, or to combine together, in what he says, both pleasure and applicability to life."

^{1/} Walter J. Bate, Criticism: The Major Texts, reporting Aristotle, Poetics IV, 2 and 6, translated by S. H. Butcher, Harcourt, Brace and Co., Inc., New York, 1952.

^{2/} Ibid., reporting Horace, Art of Poetry, translated by Walter J. Bate.

Longinus,^{1/} speaking of sublimity in poetry, stated: "...our soul ...takes a proud flight, and is filled with joy and vaunting, as though it had itself produced what it has heard." He explained the sublime as that which pleases "all and always". This elevated language is achieved by use of great conceptions, inspired passion, appropriate figures, noble diction and dignified and elevated composition.^{2/} He pointed out the power of the image - - any idea, "in whatever form it presents itself, and which gives birth to speech."

In the sixteenth century the critical writings of Sir Philip Sidney provide restatement of classical values that form part of the bridge to modern poetic values. The first great English poet-critic, Sidney reaffirmed and modified the thinking of both Aristotle and Plato in his Apology for Poetry. Called "the greatest of all Renaissance critical writing,"^{3/} the Apology synthesized the Renaissance restatement of classical values in literature. Sidney points to poetry's traditional function as educator and mental food for primitive peoples. He believed that good poetry is able to present man's experience with vivid, persuasive reality. These functions, he felt, culminate in a moral value whereby poetry forms and enlarges man's mind and character.

^{1/} Ibid., reporting Longinus, On the Sublime, (VII, 2), various translations.

^{2/} Ibid., On the Sublime, (VIII, 1)

^{3/} Ibid., Walter J. Bate, p. 77.

It is worth noting that rhyme evoked varied opinions during this era. Daniel, about 1602, defended it as adding grace and delight to our "slow language."^{1/} He made the interesting observation that rhyme made a deep impression on the memory, and being difficult to devise, bred "greater and worthier effects in our language." In the preface to Paradise Lost Milton took an opposite stand. He called rhyme "the Invention of a barbarous Age, to set off wretched matter and lame meeter..."^{2/}

It is unfortunate that the average American reader today still thinks of rhyme as an almost necessary adjunct of poetry. Rhyme has an ancient lineage and illustrious champions. Dryden brought together the strict neoclassic ideals with the rich English literary tradition and allowed some departure from rhyme where the matter warranted it.^{3/} Rhyme came of age, however, with the romantic poets, with a richness and variety that carried on into American poetry. Whitman was one of the first American poets to seek a new, freer mode, and today rhyme seems to have assumed a position among poets of serving whatever purpose the individual poet deems fitting.

The Appreciation of Poetry

The Nature of Appreciation. - - To appreciate one must be sensitive to meaningful relationships which exist among his patterns

1/ Ibid., Samuel Daniel, A Defense of Rhyme.

2/ Ibid., John Milton, Preface to Paradise Lost.

3/ Ibid., John Dryden, An Essay of Dramatic Poesy.

of experience. To evaluate such sensitivity as it applies to poetic experience, reaction to various poetic situations must be measured. The situations should be chosen so that no knowledge of the terms ordinarily employed to describe traditional classical literature is needed. Since a child of three is potentially as sensitive to meaningful relationships as are older people, it is theoretically possible to evaluate his sensitivity. However, the mechanical limitations in his ability to communicate (together with his immaturity in general and his lack of broad experience) restrict such an evaluation. So for practical purposes no such evaluation seems to be feasible with children whose working vocabulary prohibits their expression of the more highly abstract facets of perception that are peculiar to civilized man. At the earlier levels of maturity a simple indication of liking is probably adequate to express appreciation.

As the child matures, both in his personal-social growth and in communicative ability, he becomes more capable of describing the bases for his value judgments. "I just like it," becomes, "I like it because ...". There is, of course, no set age at which such ability suddenly becomes manifest. This writer feels, however, that by the time a pupil reaches senior high school, he should be able to analyze many of the whats and whys of poetry appreciation.

Just as poetry is no absolute, neither is the appreciation of poetry. The writer feels that the best anyone can do in his attempt to define poetry appreciation is to gather, sift, weigh, and organize

those elements ascribed to it by poets and their reader-critics. And since to appreciate means in part ^{1/} "to set a just value on; to esteem to the full worth of," it is obvious that the sorting process itself requires appreciative powers, and thus precludes any true objectivity. Appreciate, according to Webster, ^{2/} also means "to be sensitive to the aesthetic values of," and it is with these values that this writer is primarily concerned.

Appreciation as Recognition of Merit. - - Perhaps the broadest concept of appreciation can be expressed as recognition of merit. This concept is inherent in the approaches found in the earlier measurements of poetry appreciation, such as The Abbott-Trabue Exercises ^{3/} and The Rigg Poetry Judgment Test ^{4/} (not, of course, purported to be a test of complete poetry appreciation), as well as in Carroll's Prose Appreciation Test. ^{5/} These instruments all require a discrimination between or among two or more selections illustrative of supposedly significant degrees of literary merit. The approach, despite some of the shortcomings cited in reviews of the instruments mentioned, certainly seems to have validity. Abbott ^{6/} concludes his study of

^{1/} Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth Edition, G. & C. Merriam Co., Springfield, Mass., 1943, p. 52.

^{2/} Ibid., p. 52.

^{3/} Allan Abbott and M. R. Trabue, "A Measure of Ability to Judge Poetry," Teachers College Record, XXII (March, 1921), pp. 101-126.

^{4/} Op. cit.

^{5/} Op. cit.

^{6/} Allan Abbott, "The Imaginative Element in Poetry," Teachers College Record 28: 105-117, October, 1926.

imaginative elements in poetry with an observation of the poet's ability to mean more than he says. Therefore, the Abbott instrument does not attempt to investigate components of poetry, but rather discrimination among varying degrees of merit of the Gestalt. Both he and Rigg have been criticized soundly for their failure to provide entire poems for evaluation, a shortcoming dictated most likely by mechanical considerations in the construction of objective instruments.

Another advocate of recognition of merit as a determinant of poetry appreciation is Speer,^{1/} who observed as follows:

One may recognize merit in a poem, a bit of prose, a landscape, or a symphony without appreciating it in an emotional sense; but proper appreciation of a poem, a bit of prose, a landscape, or a symphony is based upon one's recognition of merit in it. If, then, we measure an individual's recognition of merit, we have measured an index which is basic and essential to appreciation.

Speer developed from this concept a test of "Recognition of Merit - An Index of Appreciation", intended primarily for the elementary grades, and following a plan almost identical to that pioneered by Abbott and Trabue (thus sharing much the same inherent weaknesses).

What to this writer is a more realistic analysis of the role of recognition of merit in poetry appreciation is expressed by Zukofsky.^{2/} He works entirely with poetry of widely acclaimed superiority. The success, or merit, of any one selection is weighed in terms of a

1/ Robert K. Speer, Measurement of Appreciation in Poetry, Prose, and Art and Skills in Appreciation, Teachers College, Columbia University, Contributions to Education, No. 362, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City, 1929.

2/ Op. cit.

specific "consideration". Such an approach might be adapted to objective testing, but it would require a very meticulous definition of each "consideration" and might become too cumbersome, both in sheer length and in semantic involvement, to be practicable in an instrument intended for the slower, less discerning reader in high school.

Despite much evidence of faith in the "recognition of merit" approach, this writer feels that at least some of the factors widely accepted as valid in the critical analysis of poetry can and must be dealt with in a true test of poetry appreciation. While these factors may not be exhaustive, and in some instances may seem to overlap, they do seem to provide the bases for whatever workable approaches to objective measurement the field of poetry appreciation offers.

Some major components of the appreciation of poetry. - - The theme of a poem is the idea or substance upon which it is founded. If the poet were asked, "What is the poem about?" he might answer by stating the theme. The theme might also be thought of as the threshold to meaning.

The situation of a poem is dictated by the theme as well as by other considerations. It is comparable to the prologue of a drama. Situation together with theme are perhaps analogous to the vehicle used by an artist as an indispensable medium for carrying the essential elements of color and texture. A situation might be concrete or abstract, specific or general, dramatic or undramatic.

The meaning of a poem is its significance. The poet, of course, had a meaning in mind, and his poem may evoke in the reader a similar meaning-response, or others that may not have been part of the poet's own thoughts. Incorporated in meaning is feeling. The reader may be moved to recall some personal experience. He may be able to identify himself with the situation and thus react in a way significant to him. He may be inspired, receiving stimulation to respond to entirely new concepts or newly oriented concepts.

The meaning of a poem, then, is perhaps the chief source of its satisfaction for the reader. If it evokes satisfaction the reader finds the poem successful, and is in an excellent position to appreciate it to a high degree.

Much fine poetry offers meaning at several levels. Children can read some poems at the literal or narrative level, only to discover one or more additional strata of signification with subsequent readings, usually with the help of greater maturity and experience.

A poet's attitude may be likened to a painter's perspective. It depends upon how he looks at a theme. His attitude may be broad or narrow, objective or subjective. His viewpoint may be that of almost anyone or anything. Some of the most rewarding poetry depends at least in part upon its imaginative way of looking at commonplace ideas.

With his approach to a theme the poet begins to reveal his own psychological methods. No two artists given the same model or subject "see" things the same way. In a way, the poet is selling ideas -- his "sales pitch" is unique and constitutes a significant aspect of

appreciation. Such devices as satire, irony, and understatement, to name a few, are approaches familiar to all poets.

The poet's treatment of his materials is dependent upon the techniques he has studied and admired in others, and eventually evolved for himself. The creative is usually the culmination of the imitative. His personality, taste, and repertoire of expressive devices will determine to a large extent his treatment of any matter. He may intensify, concentrate, compress, understate, exaggerate, spotlight, shade, distort, caricature, etc. as the circumstances seem to require.

The very important, and often slighted, matter of form in poetic writing may properly be considered as an aspect of treatment.

With imagery the poet becomes a painter with words. Without drawing attention to his techniques, he can, with artistry, present to the reader vivid images that can transport him to whatever circumstances the poet elects as the climate for the substance of his poem.

By using symbolism the poet can heighten and intensify the effectiveness of his writing. Obviously no symbol would be of much value if it meant only what it denoted. A symbol deftly chosen can convey a wealth of meaning through its power to suggest or imply. It is an important tool of compression.

A poet's diction is selected for all that it says to him. Others who read the works may hear differently. The poet is, therefore, challenged to employ diction with great attention to not only the denotation of his words, but also to the connotative ability of vocabulary

to say more than it means. Part of this saying power is derived from the melody or music that accompanies much of our language.

Words appropriately chosen can function at several levels of meaning.

There are many figures of speech, and while they commonly find their way into our everyday expressions, they are most properly the tools of the poet. The commonest figures of speech involve comparison, such as the simile and metaphor, or depend upon the sounds of words, as do alliteration, onomatopoeia, etc.

The element of rhythm is probably the most fundamental factor distinguishing poetry from prose. It is primitive and universal. In fact, many people do not recognize poems as such unless they have some regular pattern of metrical stress or cadenced arrangement. Today more than ever before the poet's treatment of rhythm is original and imaginative, evoking emotional responses with devices ranging from conventional meter to obscure, even occult rhythms.

Rhyme, like meter, has a basic appeal. Children respond instinctively to catchy rhyme, and only the ultra-affected would deny entirely the value of rhyme to today's poet. Yet the battle has raged long and fiercely, and currently it seems that rhyme is not faring very well. Perhaps rhyme is too much of a cliché, too obvious for the purposes of many of our modern, serious word artists.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

Preliminary Study of Test Item Construction

The research phase. - - The research phase of the study covered three major areas: existing measures of material related to the field of appreciation, the nature of poetry itself, and the appreciation of poetry. As the study progressed, specific areas to be measured and specific methods of evaluation were considered for inclusion in the final instrument. Midway in the study the writer constructed a pilot test that was designed to weigh the merits of various kinds of items.

The pilot test. - - The pilot test was administered to a total of sixty-one students of Dr. M. Agnella Gunn, some in her Seminar in the Teaching of English, some in her course Improvement in the Instruction of English. The group comprised both graduate and undergraduate students and included some teachers in service at both secondary and college level. In addition to giving their responses to the items, the students commented upon the following considerations: grades for which each item seemed suitable, merit of each item, and any other factors of matter or construction that might enable the writer to revise effectively.

Reorientation. - - Although none of these sixty-one students was "expert" in the field of poetry, their backgrounds enabled them to

write, in many cases, extremely thoughtful and discerning comments. With this help the writer concluded that several of the items lost validity because of their incorporating second-rate poems. Another serious flaw was the use of alternate response items rather than those providing four or five choices. These and many lesser flaws dictated an entirely new start.

Establishing criteria. - - With continued research the following criteria seemed paramount in construction the next instrument:

1. Items should always relate to complete poems, never to fragments.
2. The poetry used should either be fairly modern or possess a timeless quality.
3. While it may be possible to test for individual components of poetry appreciation, it is not feasible to devote an entire section to any one of these.
4. The test should avoid any technical language ordinarily used to describe poetry.
5. Test items should incorporate the titles of poems where they serve as a part of the poet's expression, but they should not use poet's names.
6. Multiple choice items seem to lend themselves most effectively to this kind of test.
7. Poems used in the test should be of widely acknowledged merit.
8. The test should not take the average student much over thirty minutes, preferably less.

9. The test should not be timed.
10. The poems must be fairly short (this excludes most narratives and ballads).
11. The poems should present no serious vocabulary barriers.
12. The poems should not deal with abnormal, perverted, or unwholesome subject matter and should deal with experiences that might normally fall within the range of the average tenth grader, either directly or vicariously.

Constructing the Test

The final instrument includes only one set of items from the pilot test, and these items are slightly revised. All other items are new, the result of a cumulative process of study and trial and error. With some minor exceptions the test does incorporate the twelve criteria cited. Perhaps it is worth mentioning that one criterion not mentioned, but nevertheless vital, is that which concerns the nature of what true appreciation is and what fine poetry is. This study could never state it succinctly enough to explain the intuitive process that must accompany an effort of this nature.

Administration of the Test

The test of appreciation of poetry was given in its current form to 140 pupils in grades ten through twelve at Plymouth High School, Plymouth, Massachusetts. Of the group 49 were seniors, 52 were juniors, and 39 were sophomores. For each pupil the following data were obtained

(some of it has not been analyzed in this study): age, grade, sex, curriculum, average mark for current year in English, total I.Q. as indicated by the California Test of Mental Maturity, and a reading comprehension percentile for New England. The latter two factors were obtained from the Cooperative Guidance and Testing Service, - Psychometric Report for Vocational Battery, administered by the Office of School and College Relations, Boston University.

Treatment of the Data

Scoring and tabulation. - - The tests were hand scored, and the results were tabulated to reveal the number of pupils getting a correct response for each item. This process helped the writer to determine the difficulty of the items. Correctness of each item was assumed to be implicit in the construction of the item and no board of experts was consulted.

The time consumed by the pupils taking the test averaged 19.2 minutes.

Means and standard deviations. - - Arithmetic means and standard deviations ^{1/} were computed for the grouped frequency distributions of the scores on the Test of the Appreciation of Poetry, of the Total I.Q.'s, and of the Total Reading Comprehension New England Percentile.

^{1/} Greene, Jorgensen, Gerberick, Measurement and Evaluation in the Secondary School, Longmans, Green and Co., New York, 1949, pp. 531, 551.

Correlations. - - A coefficient of correlation was computed by use of the Pearson Product - Moment formula ^{1/} between: (1) Test of the Appreciation of Poetry scores and Total I.Q.'s, and (2) Test of the Appreciation of Poetry scores and Total Reading Comprehension New England Percentiles.

Item analysis. - - Items were analyzed to show the critical ratios of obtained differences to the standard errors of the differences. The top 27% and the bottom 27% of Test of the Appreciation of Poetry scores were used in this analysis, and computations were based upon values obtained from the Edgerton Tables. ^{2/} The analysis was made to determine the power of each item to differentiate.

1/ Ibid., pp. 557-562.

2/ Harold A. Edgerton, Donald G. Paterson, Table of Standard Errors of Percentages for Varying Numbers of Cases, The University of Minnesota, 1926.

CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS OF DATA

Validity

The limited scope of this study precludes a thorough attempt to determine the validity of the test. Some curricular validity is claimed on the basis of a study of the approaches to the appreciation of poetry in a wide selection of high school texts and other materials dealing with the subject.

The writer makes no claim to statistical validity for this test, for it has not been widely judged by experts nor have correlations with acknowledged measures of appreciation of any kind been employed.

The principle basis for claiming validity for this test is described by Greene, Jorgensen, and Gerberich^{1/} :

The most effective approach to the validation of the content of tests in these fields (language and reading) appears to be through introspective analysis. That is, a sort of arm-chair psychological dissection of the total process is made, in which as many as possible of the basic abilities are identified.

Reliability

No attempt has been made to determine the reliability of this test.

^{1/} Op. cit., p. 60

Descriptive Data

Measurement of central tendency. - - The next step in analysis of the data used was the computation of the arithmetic mean from the grouped data.

The Test of the Appreciation of Poetry. - - The arithmetic mean of the scores for the Test of the Appreciation of Poetry is 11.12. The standard deviation is 2.65.

In the following figure the length of each bar represents the frequency of test scores, based upon a five-point distribution and employing intervals of 2.6.

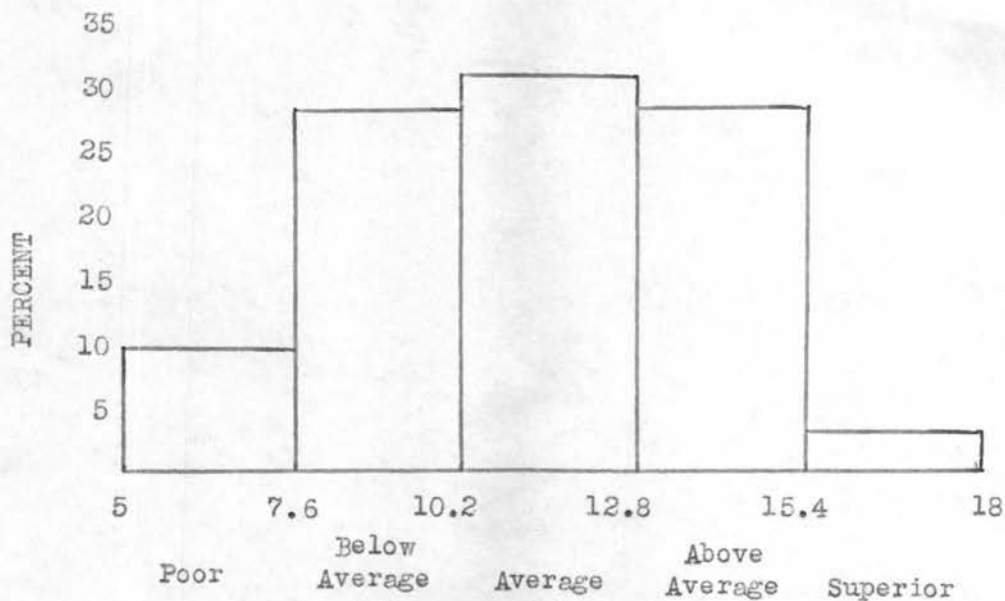


Figure 1. Percentages of Scores of 140 Pupils Tested by the Test of the Appreciation of Poetry

Total I. Q.'s. -- Similarly the arithmetic mean of the Total I.Q.'s was computed and found to be 105.87. The standard deviation is 14.16. See Figure 2.

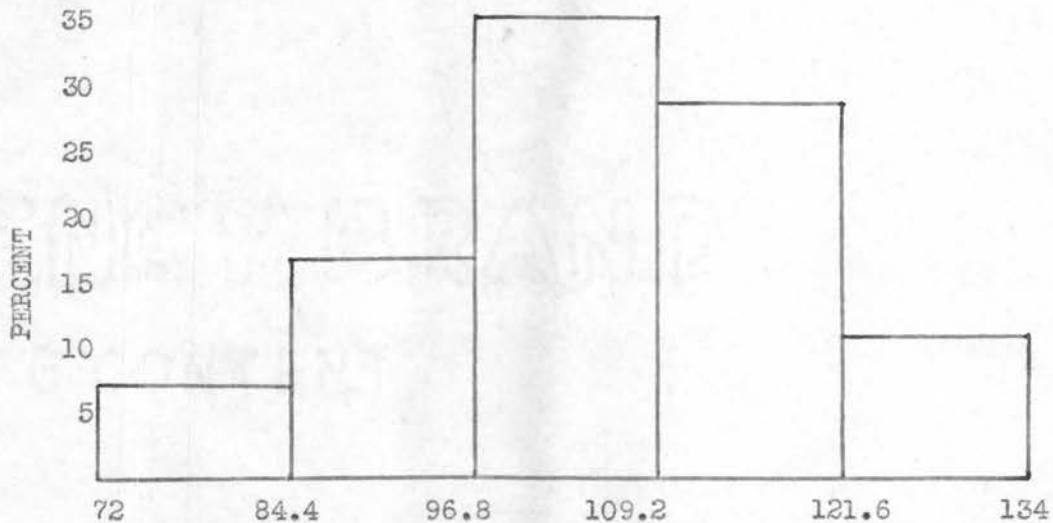


Figure 2. Percentages of Total I.Q.'s of 140 Pupils Used in the Study

Total Reading Comprehension. -- The arithmetic mean of the Total Reading Comprehension New England Percentile is 53. The standard deviation is 26.80. See Figure 3.

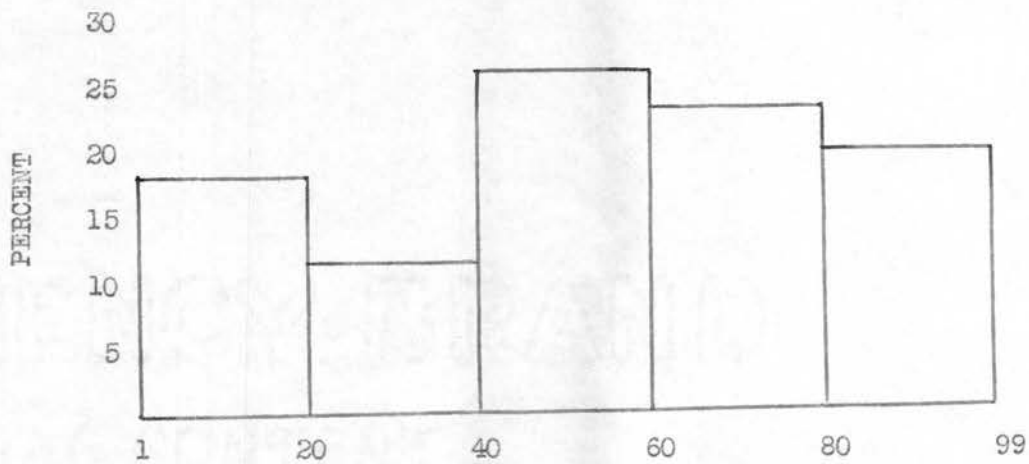


Figure 3. Percentages of Total Reading Comprehension New England Percentiles

Item Analysis

The 27 items of the Test of the Appreciation of Poetry were analyzed to determine the power of each item to differentiate. Edgerton's ^{1/} Tables were employed to compute the data in the following table.

^{1/} Harold A. Edgerton, op. cit.

Table 1. Analysis of Items to Show Critical Ratio of Obtained Difference to the Standard Error of the Difference

Item Number	% of Top 27% Getting Item Correct	% of Bottom 27% Get- ting Item Correct	σ diff.	obtained diff.	Critical Ratio
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1.	5	19	.073	.14	1.92
2.*	81	40	.103	.41	3.98
3.*	92	59	.092	.33	3.60
4.*	78	22	.096	.56	5.83
5.	59	43	.114	.16	1.40
6.	35	22	.103	.13	1.26
7.*	51	22	.106	.29	2.73
8.	59	35	.112	.24	2.14
9.	11	3	.058	.08	1.38
10.*	35	8	.090	.27	3.00
11.	40	30	.110	.10	0.90
12.*	54	22	.106	.32	3.02
13.*	62	11	.095	.51	5.36
14.	22	11	.092	.21	2.28
15.*	49	22	.106	.29	2.73
16.*	32	3	.081	.29	3.57
17.	59	57	.114	.02	0.17
18.	40	38	.114	.02	0.17
19.*	95	57	.089	.38	4.27
20.	22	8	.081	.14	1.73
21.	57	54	.152	.03	0.19
22.	54	32	.112	.22	1.96
23.	35	14	.097	.21	2.16
24.*	70	30	.105	.40	3.81
25.	76	49	.108	.27	2.50
26.	43	35	.112	.08	0.71
27.	46	32	.112	.14	1.25

Items marked with an asterisk in Table 1 are considered valid since they reveal a CR of more than 2.576 (at the 1% level). Mills^{1/} states that -

A value for T (the difference between the hypothetical value and the observed mean) of 2.576 or more indicates a significant difference, while a value of less than 2.576 indicates that the results are not inconsistent with the hypothesis in question.

He points out further^{2/} the fact that some statisticians accept odds at the 5% level. Thus items with a t value of 1.96 or better might be considered valid. If this standard were accepted, five items in addition to the eleven indicated by asterisks can be retained.

Relationship with Other Variables

The correlation coefficient between the I.Q.'s and appreciation of poetry test scores, found by using the Pearson Product-Moment formula is $+0.124$. There appears then to be no significant relationship^{3/} between these two variables. The finding concurs approximately with that of Dexter^{4/}, who reported a correlation coefficient of $+0.43$, higher but still not significant.

^{1/} Frederick C. Mills, Statistical Methods Applied to Economics and Business, Henry Holt and Co., New York, 1940, p. 471.

^{2/} Ibid., p. 472

^{3/} Greene, Jorgensen, Gerberich, op. cit., p. 562.

^{4/} Erwin B. Dexter, The Construction and Validation of a Test in the Appreciation of Poetry for Grades Nine, Ten, Eleven, and Twelve, Ed. M. thesis, Boston University, School of Education, 1950. p. 31.

Similarly the correlation coefficient between total reading comprehension percentiles and appreciation of poetry test scores was computed and was found to be .084. There appears to be practically no relationship between the two factors.

Correlation Table Showing Relation of
 Table 3. Poetry Appreciation Test Score and
 Total Reading Score

Poetry Appreciation Test Score

	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
100								•						
95							•	•••			••			•
90			•	•	•	•	••	•••	•	••				
85					••		•	•••	••					
80						•	•	•	•					•
75					•	•		•	•	••	•	•		
70						•		•	••	•••	••			
65							••	•	••	•	•••			
60					••	••	••	•				•		
55					••	•	•	•	•	•				
50	•	••			••			••	•	•				
45	•				••		••	••			•			
40		•	•			••								
35		•				•	•		•					
30	•		•			•			•					
25			•				••				•			
20			•			•	••	•	•					
15		•			••	•	•	•	••					
10	•		•			•	•	•	•					
5		•		•		•				•				

Reading Score

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was the construction and evaluation of a test of the appreciation of poetry. The evaluative process has been cumulative from the writing of the first item of the pilot test, and if the study has any real merit, the process of introspective as well as statistical analysis must continue. The end of the study is only a way station on the road to a truly excellent measure of the appreciation of poetry. No test yet devised purports to be this. This writer feels that some progress has been made. Some of the objections hurled at earlier test in the same field have been met, apparently satisfactorily.

The research suggested many ways of getting at the matter of appreciation that do not readily lend themselves to an easily administered, objective instrument. Some of the more wieldy devices have been employed.

The test was administered in its adolescent stage to 61 college students to enable the writer to obtain data and opinions leading to significant revision. The refined instrument was then given to 140 pupils in grades two through twelve.

No attempt was made to determine statistical reliability or validity. However, a significant degree of curricular and logical validity is claimed.

Eleven of the 27 items showed validity through their ability to differentiate at the 1% level and an additional 5 items differentiated at the 5% level.

No significant correlation was found between the Test of the Appreciation of Poetry and total reading comprehension.

Correlation between the Test of the Appreciation of Poetry and total I.Q.'s was also found to be insignificant.

Conclusions

In so far as this writer's claim to validity for some items is accepted, it can be also accepted that the appreciation of poetry is measurable. With further refinement the test could be a valuable aid to the classroom teacher as a diagnostic measure to help him plan his approach to the teaching of poetry. With the construction of another form the teacher might be able to measure growth in the ability to appreciate poetry. (This writer would never have attempted the study if he had not believed firmly that such growth is a common phenomenon and that it does lend itself to accurate, objective measurement.)

One conclusion, actually "forgone", that no objective instrument of poetry appreciation can ever replace the subjective, free-writing type of test, still stands. It is believed that eventually the small

steps represented by this study will convince many teachers of English that some elements of poetry appreciation are measurable by objective means, and worth measuring this way.

Limitations

The writer is well aware of the shortcomings of the study and lists some of them as follows:

1. The test is too short. It does not cover adequately the various components of poetry appreciation, nor does it provide enough items for thorough statistical studies into reliability and validity.
2. The high school population used was not adequate. Larger samples should be employed and a series of trials administered.
3. Further use of experts is indicated. While some mature judgments were called upon, it would be worthwhile to submit a revised instrument to a board of poets, critics, and educators for their reactions.

Recommendations for Further Study

Using the valid items of this test as a nucleus, expand the test to cover more of the components of the appreciation of poetry.

Pursue the Zukofsky approach, using an objective item dealing with "considerations" in two or more superior poems.

Analyze further the reason for the distracting powers of the various alternate responses.

Make a correlation study between this or a revised test of the appreciation of poetry and:

1. Tests of reading.
2. Tests of the appreciation of poetry.
3. Tests of the appreciation of art.
4. Tests of the appreciation of music.

Follow up the work done thus far with administration of the test to greater populations with the purpose of working out complete statistical validity and reliability.

Pursue the problem of item construction much further than appears to have been done. Some suggestions follow for getting at the appreciation of poetry objectively.

1. Present the poem. Provide multiple responses, one being the poet's professed purpose of intention in writing the poem.
That is, "The poem was probably inspired by..."
2. Get at the meaning (connotation and/or denotation) of a word phrase quoted from the text of a given poem.
3. Paste up four pictures, one of which is to be associated with the mood, attitude, image, etc. of a given poem.
4. Present a poem in several different forms (line arrangement, punctuation, capitalization, etc.) and provide for response indicating form best suited to the mood and stresses called for by the poem.
5. Provide for the choice of the most poetic of three or four passages of varying degrees of poetic value.

6. Provide for the detection of an unpoetic line inserted in or replacing a line in a poem of acknowledged merit.
7. Experiment with the use of prose arranged to "look like" poetry and vice versa.
8. Provide for the selection of a poem that employs sounds most effectively. (See Tennyson's "imitative harmony".)
9. Provide for the indication of intensity of stresses required by various syllables in a poem (none, heavy, light). Try to devise some system also for indicating the duration of syllables and the pace at which it travels.
10. Provide for the indication of probable meanings of poems or carefully edited excerpts.
11. Play a high fidelity recording of a poetic reading. Test listeners by providing an alternate or multiple-response check sheet of a wide variety of poetic components. Such a list would probably have to be carefully previewed with the pupils.

APPENDIX

PILOT TEST

This is not intended to be a test of poetry appreciation. It is a collection of items that purport to measure certain elements generally considered to be part of poetry appreciation. Some may follow a familiar pattern; others are experimental to some degree.

This instrument is designed to gather the reactions of people who know, and in most instances teach poetry. It may, with refinement, help some of us to teach it more effectively, - if we know something about what the student brings with him in the way of poetry appreciation.

Thanks for your help.

Roland W. Holmes

for

Dr. A. Agnella Gunn

Seminar in the Teaching of English

August 1953

Boston University

School of Education

Please use last page for answers and comments.

A

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
 In the red West; thru' mountain clefts the dale
 Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
 Bordered with palm, and many a winding vale
 And meadow...

B

Lo, the most excellent sun so calm and haughty,
 The violet and purple morn with just-felt breezes,
 The gentle soft-born measureless light,
 The miracle spreading bathing all, the fullfill'd noon,
 The coming eve...

1. Which selection seems to depend more upon emphasis or stress 1.()
 of certain syllables for its effectiveness:
2. Which seems to flow more smoothly? 2.()
3. Which suggests a mood of relaxed ease and comfort? 3.()
4. Which gives a picture of a changing scene? 4.()

- - - - -

A

In hearing his heartfelt voice ringing a faith sublime,
 In considering his supreme sacrifice, remembering his
 heroism, I felt small at the presence of his greatness
 and found myself compelled to fight back from my eyes
 the tears, to not weep before him.

B

Had I been reft of sight before this man
 Had placed his trust in man,
 I would have shed no tears of pain
 To see a hero fall.

But since I have the sight to see this man
 In his nobility which dwarfs
 Me and my fellow man,
 I hide my tears from him.

C

As I heard my friend's expressions of faithfulness,
 and as I came to realize his extreme devotion and
 bravery, I was humbled by his majestic stature and
 found difficulty in concealing my grief.

5. Which selection most effectively expresses sincere emotion? 5.()
6. Which uses words that are most suited to this emotion? 6.()
7. Which do you consider the best poem? 7.()

A

Fly envious Time, till thou run out thy race,
 Call on the lazy leaden-stepping hours,
 Whose speed is but the heavy Plummets pace;

B

The learned is happy nature to explore,
 The fool is happy that he knows no more;
 The rich is happy in the plenty given,
 The poor contents him with the care of Heaven.

8. Which selection is more dependent upon the sound of words for its effect? 8. ()
9. Which achieves variety through a change of tempo (speed)? 9. ()
10. In which do you see more definite word pictures? 10. ()
11. Which do you think is the better poetic writing? 11. ()

A

An Epitaph

Like thee I once have stemm'd the sea of life,
 Like thee have languish'd after empty joys,
 Like thee have labour'd in the stormy strife,
 Been grieved for trifles, and amused with toys.

Forget my frailties; thou art also frail;
 Forget my lapses; for thyself may'st fall;
 Nor read unmoved my artless tender tale -
 I was a friend, O man, to thee, to all.

B

The dead make rules, and I obey.
 I too shall be dead some day.

Youth and maid who, past my death,
 Have within your nostrils breath,

I pray you, for my own pain's sake,
 Break the rules that I shall make!

12. Which poem is more suggestive of death (sounds like death)? 12. ()
13. Which poem contains more repetition of sounds which are the same? 13. ()

From "Byron"

In men whom men condemn as ill
 I find so much of goodness still,
 In men whom men pronounce divine
 I find so much of sin and blot,
 I do not dare to draw a line
 Between the two, where God has not.

If this selection seems to say any of the following ideas to you, make a cross (X) in the Yes column; if not, make a cross in the No column.

- | | Yes | No |
|---|-----|-----|
| 14. Man is rarely either all good or all bad. | () | () |
| 15. A man who is well recommended is usually a man to be trusted. | () | () |
| 16. Had God intended us to sort our fellow men into good and evil groups, he would have made the choices clearer. | () | () |
| 17. The author attempts to deal with his fellow men honestly and fairly. | () | () |
| 18. God has failed to provide us with suitable standards for judging our friends. | () | () |

- - - - -
 Lucy Ashton's Song

Look not thou on beauty's charming;
 Sit thou still when kings are arming;
 Taste not when the wine-cup glistens;
 Speak not when the people listens;

Stop thine ear against the singer;
 From the red gold keep thy finger;
 Vacant heart and hand and eye,
 Easy live and quiet die.

Continue, following the directions you followed with the previous section.

- | | | |
|---|-----|-----|
| 19. Don't let your heart be ruled by your mind. | () | () |
| 20. For me death is simply the end of nothing. | () | () |
| 21. The simple life is the best life. | () | () |
| 22. Don't be afraid to plunge into all that life has to offer. | () | () |
| 23. If I had my life to live over, believe me, it would be lived differently. | () | () |

Decide which selection in each of the following pairs is the better poetry. Write A if you think selection A is better than selection B; write B if you think B is better than A.

24. A. Yon bird is but her messenger,
 The moon is but her silver car;
 Yea! sun and moon are sent by her,
 And every wistful waiting star.
- B. The nightingale her missives bring,
 The silver stars her love songs sing;
 All nature nods its knowing head
 To tell me she my thoughts hath read. 24.()
25. A. Full many a glorious morning I have seen
 Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye,
 Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
 Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy.
- B. When early morning gilds the skies
 With Aurora's roseate hue,
 All nature smiles in glad surprise,
 The lofty mountain peak, the river's silvery streak,
 And the meadow rich with dew. 25.()
26. A. Red robin saw the sun to rest,
 Then gathered sleep to line his nest;
 I quickened step lest evening star
 Should find me from my home so far.
- B. The sun descending in the west,
 The evening star does shine,
 The birds are silent in their nest,
 And I must seek for mine. 26.()
27. A. When we have breathed the last,
 Our souls shall soar
 With tardy messages of unborn deeds that in
 God's ear shall roar.
- B. Not what we did shall be the test
 When act and will are done,
 But what our Lord infers we would -
 Had we diviner been. 27.()
28. A. Hence all you vain delights,
 As short as are the nights
 Wherein you spend your folly!
 There's naught in this life sweet,
 If man were wise to see't,
 But only melancholy.

- B. My soul is sick of pleasure vain,
Which fleeting come and go.
Let melancholy sadness reign,
And passions turn to snow.

28.()

Strong Moments

Sometimes I hear fine ladies sing,
Sometimes I smoke and drink with men;
Sometimes I play at games of cards -
Judge me to be no strong man then.

The strongest moment of my life
Is when I think about the poor;
When, like a spring that rain has fed,
My pity rises more and more.

The flower that loves the warmth and light,
Has all its mornings bathed in dew;
My heart has moments wet with tears,
My weakness is they are so few.

29. The poet would be most proud to
- A. catch a thief
 - B. attend a wedding
 - C. win a game
 - D. donate blood
 - E. succeed in business
- 29.()
30. The poet would be least proud to (use list above)
- 30.()
31. The tears he describes symbolize
- A. resentment
 - B. sentimentality
 - C. emotional relief
 - D. honest pity
 - E. weakness
- 31.()
32. Blur not your thoughts with sorrow.
Let not your mind decay.
Just think that each tomorrow
May prove happier than today.
- Which best describes your feelings (mood)?
- A. idleness
 - B. thoughtfulness
 - C. sadness
 - D. hopefulness
- 32.()

33. I love the hush of winter,
For what can be more sweet,
Than the white calmness all about you,
And the crunch of snow beneath
your feet?

Which phrase best describes
your feelings?

- A. a winter's walk
- B. a walk in the snow
- C. plowing through
- D. arriving home late

33. ()

34. I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped
All three;
"Good speed!" cried the watch,
As the gate-bolts undrew.

Which best describes what
the rhythm suggests to you?

- A. breathless pace
- B. a horse race
- C. horses' galloping
- D. horses' clattering

34. ()

PILOT TEST

ANSWERS, COMMENTS, CRITICISMS

Directions: Beside each number indicate your response either with a letter or yes or no. Then if you have any remarks concerning pertinence to poetry appreciation, use at high school level, your recognition of selections, or any other factors that might lead to a more effective test, please write beside the item. Make any general comments on the back.

- | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. () | 13. () | 24. () |
| 2. () | 14. () | 25. () |
| 3. () | 15. () | 26. () |
| 4. () | 16. () | 27. () |
| 5. () | 17. () | 28. () |
| 6. () | 18. () | 29. () |
| 7. () | 18. () | 30. () |
| 8. () | 20. () | 31. () |
| 9. () | 21. () | 32. () |
| 10. () | 22. () | 33. () |
| 11. () | 23. () | 34. () |
| 12. () | | |

List of Selections and Authors Used in the Pilot Test
in Order of Their Appearance

Items		
1-4	A. ? B. Excerpt from "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" Walt Whitman	
5-7	A. Excerpt from "Last Speech to the Court" Bartolomeo Vanzetti B. Rendered in verse form by this writer. C. Paraphrase, avoiding illiteracies, by this writer.	
8-11	A. Excerpt from "On Time" John Milton B. ?	
12-13	A. "An Epitaph" James Beattie	
14-18	From "Byron" Joaquin Miller	
19-23	"Lucy Ashton's Song" Sir Walter Scott	
24	A. Excerpt from "Song" Richard LeGallienne B. Verse paraphrase by this writer	
25	A. Item #34 from the Rigg test B. ?	
26	A. Verse paraphrase by this writer B. Excerpt from "Night" William Blake	
27	A. Verse paraphrase by this writer B. CLXXV from Part Six, <u>Further Poems</u> Emily Dickinson	
28	A. Item #32 from the Rigg test B. ?	
29-31	"Strong Moments" William H. Davies	
32-34	From the Dexter thesis	

PILOT TEST

Answer Key

- | | | |
|-------|---------|-------|
| 1. B | 13. A | 24. A |
| 2. A | 14. Yes | 25. A |
| 3. A | 15. No | 26. B |
| 4. B | 16. Yes | 27. B |
| 5. A | 17. Yes | 28. A |
| 6. A | 18. Yes | 29. D |
| 7. A | 19. No | 30. A |
| 8. A | 20. Yes | 31. D |
| 9. A | 21. Yes | 32. D |
| 10. A | 22. No | 33. B |
| 11. A | 23. No | 34. C |
| 12. B | | |

FINAL TEST

A TEST OF APPRECIATION OF POETRY
for use in senior high school

Roland W. Holmes
Plymouth High School
Plymouth, Mass.

1957

Directions: This test consists of several multiple-choice items following each poem or group of poems. Read each poem or group of poems carefully as you come to it. Then decide which word or phrase given after the question or incomplete statements makes the best sense. Reread the selection or selections if you wish. Then write the letter of your choice beside the number on your answer sheet that corresponds to the item you are considering.

THE SKY IS LOW

The sky is low, the clouds are mean,
A traveling flake of snow
Across a barn or through a rut
Debates if it will go.

A narrow wind complains all day
How some one treated him.
Nature, like us, is sometimes caught
Without her diadem.

1. The actual definition of diadem seems most likely to be
 - A. a fur coat.
 - B. a glittering crown.
 - C. an evening gown.
 - D. best manners or behavior.
2. The author probably intended the reader to expect to find Nature with her diadem.
 - A. on a rainy day.
 - B. only when there is no wind.
 - C. just in the summer.
 - D. on a fine, sunny day.
3. Which line of the poem best shows the author's sensitivity to sound?
 - A. line 1
 - B. line 2
 - C. line 4
 - D. line 5
4. In lines 2 through 4 the poet seems to be suggesting that the wind is
 - A. blowing in light gusts or squalls.
 - B. driving hard across the barnyard.
 - C. working up to a real gale.
 - D. really hardly blowing at all.

- | | first
poem | second
poem | neither
poem | both
poems |
|---|---------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 10. Which brings to the reader's mind vivid, clear-cut images or pictures? | A. | B. | C. | D. |
| 11. Which makes approximately the following statement:
The secret of true and lasting love is a deep mystery that only the lover himself can solve. The path to love is sometimes smooth, sometimes strewn with obstacles. | A. | B. | C. | D. |
| 12. In which does the love seem to be rather superficial, hardly worth bothering with? | A. | B. | C. | D. |

The following poems have different themes or ideas. Yet they also have points of similarity.

first poem

ATOMIC COURTESY

To smash the simple atom
All mankind was intent.
Now any day
The atom may
Return the compliment.

second poem

The golf links lie so near the mill
That almost every day
The laboring children can look out
And see the men at play.

third poem

IMMIGRANTS

"These foreigners with strange and avid faces
Crowding our shores, marring our pleasant places,
They must be curbed...." So mused King Powhatan,
Hundred per cent, red-blooded American.

13. Each poem attempts to shock the reader into serious thought by
- dealing with problems that man is not accustomed to taking very seriously.
 - presenting humorously ideas that are not at all amusing.
 - taking little or no responsibility for a situation that deserves everyone's intelligent consideration.
 - meaning or suggesting much more than the words seem to say.

Indicate the answer that seems to apply best to each of the following:

- | | first
poem | second
poem | third
poem | none | all three |
|--|---------------|----------------|---------------|------|-----------|
| 14. It ends with an unusual thought that the reader was not lead to expect. | A. | B. | C. | D. | E. |
| 15. It employs a fictitious incident to achieve dramatic force. | A. | B. | C. | D. | E. |
| 16. The poet is not being very critical, but he does suggest that the reader should pay attention to what is going on. | A. | B. | C. | D. | E. |
| 17. The poet seems to reveal an almost un-American attitude. | A. | B. | C. | D. | E. |
| 18. The poem takes the form of simple verse, using the kind of rhythm and rhyme commonly found in "everyday" poetic writing. | A. | B. | C. | D. | E. |
| 19. Sometimes progress can amount to what is actually a step backward. | A. | B. | C. | D. | E. |

IT BIDS PRETTY FAIR

The play seems out for an almost indefinite run.
 Don't mind a little thing like the actors fighting.
 The only thing I worry about is the sun.
 We'll be all right if nothing goes wrong with the lighting.

20. Which of the following phrases seems to state best the poet's approach to his idea?
- direct analysis of a problem
 - brushing lightly over a situation too complicated for men to handle effectively
 - intentional understatement of a major human flaw
 - lighthearted optimism.
21. In which line do you find a key word that unlocks the meaning of the poem?
- 1st line
 - 2nd line
 - 3rd line
 - 4th line

22. Which of the following phrases does not seem to apply to the poem?
- A. depends for the most part upon one comparison
 - B. avoids the use of any striking beats or rhythmic patterns
 - C. uses simple language that suits the simple form
 - D. appeals strongly to the reader's eye with color and shape.

The next little poem is translated from the Japanese. Although it is very brief, it does deserve thoughtful reading.

To-day, how far may he have wandered,
The brave hunter of dragon flies?

23. The actual background of this poem is stated below. See if you can find it. That is, select the situation which, when considered with the poem, makes it seem most effective and convincing.
- A. A little girl is sorry that she couldn't go off to play with her older brother.
 - B. A father speaks proudly of his son to a friend.
 - C. A young mother mourns for her dead child.
 - D. A mother is getting anxious for her boy, who has not returned from his play.

Compare the effect of the next two selections.

first Fly envious Time, till thou run out thy race,
 Call on the lazy leaden-stepping hours,
 Whose speed is but the heavy Plummets pace;

second The learned is happy nature to explore
 The fool is happy that he knows no more;
 The rich is happy in the plenty given,
 The poor contents him with the care of Heaven.

- | | first | second |
|--|-------|--------|
| 24. Which selection is more dependent upon the sound of words for its effect? | A | B |
| 25. Which is more successful in achieving variety through a change of tempo (speed)? | A | B |
| 26. In which do you see the more distinct pictures? | A | B |
| 27. Which do you think is the better poetic writing? | A | B |

List of Selections and Authors Used in A Test of the
 Appreciation of Poetry - Revised Form
 in Order of Their Appearance

Items

1-5	"The Sky Is Low"	Emily Dickinson
6-12	First Poem - "Advice to a Girl"	Sara Teasdale
	Second Poem - "Music, when Soft Voices Die"	Percy Byshe Shelley
13-19	First Poem - "Atomic Courtesy"	Ethel Jacobson
	Second Poem - ?	Sarah N. Cleghorn
	Third Poem - "Immigrants"	Nanch Byrd Turner
20-22	"It Bids Pretty Fair"	Robert Frost
23	a <u>haiku</u>	Kago no Chiyo
24-27	First Poem - Excerpt "On Time"	John Milton
	Second Poem - ?	

A TEST OF THE APPRECIATION OF POETRY - Revised Form

Answer Key

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1. B | 15. C |
| 2. D | 16. E |
| 3. D | 17. C |
| 4. A | 18. A |
| 5. C | 19. A |
| 6. A | 20. C |
| 7. A | 21. C |
| 8. B | 22. D |
| 9. B | 23. C |
| 10. A | 24. A |
| 11. A | 25. A |
| 12. C | 26. A |
| 13. D | 27. A |
| 14. E | |

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