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The value process in the classroom: the role of the English teacher in facilitating student growth in the valuing process.

Marjorie Florence Costello

University of Massachusetts Amherst

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THE VALUING PROCESS IN THE CLASSROOM

THE ROLE OF THE ENGLISH TEACHER IN FACILITATING STUDENT GROWTH
IN THE VALUING PROCESS

A Dissertation Presented

By

MARJORIE FLORENCE COSTELLO

Submitted to the Graduate School
of the University of Massachusetts
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

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August, 1973

Major Subject: English Education
THE VALUING PROCESS IN THE CLASSROOM

The Role of the English Teacher in Facilitating Student Growth in the Valuing Process

A Dissertation

by

Marjorie Florence Costello

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William Lauroesch, Chairman of Committee

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School of Education

August, 1973
To

My Parents

Mae F. and George T. Costello

In Loving Memory
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The Valuing Process in the Classroom

The Role of the English Teacher in Facilitating Student Growth in the Valuing Process

(August, 1973)

Marjorie F. Costello, B.S., American International College
M.Ed., University of Massachusetts
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ABSTRACT

The study is a conceptualization of one component of a teacher education program to generate in the prospective teacher of English an awareness of values and the valuing process and of his own role in facilitating that process.

The aims of the study are: (1) to establish instruction in the valuing process as a legitimate, significant function of education, with a long continuing tradition in the American school system; (2) to provide a rationale for planned, deliberate instruction in the valuing process in the classroom; (3) to evolve a conceptual framework for providing the teacher the awareness, understanding, and skills for managing the learning of the valuing process; and (4) to establish the secondary English class as the locus for the valuing process, and to demonstrate how the resources of that class, i.e., the study of literature, may be used to facilitate growth in that process.

The procedure for the study was the actual conceptualizing of the plan to achieve these aims. The procedure included:
1. A review of literature in the field;
2. Observation in the field;
3. Informal interviews and discussions with school personnel, teaching interns, and others connected with the teaching of English or with teacher education;
4. A continuous process of review, modification, revision, reorganization, and evaluation based on the above;
5. The development of a rationale and a conceptual framework.

Chapter I, "The Problem," delineates the nature and scope of the dissertation, its purpose and procedure.

Chapter II, "Values: A Function of Education," examines the historical and continuing connection of values and education, particularly the changing role of the American school in the development of American cultural values and the commitment of the school to moral leadership in American life.

Chapter III, "Values: A Rationale for Instruction," offers the beginning teacher an orientation to the need for teaching the valuing process in the classroom. Despite the ironic contradictions in the mandate and the near-impossibility of the task, the chapter argues for the urgency of the individual teacher's awareness of and commitment to the valuing process.

Chapter IV, "Values: A Conceptual Framework," establishes the need for awareness, on the part of the teacher, of value transmission and communication, both conscious and unconscious, and of the role he can play as communicator, transmitter, and especially facilitator in the valuing process. To do so, he needs to develop certain knowledge and skills,
including the capacity for trend analysis and special understandings relative to the nature of the valuing process.

Chapter V, "Values: The English Class as Locus," establishes the English class as the optimal setting for the nurturing of the valuing process among high school students.

Chapter VI, "Values: Literature Study as Resource," demonstrates some of the myriad ways literature may be used as a resource by the literature teacher in an effort to promote the valuing process.

Chapter VII, "Values: Awareness and the English Teacher," identifies the special responsibility of the secondary English teacher to develop awareness: (1) of value bias in the selection of the literary works to be studied, (2) of the imposition of his own values, (3) of the dynamics operating in his own classroom, (4) of the actual parameters of literature--of just what literary study can and cannot do, and (5) of the many dimensions of the teacher's role as facilitator in the valuing process.

Chapter VIII, "Epilogue," states a personal conviction regarding the importance of valuing and the need for stressing the valuing process for those who are about to engage in teaching, yet not at the expense of other important aspects of English teaching. It urges follow-up studies, once teachers have become aware, in the area of specific strategies and techniques, to translate the teacher's new-found awareness into action.

Appendix A is a suggested model for teaching the novel, Giants in the Earth, by O. E. Rølvaag, with the valuing process as one goal.

Appendix B is a list of elementary and secondary schools visited during the course of the study.

A Selected Bibliography is also appended.
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction to the Problem

Comfort isn't enough. Ingenious diversions aren't enough. If it were, the large number of Americans who have been able to indulge their whims on a scale unprecedented in history would be deliriously happy. They would be telling one another of their unparalleled serenity instead of trading tranquilizer prescriptions.

We need a sense of identity, enduring emotional ties to others, a vision of what is worth striving for. Most of all, we need a system of values that we consider worthy of our allegiance (even if it is subject to revision).

--John W. Gardner in No Easy Victories

Our forefathers had a vision of America; the America they built was for them a dream come true. In the second half of the Twentieth Century, America seems to have arrived breathless, its destination uncertain, and its vision blurred. Once a land of inexhaustible resources, seething vitality, and limitless opportunity, we now possess the mixed blessings of a modern, affluent, technological society. In our dizzily changing, kaleidoscopic world we seem to engage in a relentless pursuit of things, of luxurious ease, of pleasure unending. We have only begun to realize that push-button convenience and a pre-fabricated, pre-digested, pre-packaged world are not enough. Our glaring needs co-exist with our glaring superabundance. Our fascination with the new hides our ruthless abandonment of the old. And we have finally begun to question our goals, our accomplishments, our future directions. Our concern has slowly been turned toward the
inequities and injustices in our system; our priorities are slowly changing; our social conscience is slowly awakening to relieve suffering, provide education, and promote the common good. All of these—everything we do with our money, our time, our energy, and our lives—bespeak values. They are the choices we make from possible alternatives; the ways we choose to live our lives, the ways in which we choose to operate our government and our institutions, and ultimately, the decisions and choices we make regarding not only the humanity of our lives, but the very survival of our species on a livable planet.

Values, then, are an integral, inescapable part of everyone's life. Often hidden, frequently unstated, sometimes confused or even unconscious, values lie at the heart of what we do, how we act, and the way we spend our lives.

Seemingly, anything that our educational institutions can do to help young people to develop their values, to arrive at clear, conscious decisions, to discover competing and conflicting value systems and their potential implications, to promote humane values everywhere—in short, to engage in the valuing process—should be regarded as welcome, helpful, even indispensable by our society.

However, despite the importance of value issues and value development to the students in our schools, consciousness of the many facets of the valuing process that goes on in school is rare among teachers and students alike. It is especially lacking in beginning teachers, and, at least in the experience of this study, is generally not to be found in any segment of their teacher training.

Therefore, in an effort to meet a perceived need, the following chapters (II through VII) have been developed so that together they
represent one element of a teacher preparation program. This component is designed to (a) offer the prospective teacher, particularly the teacher of English, some background in the traditional relationship of values and education and in the changing role of the American school vis-a-vis values; (b) generate awareness in the new teacher of the many aspects of the valuing process in his classroom and his possible role in encouraging that process among his students; (c) establish that the English class can be the locus in the secondary school for that process; and (d) demonstrate how the teacher of English can use the existing resources of the English class to facilitate valuing.

The perspective here is the process, rather than the product. The question in this study is not whose values should the school be concerned with, and these chapters have tried not to give answer to that idea. Rather, the question is how can the teacher, especially the beginning teacher of English, be made aware of the value issues that are in every classroom, of the values that are transmitted both consciously and unconsciously, and of the value development that goes on within every student. In other words, how can the new teacher be made aware of the whole process of learning to value, and then of his potential role in facilitating student growth in that process?

General Statement of the Problem

The problem with which this study has been concerned is the development of a component of a teacher education program (specifically in a Methods of Teaching course) which will (a) generate in the prospective English teacher an awareness of the valuing process in the classroom, and (b) provide a rationale for and an orientation to his
role in facilitating that process, using the resources of the secondary school English class.

Sub-Problems

1. To establish instruction in the valuing process as a legitimate and significant function of education, with a long tradition in the American school system.

2. To provide a rationale for planned and deliberate instruction in the valuing process in the classroom.

3. To evolve a conceptual framework for providing the teacher with the awareness, understanding, and skills for managing the learning of the valuing process in the classroom.

4. To establish the secondary school English class as the locus for the valuing process, and to demonstrate how the resources of that class, i.e., the study of literature, may be used to facilitate growth in that process.

Procedure

This study is intended to be one segment of a teacher education program designed to generate in the prospective teacher an awareness of values and the valuing process in the classroom and of his potential role in facilitating that process. The procedure for this study is the actual conceptualizing of a plan to orient the prospective teacher of English to achieve this goal. Thus, the intention here is to serve the potential needs of members of three professional groups: experienced teachers of English, beginning or practice teachers of
English, and educators on the college level engaged in teacher preparation, such as instructors in Methods courses in a university setting.

In the development of such a plan, this study will attempt to answer such questions as these:

1. What does current literature in the field have to say about values and the valuing process as a function of education, and are there some key concepts that may be drawn therefrom?

2. What kind of conceptual framework can be designed to incorporate these key concepts into a meaningful learning experience which will make the teacher aware of the valuing process and of the nature of his role in nurturing that process?

3. In what ways can the teacher's awareness serve to promote the examination and development of values in the classroom and the facilitation of the valuing process in general?

4. How can the teacher use the resources of the English curriculum, particularly the literature of the traditional secondary school English class, to serve the valuing process?

Using these questions as a base, the procedure of this study will include the following:

1. A review of literature in the field;

2. Observation in the field;

3. Informal interviews with teaching interns, experienced elementary and secondary teachers, undergraduates enrolled in teacher preparation programs, school administrators, instructors in university methods courses, high school English department chairmen, and others connected with the teaching of English or the preparation or supervision of teachers;
4. A continuous process of review, modification, revision, reorganization, and evaluation, based on the above;

5. The development of a rationale and a conceptual framework for generating in the prospective teacher of English an awareness of values, the valuing process, and his role in facilitating that process in the classroom.

Assumptions and Delimitations

In establishing the English class as the locus for the valuing process (Chapter V) and in illustrating the facilitation of valuing through the teaching of literature (Chapter VI) no attempt is made to examine all the elements subsumed under the umbrella of "English" and then to prove their connection to the valuing process. Among the course offerings in the typical high school, English as a discrete subject is so broad, so unwieldy, so nebulous that at times it seems all-inclusive and not even a "subject" at all. Satisfactory definitions have eluded the most competent authorities, who find it difficult even to establish the parameters of the area of instruction called "English."

Traditionally, the structure has been that of a tripod: Reading (Literature), Writing (Composition), and Grammar (Language). At times, the skill aspects—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—have become the major divisions of concentration. Some schools have differentiated the curriculum into a basic grammar and composition course, with literature or reading a separate course on assigned days of the week. Still others have offered courses in all these aspects, plus electives in literature by genre ("The American Novel"), by theme ("Man: The
Comic Spirit"), by personal selection ("Poetry for People who Hate Poetry") or in response to special interests or requests ("Novel into Film," or "Poetry and Music of the 1970's").

The so-called "New English" of the 1960's placed an emphasis on Language--its history, structure, development, and usage--as the single aspect of commonality among the many facets of the English diamond. The structure of English as conceived herein resembles a lopsided tripod or an elongated triangle, with Language developing into facility in the two areas of Reading and Writing (Literature and Composition).

Then the Anglo-American Conference at Dartmouth (1966) partly compounded and partly clarified the problem, with its plea for more personal self-expression (affective rather than cognitive), its acceptance of dialect and subforms of speech, its greater stress on impromptu and improvisational drama, its concern with humanistic ideals and values, and its discard of traditional grammars and formal rules for speech or writing.

The concern of the English teacher with any one of the components of "English" would be enough to justify the English class as the optimal setting for the nurturing of the valuing process. There is no intent here to demean or minimize the importance of any other segment of English, or indeed of any other subject in the curriculum; there is only the intent to demonstrate literature and literary study as the focal point for the valuing process. Thus the plan here is to choose one segment, Literature, common to all English programs, to establish its richness as a resource, to illustrate some of the many ways it may be used, and by extension to imply generalizability to the nurturing
of the valuing process in other areas of English as well. Thus, "English class," unless otherwise specified, will be construed throughout to mean "Literature class."

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, there has to be a clear delineation of terms.

**Intern--Student Teacher--Practice Teacher:** The various terms designating the neophyte or beginning teacher or a person preparing to teach will be used interchangeably.

**Methods Course:** The professional course in "Methods of Teaching" generally required of persons preparing to be certified as teachers. Also the course designated by specialized terms such as "Methods of Teaching English" or "Curriculum and Instruction in the Teaching of English."

**Awareness:** Consciousness; alertness; cognizance; state of being informed, knowledgeable or sophisticated, especially regarding the valuing process.

**Process:** A continuous action, operation, or series of changes taking place toward a definite end; a condition of being developed or carried on. In this study, largely, the process of discovering, examining, formulating, or developing values.

**English Class:** Generally meant to designate a typical class, meeting five days a week in the secondary school (grades seven through twelve). Unless referred to in specialized terms such as advanced, honors, or elective, the class will be presumed to be average, and not specifically homogeneously grouped, except as the school is organized by such de facto grouping as by vocational tracking.

**Resources of the English Curriculum:** The syllabus or course of study, the materials, the skills, and the programs, especially the literary works, used in a typical secondary school English class.
Definitions of Terms: "Values"

From numerous sources, it has been possible to cull statements of meaning regarding aspects of values which this study proposes to treat:

Values: The ideals, customs, institutions, etc., of a society toward which the people of the group have an affective regard. These values may be positive, as cleanliness, freedom, education, etc., or negative, as cruelty, crime or blasphemy.

—Random House Dictionary

Values: (n.) the social principles, goals or standards held or accepted by an individual, class, society, etc. To value: (v.t.) to place a certain estimate of worth on in a scale of values.

—Webster's New World Dictionary

Value: A principle, standard, or quality considered worthwhile or desirable.

—The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language

A value... is a standard for decision-making, held by an individual student, and normally to be identified when it is articulated in (a) an expressed verbal statement, or (b) overt conduct.

—Philip E. Jacob

A value is the quality of recognized desirability founded on goodness.

—Paul Furfey

Values: abstract and perduring standards, which are held by an individual and/or a specified group to transcend the impulses of the moment and ephemeral situations. From the psychological point of view, a value may be defined as that aspect of motivation which is referable to standards, personal or cultural, that do not arise solely out of an immediate situation and the satisfaction of needs and primary drives. Concretely, of course, values are always manifested in the verbal and motor behavior of individuals—including what is NOT said and NOT done.

—Clyde Kluckhohn

Values... feed the soul of our culture.

—Harold Blake Walker
Values are those objects, ideas, and states of mind about which people get motivated. They are a cultural statement of goals, a short-hand description of a cultural system—the things which people have, want to have, and will work to have.

—George D. Spindler

Unless the educational process includes at every level of maturity some continuing contact with those fields in which value judgements are of prime importance, it must fall far short of the ideal. The student in high school, in college, and in graduate school must be concerned, in part at least, with the words "right" and "wrong" in both the ethical and the mathematical sense.

—James Bryant Conant

A clear distinction must be made between the two meanings of the word value: "That which is desired" and "that which is desirable (worthy of being desired, properly the object of desire, etc.)." The question of value arises only when the possibility of selection in accord with abstract standards exists or is held to exist. A value is a selective orientation toward experience, implying deep commitment or repudiation between possible alternatives in action. These orientations may be cognitive and expressed verbally or merely inferable from recurrent trends in behavior. Values, then, are images formulating positive or negative action commitments, a set of hierarchically ordered prescriptions and proscriptions. Without a hierarchy of values, human behavior could be described by a list of instincts and a probabilistic calculus. Human life would become a sequence of reactions to unconfigured stimuli. Values are standards which complicate the individual's satisfactions of his immediate wishes and needs. They take distinctive forms in different cultures, tend to persist tenaciously through time, and are not mere random outcomes of conflicting human desires.

—Clyde Kluckhohn

When the relations of human society are expressed in terms of rights and duties, men become conscious of spiritual values and understand the meaning and significance of truth, justice, charity, and freedom.

—Pope John XXIII

A value is a principle, or generalization, that is preferred by some people in the conduct of their lives or regarded as desirable as a result of what they have been taught or of their experience.

—O. R. Bontrager

Any judgment... involves a value decision, and any study reveals more about the investigator's own values.

—Kaoru Yamamoto
Values are the "things that matter," what people believe in strongly enough to live by, fight for, even die for. . . . A social value is that which people think "worthwhile"; they treasure it, they object to its desecration.

--Joseph H. Fichter, S. J.

A value expresses the essence of experiences the race has found to be worthwhile. . . . Moral and esthetic values have an identical foundation—the good and the beautiful, traced to their ultimate considerations, dissolve into a single principle—the law of harmony. . . . Two understandings may help students become more realistic in assessing problems concerned with values: Values are guides, not prescriptions for conduct. Values are a balance of rational thought and controlled emotion.

--Walter Loban
Margaret Ryan
James R. Squire

By moral and spiritual values, we mean those values which, when applied in human behavior, exalt and refine life and bring it into accord with the standards of conduct that are approved in our democratic culture.

--Educational Policies Commission,
N.E.A.

Values generally are included in the category of learning called the affective domain. They deal with feelings, emotional tones, and subjective judgments. They concern what one considers valuable, important, or unimportant.

--Gerald M. Torkelson

We therefore see values as constantly being related to the experiences that shape them and test them. They are not, for any one person, so much hard and fast verities as they are the results of hammering out a style of life in a certain set of surroundings. After a sufficient amount of hammering, certain patterns of evaluating and behaving tend to develop. Certain things are treated as right, or desirable, or worthy. These tend to become our values.

--Sidney B. Simon

Value: In the sense of an evaluation of an object of regard and the standards upon which evaluations are predicated. . . . Values in the sense of standards are "conceptions of the desirable". . . . For present purposes, in short, values are criteria or standards.

--Robin M. Williams, Jr.
By values, I mean those ideals, goals, norms which guide man's behavior; according to which he judges whether his behavior is right or wrong; which lead toward the betterment of himself and his fellow men, or toward their detriment; which enable him to discriminate between that which is good and that which is bad.

--Joseph P. Fitzpatrick, S. J.

I therefore find myself in an odd position: I am the starter of the value-making process, but as such I myself have no base to stand on that can tell me which values I should start making. In this role, then, I discover that I am the originator, the inventor, the creator of values. And the oddness of my position is that I cannot help it; I cannot escape being the creator of values, for I cannot escape choosing in the world. Even to choose not to choose is a choice. I am therefore "condemned," as it were, to the peculiar role of being a chooser and therefore a value creator in the world. . . . Man, as existential chooser, is the being by whom values come into the world. In the act of choosing, man brings values into being.

--Van Cleve Morris

Values are important in behavior, they concern standards of choice and the normative, and they involve some degree of commitment. . . . Very often the term, value, has become inextricably associated with other terms, such as "ought" and "should." Hume's powerful argument has been persuasive in favor of the notion that passing from existential to "should" statements is completely illogical and unfounded. Since this thinking is implicit in much of the modern value literature, values have been accorded the status of items vital to human action, moral in basic nature, and separated from rationally disposed reality.

--Donald N. Barrett

The student of human ecology can determine the practical repercussions of various proposed solutions to a problem. The decision as to which solution is preferable, however, must rest on a sense of priorities. We need to look beyond any immediate situation to its long-term effects on the total quality of human life. And this requires a system of values, criteria of what is essential to a humane and qualitively desirable way of life. . . literature can provide the environment for developing a sense of priorities, a sense of values. Problems in values are essentially problems of choice—and in many instances, of choice among differing, and sometimes conflicting, goods.

--Louise M. Rosenblatt

Values can be established only in terms of some purpose. There are no values except in light of purpose, whether that purpose is cosmic or human in origin.

--Thomas F. Powell
An important part of any culture is what the people believe in and what they hold dear—these are its values.

---Kevin Ryan

The final and unavoidable conclusion is that education—like all our social institutions—must be concerned with its final values, and this in turn is just about the same as speaking of what have been called "spiritual values" or "higher values." These are the principles of choice which help us to answer the age-old "spiritual" (philosophical? religious? humanistic? ethical?) questions: What is the good life? What is the good man? The good woman? What is the good society and what is my relation to it? What are my obligations to society? What is best for my children? What is justice? Truth? Virtue? What is my relation to nature, to death, to aging, to pain, to illness? How can I live a zestful, enjoyable, meaningful life? What is my responsibility to my brothers? Who are my brothers? What shall I be loyal to? What must I be ready to die for? ... it is possible that precisely these ultimate values are and should be the far goals of all education, as they are and should be also the far goals of psychotherapy, of child care, of marriage, the family, of work, and perhaps of all other social institutions.

---Abraham H. Maslow
CHAPTER II

VALUES: A FUNCTION OF EDUCATION

A Continuing Tradition

There is an historical and continuing connection between the values of a culture and the operation of its institutions, especially its educational system—a relationship which is important for the beginning teacher to understand. The American educational system, like the systems out of which it grew and on which it was partially based, has a particular concern with values, that is, with the fostering and preserving of ideals and values reflecting American society and traditions. Our schools are also concerned with the encouragement of the growth of the individual to his highest potential, including his mental, physical, moral and aesthetic growth, and the development of his ability to think clearly, to reason carefully, to make value judgments, to engage in decision-making, and thus to engage in the valuing process. The following chapter is intended to provide a foundation for the beginning teacher regarding the historical and ongoing commitment of the American school to such value development by its citizens and to a role of moral leadership in the community.

Values and American Education

Nearly every respected critic or commentator of the Twentieth Century—from Ortega y Gasset to John W. Gardner, from Paul Tillich to
Paul Goodman, from Kenneth Galbraith to Kenneth Keniston—has written of the changing character of modern institutions, the transfer or abdication of responsibilities, the weakening of authority, the reshuffling of political, economic and social priorities, and the profound shifting of the nature and structure of human values. America's institutions and the values they represent have not been unaffected.

Every society which has deemed itself civilized has wished its members to live within a personal and social code, a set of principles or beliefs from which its laws and institutions are loosely derived; every such society has also been concerned with the preservation and transmission of its most precious ideas, beliefs, customs, and values to succeeding generations. To this end, elaborate systems have been designed to teach the ways of a culture to the uninitiated, to foster respect for and even fear of its traditions, to guard against its deterioration, and generally to preserve the essentials of the cultural heritage. Actually, the institutions of a society not only become the embodiment of its values, but frequently have been designed in order to preserve those values and pass them on to posterity.

In America, the classic example among the institutions charged with this significant task is the public school. From its inception, the American public school has been concerned with the ideas, beliefs, and customs that have made up the cultural values of the nation. The earliest settlers brought their institutions and values with them, to prosper yet become uniquely American in their adopted environment. Some settlers might be said to have come here precisely to preserve those traditions and values that they felt unable to nurture in the
hostile, intemperate social and religious climate of Seventeenth Century Europe. Our public school, then, by its very nature, was designed to be the chief transmitter of the cultural heritage. Together with the church, to which it was closely tied and for which it prepared its scholars as churchmen, the school was the repository of those values the Colonists wished to preserve in their New World.

For the first century and a half of American growth, the school was the tamer, the civilizer of the wilderness children. Crude, but infinitely adaptable and genuinely responsive to the community, the early school reflected the environment and taught its values, both consciously by precept, and unconsciously by its curriculum and method of operation.

As the frontier expanded and waves of immigrants arrived, solving some problems while creating others, diverse cultural patterns were woven into the social fabric. The school, willingly or not, became the means to mold the heterogeneous peoples into a nation. In spite of the mixture of strains and ethnic backgrounds in the population, there was, along with an historical tradition, always somehow an assumption of a core of beliefs, an ethical tradition, a set of basic values that could be passed along.

When the public school system was founded, life in this country was relatively simple. Most citizens lived in rural areas or small towns, attended church, lived by very much the same moral code. The term "melting pot" was an apt metaphor, as people from a variety of backgrounds made their contributions to the unique blend of the American character. The pace was slower then, important issues were nearer home, and the decisions were not so large or so far-reaching in consequence.
Values, in this pre-industrial society, were relatively simple, consistently held, and generally presumed to be inculcated first by the home and the church and then reinforced uniformly by the schools.

But somewhere in the growing and developing of this nation, somehow in the phenomenal migrations to our shores, and in our catapult into the urbanized, technological world of the Twentieth Century, we became a pluralistic society. Scientific discoveries and new philosophies superseded some old, secure beliefs and shook our certitudes. Technological advances and a rising standard of living provided broader experience, greater opportunity, economic independence and personal freedom for many, but these advantages also loosened the bonds of familiar institutions, vitiated their power, and eliminated some of the pressures that had kept families intact. The powerful voices of authority were no longer at the head of the table or on the altar or behind the teacher's desk.

Yet in all this turmoil, the school was supposed to remain the preserver of the national heritage and the promoter of its social and ethical values. In the second half of the Twentieth Century, the Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association could still say,

A great and continuing purpose of education has been the development of moral and spiritual values. . . . The American people have rightly expected the schools of this country to teach moral and spiritual values. The schools have accepted this responsibility. . . . The men and women who teach in these schools, as responsible members of society, share its system of values. As educators, they are engaged in a vocation that gives a central place to values as guides to conduct.¹

Somehow, the school was expected to remain stable, its purposes unswerving, its foundations secure, and its values intact. Such are always society's expectations of its cultural agents and institutions.

The Cultural Task

As the primary agent of enculturation within a society, any educational system is permeated by the values of the culture it represents. Its design and operation, its curriculum, even its very existence, reflect the values of the culture. Anthropologists studying cultural transmission inform us that "the core values of a society must be the core values of its educational system," and furthermore that ". . . the educational system of a society is the means whereby traditional culture is preserved, and that any new values it transmits within one generation are fractional compared to the massive tradition it imparts."

The educational system and the values it represents are inextricably intertwined. The school is the community's institution, conceived out of a milieu of values which it purportedly reflects and transmits, responding to changes within the value-laden environment as they occur. But the essence of any school system, the heart of the educating process in which the school is engaged, is its concern with values. Robin Williams presents the case as follows:

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... The activity of educating represents preference, choice, hence evaluation. What is taught is not just an automatic reflection of an objective world—"objective" in the sense that no preferences are involved and no criteria of selection applied. Education cannot avoid dealing with values, either in the case of evaluations of the world or in the case of the standards in terms of which judgments of desirability are made. In those instances in which education really does its job, it gives hands and feet to feelings and values. It provides conceptual structure, defining and stabilizing the criteria for value-judgments and for the selection of objects of choice.\(^4\)

Some authorities, such as Sir Richard Livingstone, eminent Oxford educator and champion of the democratization of British schools, feel that education's concern with values is essential to maintain the quality of civilization itself:

Standards, right values, the science of good and evil—to implant these is an essential part of education. ... the quality of a civilization does not depend only on its science, economics or sociology, but even more on its standards, values, ideals, its sense of what is first-rate in life, its religion.\(^5\)

Such a view of education, with its strong emphasis on moral and spiritual guidance, is a classical view, derived, like so much else that is part of modern, democratic education, from early Greek models. Democratic education—that ideal that comes down to us from those early times—is inextricably connected with values, as studies of Greek education reveal. Werner Jaeger writes in his study called Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Education:

Every nation which has reached a certain stage of development is instinctively impelled to practice education. Education is the process by which a community preserves and transmits its physical and intellectual character. For the individual passes but the

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type remains. . . As man becomes increasingly aware of his own powers, he strives by learning more of the two worlds, the world without him and world within, to create for himself the best kind of life. . . Education, as practiced by man, is inspired by the same creative and directive vital force which impels every natural species to maintain and preserve its own type; but it is raised to a far higher power by the deliberate effort of human knowledge and will to attain a known end. From these facts certain conclusions follow. To begin with, education is not a practice which concerns the individual alone: it is essentially a function of the community. . . The formative influence of the community on its members is most constantly active in its deliberate endeavor to educate each new generation of individuals so as to make them in its own image. The structure of every society is based on the written or unwritten laws which bind it and its members. Therefore, education in any human community (be it a family, a social class, a profession, or some wider complex such as a race or a state) is the direct expression of its active awareness of a standard. Now, education keeps pace with the life and growth of the community, and is altered both by changes imposed on it from without and by transformations in its internal structure and intellectual development. And, since the basis of education is a general consciousness of the values which govern human life, its history is affected by changes in the values current within the community.6

If, as Jaeger says, education is the expression of the community's awareness of standards and values, and is changed by changes to those values, then, of course, American education today does encompass the values of American society and does have a moral commitment and a leadership role implied in its creation. Former United States Commissioner of Education Francis Keppel writes:

Jaeger's use of the word "education" is far broader than that to which Americans are accustomed. Paideia is more than the sum of institutions: it is the "creation of a higher type of man." The Greeks believed that education embodied the purpose of all human effort. It was, they held, the ultimate justification for the existence of both the individual and the community. For Jaeger a description of the schools as a part of the way of life of any

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nation was not enough: he sought a concept of value, a consciously pursued ideal.7

But the commitment of American schools to moral education and the fostering of values, while rooted in ancient ideals, and owing some debt to an accepted European tradition, is an intrinsic part of a larger commitment to fostering peculiarly American ideals and to becoming a great force in the democratization of the people. The idea was, says one statesman, that American education "must not only provide an education for everyone, but transmit the values of a democratic society and provide equal access for all to the best that education has to offer."8

Anthropologist Rhoda Metraux in studying American ideals and values, especially as they are embodied in the school system, writes of the unique nature of this process:

When we think of education in American terms, teaching and learning are bound up in our minds not only with values and performances and dreams, with enriching our heritage, with developing skills that will shape a future as yet unknown, but also, continuously, with the making of new Americans.

For we have believed that any individual, by wanting to do so, could become an American, and to a greater or lesser degree, could learn a whole new cultural orientation in a lifetime—a highly unusual belief.9

As a nation, we are, of course, highly unusual and exceptional, not just in our pursuit of the democratic ideal, but in expecting

7Ibid., p. 2.
8Ibid., p. 2.
schools to fulfill a major role in its future consummation. Samuel Holton, in *Understanding the American Public High School*, writes of "a developing tradition for using the school to teach those values which would improve the quality of democratic living." This is surely a noble, if nearly impossible, task, the origins of which must lie deep in the American psyche. Commissioner Keppel offers a philosophical base, when he states, "American education rests on two assumptions from which all else derives: the idea that man is potentially good and that this good can be brought about by education."

In actual practice, this function of education becomes a process in socialization—in the so-called "Americanization" of the populace:

Our free public high school has from the beginning discharged two paramount social functions, neither of which has burdened secondary education to anything like the same extent. The first of these is to build a common pattern of values and responses among adolescents from a diversity of class and ethnic backgrounds; the high school is a very important unit in our traditional system of melting pots. The second has been to help the youngsters, as we say, to better themselves.

The melting pot and mobility functions of the high school are complementary. In combination, they are peculiarly potent. The atmosphere of the high school is permeated by the values they generate when combined. The combination is synergistic, and it really works.

To some educators, this cultural and socializing function, the promoting of American ideals and values, is utterly central to the mission of American schools:

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11 Keppel, *op. cit.* p. 11.

... one can only agree with such British writers as Lasky and Brogan that American education is likely to be greatly misunderstood if it is viewed solely as a means of advancing and transmitting knowledge. Certainly, it does create and disseminate knowledge. However, another central function of the public schools and nonsectarian universities is the teaching of young people from diverse backgrounds in a set of common ideas and social standards. They teach "Americanism" perhaps more effectively by unwitting precept and example than by drill in creeds and forms. Our educational system is one of the great agencies of all time for inducing voluntary consensus and conformity.13

Moral Leadership and the American School

The commitment of the public schools to the promotion of American ethical ideals and values and to moral and cultural leadership is, interestingly enough, not generally viewed as any contradiction of the American principle of separation of church and state:

American democracy cannot select any system of religious faith as the sole basis for the values to which all Americans subscribe. Nevertheless these moral and spiritual values themselves command, with minor exceptions, the allegiance of all thoughtful Americans... .

It is not surprising that this should be so, for each of us has been surrounded from birth by an invisible network of values which guide and direct his life. However we may disagree on religious creeds, we can agree on moral and spiritual values. For that reason, we can usually agree in turn upon what constitutes good conduct in a particular situation... . The fact that we can agree to judge behavior in terms of common values and at the same time agree to differ with respect to the religious interpretation of the source of these values is an asset and an achievement of no mean importance.14

The fact is that the school never was intended to be a neutral, inert, impersonal repository of a culture's ways; at least so say

13 Williams, op. cit., p. 69.

14 Moral and Spiritual Values in the Public Schools, op. cit.
several of our educational authorities. Implicit in its mandate to preserve tradition is its responsibility to offer moral leadership.

No city in a great democracy can survive without education. Citizens who guard their schools guard their own future, and their best guardian is a leadership able to cultivate the common goals, the shared attitudes and values.

What Jaeger said about Greek culture and education can equally be applied to the Great Society of the United States in the Twentieth Century: the basis of education is a general consciousness of the values which govern human life.

Leadership's task is to state these values and to interpret them. American education, that great engine of the democracy, does not drive itself. It must be guided, not by one but by many, into a future of incalculable promise.  

But the moral leadership which so many agree is fundamental, is often found lacking. Former Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare John W. Gardner says,

Leaders worthy of the name, whether they are university presidents or senators, corporation executives or newspaper editors, school superintendents or governors, contribute to the continuing definition and articulation of the most cherished values of our society. They offer, in short, moral leadership.

So much of our energy has been devoted to tending the machinery of our complex society that we have neglected this element in leadership. I am using the word "moral" to refer to the shared values that must undergird any functioning society. The thing that makes a number of individuals a society rather than a population or a crowd is the presence of shared attitudes, habits and values, a shared conception of the enterprise of which they are all a part, shared views of why it is worthwhile for the enterprise to continue and to flourish. Leaders can help in bringing that about. In fact, it is required that they do so.

Other educators, philosophers, and theologians have underscored the need for moral leadership in education. Philosopher

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15 Keppel, op. cit., p. 163.

Jacques Maritain insists that although the first responsibility of the school deals with the intellect and knowledge, and though the direct responsibility for moral education belongs to the family group and the church, nevertheless the duty of the educational system in this regard is just as necessary. Knowledge, he states, is a general precondition necessary for virtue, for decent, generous and upright behavior, in the sense that "no right human life can have solidity, stability and duration without a vision of the world in which firm convictions about moral and spiritual values appears rationally found-
ed. . . .".\(^{17}\) Is it not the job of school and college educators, he asks, "to develop such a vision of the world and such firm convictions about moral and spiritual values—in other words, such an integrated knowledge destined to grow into real wisdom?"\(^{18}\)


\(^{18}\)Ibid.
CHAPTER III

VALUES: A RATIONALE FOR INSTRUCTION

The Mandate

If it is indeed the job of the School to offer moral leadership and instruction in values and the valuing process, then the mandate to the teacher to encourage growth in the valuing process in his classroom seems clear. The following rationale is an attempt to provide the beginning teacher an orientation to the need for such teaching, the near-impossibility of the assignment, and the urgency of the commitment each individual teacher must make to the valuing process in his own classroom.

The Ironic Contradictions

Society has had an off-hand way of discharging some of its most pressing responsibilities, with little understanding of the magnitude of a given problem and little real hope of following through to see that the problem has been solved or the conditions improved. The school is frequently given assignments which are difficult or even impossible to execute without genuine understanding of the parameters involved. If the school is to offer leadership and values instruction, the ironic contradictions in tackling such an assignment are manifest, and must be recognized by the teacher if they are to be overcome. First, there is a measure of blindness, if not total hypocrisy in the
assignment of this task, for the school is really expected to do that which society itself cannot or will not do. Keppel describes the irony this way:

The American people assign to the schools the task of putting the hope of perfectibility into practice—but they spend their own time worrying about more "practical" matters. The teacher is supposed to put into practice on weekdays what many Americans hear only in their churches on Sundays, and American schools are expected to transmit the publicly espoused values of the community even when the community itself often rejects them in practice.¹

Furthermore, there is a kind of double irony here—that at the very time when standards have become flexible and ethics situational, when dogmas have been shaken and principles renounced, when all our values have been scrutinized and even rejected by many—now society has come more and more to entrust the care and moral training of its young people to the school and to the other community or social agencies.

(The Y.M.C.A. must build a sound mind in a sound body; the Boy Scouts must teach honor; the Little League must develop sportsmanship; the art museum must give an appreciation of aesthetics; and the schools? They must do the rest! Theirs is the job of instilling patriotism, developing healthy attitudes, disciplining anti-social behavior, encouraging creative expression, building solid citizens, emphasizing the rewards of honest virtue, and setting personal standards and goals, while all the while continuing to teach skills and to transmit knowledge, which grows more sophisticated every day.)

The Paradox of Inescapability

But there is an even greater ironic element in the school's paradoxical assignment to handle values in the classroom. Now, when the church and the home both seem to have surrendered some of their precious age-old responsibilities to the school, ironically some educators wish to back off from any direct commitment to ethical education, hoping to espouse moral "neutrality," and disclaiming the teaching of values altogether.

But the awful irony in this is that educators cannot back off from the teaching of values, even if they should wish to, for values are there, right in the classroom—not only because they should be there, as a main mission of education, but also because they cannot help being there—for the entire educational system and the objectives it espouses are moral, and the school by its very existence makes a moral statement and conveys a multitude of values. All its rules, its management, its course offerings (which imply choices and preferences), the appointment of its teachers, the design of its buildings, and even the speech, manners, and dress of its faculty—all communicate values, whether we like it or not. In his critique of modern American society, Future Shock, Toffler writes,

Today it embarrasses many teachers to be reminded that all sorts of values are transmitted to students, if not by their textbooks then by the informal curriculum—seating arrangements, the school bell, age segregation, social class distinctions, the authority of the teachers, the very fact that students are in school instead of in the community itself. . . .

Furthermore, in addition to the values almost indigenous to the school's operation, teachers themselves communicate values, sometimes without real consciousness of their role in such an operation. In *Crisis in the Classroom*, Silberman reports, "Teachers are always and unavoidably moralizing to children about rules, values, and behavior, but they rarely think about the values they are communicating." He quotes Lawrence Kohlberg of Harvard, who has done so much research in value development in children, as saying, "Many teachers would be most mortified and surprised to know what their students perceive to be their moral values and concerns."  

The Answer -- A Commitment

Here, then, is the problem. It is not whether values belong in the school, nor whether we are willing or ready to teach values in the classroom, nor how or through what kind of lesson values shall be discussed (whether they should be "inculcated" by the school, for instance, as opposed to being "discovered" by the pupil). It is the very real fact that, like it or not, values are present in every lesson and in every classroom, transmitted constantly by everything the school does or tries to do, and thus the valuing process is a part of every child's education.

And if this is the problem, the solution is neither a value-free school nor a value-free teacher, for even if either were possible, it

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would not be desirable, since the very business of education has repeatedly been shown to be valuing. Rather, it is the firm contention of this study that in order to become efficacious, beneficial, and useful, the presence of values and value issues must be made conscious knowledge, and instruction in the valuing process must be made deliberate. And for the process to be made deliberate, the teacher must be made aware.

The need is for the aware teacher to make a commitment of a portion of his time, his resources, and himself to an examination of values in the classroom, and to make the valuing process a conscious, deliberate part of classroom instruction.

The challenge here is a very real one, and the importance of the problem can hardly be overestimated. Surely it is not too grandiose to believe that the future of democracy, American-style, is at stake in the commitment of the teacher and others to facilitating the valuing process of our youth, as an integral part of their education. Socrates has told us that the unexamined life is not worth living. For most of us, the bitter memories of the indoctrinated, unquestioning school children of Nazi Germany are an awesome reminder and a cogent justification for wanting the democratic school to teach its children to formulate and examine and test their own value systems. We are warned,

If the schools and colleges fail to rise to these challenges, there will be a steady slippage in our ability to cope with life-and-death problems in the world and in our own country, in our standards of morals and civility, in public taste, in people's capacity to wrestle with complex ideas and to weigh competing values.⁵

From the individual's (i.e., the child's) point-of-view, the whole point of education is to help the young person to make sense out of life, to clarify his experience, and thus to help him make wise choices (to help him learn to value). From the nation's point-of-view (i.e., from the long-range view that encompasses the future of all our children), the decision-making ability is absolutely imperative for the preservation of democratic ideals, because enlightened citizens are essential, if democracy is to be able to function. Eli Ginzberg, in *Values and Ideals of American Youth*, makes the point emphatically:

A decision made in the area of the moral should be a true decision based on the eternal verities. Since democracy is predicated on the ability of an individual to make choices based on reason, the fate of democracy will be determined by the success we have in creating decision-making values that are ethical, meaningful, consistent, and consciously chosen.\(^6\)

It is the considered opinion of this study that we cannot fail any longer to honor values in the classroom. To contemplate continuing as we have been operating, with values a hit-or-miss, occasional exercise or an often neglected area of exploration is to plan a genuinely destructive and counter-productive curriculum. Instead, the student must learn how to value, as part of the learning process, while he is still in school, so that later he will indeed be able to function as an intelligent, humane person, and an enlightened citizen, responsible for rational decisions in the future.

What is meant by the phrase "to value"? What does the process of valuing entail? To value is to prefer. In practicing valuing the

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individual is under the compulsion constantly to make decisions—to prefer one good or to accept one idea as being preferable to another. When the school does its job, when teachers rise to the challenge of fostering values, then the student emerges from his educational experience not only well-informed and equipped with necessary skills and cognitive learnings, but also able to make the choices he must make if he is to survive—or in Faulkner's words, not only to survive or to endure, but to "prevail."
CHAPTER IV

VALUES: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

An Approach to Values -- Teacher Awareness

If the connection between the valuing process and the education of the child is inevitable, and if values are undeniably present in the classroom, then a plan to make teachers aware of values, value transmission and the valuing process needs to be devised. An attempt at such a plan is the following conceptual framework, developed around the teacher's need for awareness--his awareness of himself as a communicator of values, and his awareness of his potential role as facilitator of the valuing process in a difficult and constantly changing world.

The Teacher as Communicator of Values

To be truly aware, the teacher must recognize the role he plays as a communicator of values. A teacher in a classroom transmits values to his students, whether he is conscious of the communication or not:

1. By virtue of the kind of person he is and the values he himself holds;
2. By virtue of his having become a professional educator, with all the values that are inherent in the role expectations attached to "teacher" even by his pupils;
3. By virtue of his being there in that classroom, set up by that community, and presumably reflecting the values of that community;
4. By virtue of the kind of teacher he is--how he treats his students, the traits he exemplifies, the materials he selects, the illustrations he offers, the relationships he develops, the model of teacher he becomes;

5. By virtue of his job as enlightener, preserver of the cultural heritage, enculturator, direct transmitter of values, facilitator in the valuing and the learning processes.

If we can accept these as the "givens" in the communication of values by the classroom teacher, then we must conclude that awareness of the nature, the magnitude, and the means of his value influence is fundamental for the teacher.

**Unconscious Communication -- As Role Model**

The teacher must become aware of himself with respect to the values he communicates unconsciously by example or model. Every parent knows that he is a model for his child, although often he is unaware of the actual messages he conveys. A teacher needs to be aware of the influence he has and the part he plays in the value development of the students in his charge.

Everyone does not play an equally important role in the re-creation and reshaping of values. But a far greater proportion of the populace than one might think has some share in the process.

Young people do not assimilate the values of their group by learning the words (trust, justice, etc.) and their definitions. They learn attitudes, habits, and ways of judging. They learn these in intensely personal transactions with their immediate family or associates. They learn them in the routines and crises of living, but they also learn them through song, stories, drama and games. They do not learn ethical principles; they emulate ethical (or unethical) people. They do not analyze or list the attributes they
wish to develop; they identify with people who seem to them to have those attributes. That is why young people need models, both in their imaginative life and in their environment, models of what man at his best can be.¹

Awareness of his potential role as model in the classroom implies that the teacher will try to be an example worthy of emulation, and that at least he will become conscious of his own values and the way they operate in his teaching. Ideally, every teacher would be a perfect model—a mature, competent, humane person of honor and integrity, with many talents and skills and a sense of his own identity and values—one who knows himself and the precepts and principles by which he lives and one who understands that the frame of reference through which he perceives life will influence how he teaches and what he teaches his students. "The values we show," one educator writes, "are the ones the kids learn."²

Silberman, in Crisis in the Classroom, bears out exactly this point. "What educators must realize, moreover," he says, "is that how they teach and how they act may be more important than what they teach. The way we do things, that is to say, shapes values more directly and more effectively than the way we talk about them."³

Teachers need to become conscious of the difference between what they preach and what they practice, between the models they wish their students to follow, and the models they themselves are. One


²Ibid., p. 70.

³Silberman, op. cit., p. 9.
teacher, writing in School Activities, in describing her attempts to put into practice the "good life," (which for her is being needed and wishing "to serve"), becomes conscious of the example she sets and the differences between precept and behavior. "Ideas of my young students," she writes, "will develop around my operative values, rather than around my conceived values."^4

Furthermore, teachers need to be aware of the "contagiousness" of values in certain environments and to realize that some ideals and values are better "caught" than taught if the environment in which they can be nurtured is created:

Not only is self-discipline basic to democratic social life, but there is a contagiousness to democratic values. It is easier to respect those who are respectful of you. . . . Indeed, the teaching of democratic values is difficult in an autocratic setting. If there is any single characteristic of the democratic teacher, it is the quality of respecting and conveying his respect for his students. Respect for students is conveyed in the manner in which the teacher addresses them, the considerations which he expresses in making assignments, and the care with which he corrects their mistakes. Conversely, the teacher who is inconsiderate conveys his lack of concern for democracy.5

It is a basic psychological concept that consciousness of behavior is the precursor to control. The point with respect to values is that if the teacher wishes to be the controlling factor in what takes place in his classroom, he had better become aware of those values that are being exemplified, communicated and taught in his classes.


^5 Holton, op. cit., p. 280.
All of us teach values all the time through our behavior. But the values we teach are often not those we wish to teach or think we are teaching. . . . Much of our value teaching is unrecognized by ourselves as well as by our students. . . . Our values are whatever normative understandings underlie our attitudes and actions. They are the choices we make, the assignments of relative worth which we consciously decide upon or subconsciously arrive at. . . . They may be inchoate, never articulated even to ourselves—but they are the real preferences implicit in what we say and do. . . . We cannot speak or act in any human relationship without communicating values because to act is to act on some understanding of the desirable. Since we exist, we must act, even if only in choosing inaction, and since we act, we must express to other humans the foundation, or to be optimistic, the "reason" for our action.6

The Conscious Communication of Values

While the teacher needs to be made aware of the unconscious transmission of values in the classroom, he also needs to become aware of the opportunity he has for promoting conscious valuing among his students. In this effort, he can find support from a variety of sources. The National Education Association has called the development of moral and spiritual values "basic to all other educational objectives,"7 and furthermore, has made this pronouncement, "Education uninspired by moral and spiritual values is directionless."8

Other professional organizations support the conscious communication of values and the introduction of the valuing process into the curriculum. For example, the Commission on the English Curriculum of the National Council of Teachers of English has stated:

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7 Moral and Spiritual Values, op. cit., p. 6.

8 Ibid., p. 7.
The major purposes of American education are to produce persons who are self-directive to the point that they can cultivate wholesome and satisfying personal lives, can achieve vocational competence in an occupation suited to their interests and needs, and possess knowledge, values, and attitudes which will make them constructive participants in our democratic society.9

Individual teachers, also, have written of their commitment to conscious value communication. The head of a London Infant School says,

Reading for what? If my children get perfect reading scores and then grow up to read only the tabloids and movie magazines, I shall have failed. My job is to develop attitudes and values as well as skills—to make music, art, poetry, beauty, experiences they will enjoy throughout their lives. I don't want to develop a generation of proficient readers who lack humane values.10

Perhaps one of the most eloquent statements comes from an American teacher:

To educate at all is to educate for something. If one does not intend to change the student, why bother to teach at all? ... At the very least, one intends to open up doors and windows, to help the student discover for himself some of his potentialities for doing, thinking, feeling, valuing. How we will educate depends both upon our values and upon our knowledge and our ideas concerning reality.11

The Teacher As Facilitator

Once a teacher has become aware of himself as a communicator of values, he needs to recognize the role he can play as a facilitator of the valuing process among his students.


11Williams, op. cit., p. 57.
First, he can be a resource himself. The really aware teacher needs to have some background in values—to know something of their nature, how they are acquired, how they change, how significant they are in the child's development. He needs to have some breadth of experience and study of value issues and value conflicts in whatever guise they may appear, so that he may recognize opportunities for the valuing process when they arise in his classroom. Ideally, he will be aware of his own value system, and will know himself well enough to recognize his own value bias and to distinguish it when he finds it coloring his views or his actions.

Fortunately, it is not difficult for a teacher to become aware of the whole valuing process as it applies to education and to become sensitized to value issues as they might conceivably be a part of his lessons. Literature in the field of psychology and child development takes up the formation of values as a fundamental step in the growth process. Cultural anthropology has produced significant research in value transmission, both in Western society and in "primitive" cultures. A large body of literature exists in moral education, reflecting the most recent educational thinking and the ongoing dialogue between religious and secular philosophers and curriculum reformers.

Actually, the teacher can find a body of information on the subject of values and the valuing process in his own professional literature and in material published by educational organizations. (See Selected Bibliography appended.) One professional association, the National Council for the Social Studies, has recently made values the subject of its annual publication for teachers (Forty-First Yearbook,
1971) and the theme of its national conference, held in Boston, in November, 1972.

In a very practical vein, the aware teacher can find published materials with values-oriented lessons and suggested models for values discussions applicable to his own classroom. Techniques of value clarification and strategies for encouraging the valuing process may be found in the works of Sidney B. Simon, Louis E. Raths, Merrill Harmin and others. Many in-service programs for teachers as well as teacher preparation courses at colleges and universities now offer simulation games and other techniques for facilitating the valuing process, and sessions and seminars in value clarification, largely through the work of Simon and his disciples.

From the more scholarly journals through the educational textbooks to the popular press, the teacher now has available a wealth of information on values and on the role he may play as a resource in fostering valuing in his classroom.

In addition to becoming a well-informed resource himself, the teacher must develop certain skills and knowledge if he is to become a true facilitator in the valuing process. He must become aware of the needs of his students, particularly the need of the adolescent to participate in the valuing process, and the conditions in the school environment that impede that process, and he needs to become adept at trend analysis, so that valuing may continue, despite the environment and despite the changing times in which we live.
The Adolescent's Need to Value

To be aware, the teacher must recognize his students' need to acquire a sense of values and to have practice in the valuing process. Do adolescents need the valuing process? A majority of psychologists, anthropologists, and sociologists seem to agree on the paramount importance of values and their formation in the growth of the adolescent to maturity.\(^1\) The growth toward maturity is itself in part the acquisition of a sense of values, an evolving, shifting sense of the relationship between notions of the ideal and the real—the theoretical model and the genuine experience.

A Patterned Process

Most first values are acquired unconsciously in an "either/or," child-centered world. Surrounded by loving protectors, the very young child has no life-sustaining choices to make. And he is protected (from the consequences of the choices he does make) by parents or surrogate authority, by the amused tolerance of society at the first efforts of a learning child, and by the general good will of men toward the young. The child, with all his sense antennae operating and his capacity for feeling not yet inhibited, gradually acquires, by both affective and cognitive means, the beginning of a system of values. Long before he matriculates at his first school, the child has thus acquired modes of operation, attitudes toward himself and others and indeed toward life itself, and a whole gallery of responses to specific stimuli and

\(^1\)See the works of Allport, Keniston, Kohlberg, Kluckholn, Riesman, and others listed in Selected Bibliography appended.
defenses against the vicissitudes of life. His early values have been acquired rather unquestioningly and unconsciously from the home environment.

But in the adolescent years, the pattern changes. The emotionally toned inner world of the child-becoming-man is now bombarded by new experiences, new feelings, and new knowledge, as his outer world expands ever wider. His own role changes and his needs and expectations and responsibilities alter accordingly. He even "tries on" new roles, adopts new attitudes, and explores new philosophies, which later may be tested and assimilated or discarded. The process, although dynamic, is often hidden, sometimes camouflaged by a seeming apathy or nonchalance about life. As Dwight Burton describes it,

Few adolescents would admit openly to an interest in "philosophy of life." Yet teenagers are keenly concerned with values, with the things that people live for, and with the motives that impel men. The "Omar Khayyam" period has long been associated with the adolescent experience, and WELTSCHMERZ, sometimes serving as a defense mechanism, is a hallmark of teen years. Often the adolescent has to carry on a lonely tussle with concepts of right and wrong. Typically, adolescence is a time of outward cynicism and inward idealism.13

Such a growth process would appear to be complex and multi-layered; it deeply and poignantly involves and revolves around the "self"--the developing personality and soul of the individual--and its relationship to other people. Friedenburg, in The Vanishing Adolescent, writes, "Adolescence is not simply a physical process; there is more to it than sexual maturation. It is also--and primarily--

a social process, whose fundamental task is a clear and stable self-
identification."\(^{14}\)

In that case, what could more clearly answer the adolescent's need for self-identification than for the aware teacher to include the valuing process as part of the daily teaching/learning situation in his classes? Educators have often been accused of neglecting the whole range of the student's feelings, of concentrating on cognitive operations, to the neglect of the emotional side of the student's nature. For years, proponents of more affective education have insisted that education as currently practiced does not consider the needs of the adolescent to come to terms with himself, to get close to his real feelings, to clarify his own experience, and generally to see his place in the scheme of things.

Implications of the Social Scientists

The aware teacher need only look to the work of the social scientists to confirm the adolescent need for valuing as part of his growth process. Significant implications for education are contained in the writings of Carl Rogers (1969), Jerome Bruner (1963), B. F. Skinner (1948), Nevitt Sanford (1969) and others, regarding the need for individualized learning opportunities and adequate decision-making and valuing experiences. Kohlberg (1970) has written extensively of the absolute need the child has to develop moral values and of the in-escapable succession of stages through which he must pass as he learns to value.

The child, wrote Dewey in 1920, "lives in the world of imaginative values and ideas which find only imperfect outward embodiment." In his view, the child's experience in the outer world then becomes a process in the discovery of meaning:

To learn from experience is to make a backward and forward connection between what we do to things and what we enjoy or suffer from things in consequence. Under such conditions, doing becomes a trying; an experiment with the world to find out what it is like; the undergoing becomes instruction--discovery of the connection of things. . . . Experience is primarily an active-passive affair; it is not primarily cognitive.16

Then, as experience widens, independence increases, and the need for valuing and the responsibility for decision-making become more significant and inescapable. Rosenblatt writes,

It must not be forgotten that the student--no matter whether he is a young child or a college boy soon to enter adult life--is already functioning in society. He has to make choices; he must set up goals for himself in his daily life; he must develop a sense of values.17

Educators such as Postman and Weingartner, Harold Taylor, Paul Goodman, and Gerald Weinstein have advocated the structuring of the curriculum around the needs of the adolescent: for identity, for self-esteem, and for understanding and acceptance of himself. Weinstein (1970) considers the "self" so central as an adolescent concern and such an integral part of the learning experience that he has consistently promoted the study of the developing self in all parts of the school


curriculum. He has designed a three-tiered curriculum model, with the concerns and needs of the self as the basis for planned experiences.

If, as Weinstein says, today's adolescent suffers from feelings of "self-rejection, disconnectedness, and powerlessness," then what better way to answer these fears than to offer practice in the valuing process, which should help the student (1) to accept himself by discovering his own values; (2) to make connections with others by testing his values against those of other people, other systems, even other worlds; and (3) to gain power over his world by clarifying experience and improving understanding.

The Inhibiting School Environment

But the aware teacher must understand that in spite of the obvious need of the adolescent for the valuing process, the learning environment of the school has often discouraged or even prevented the student from engaging in the valuing process during his school years. For much too long and in far too many cases, our youth have been permitted to go through a highly structured and sophisticated program of schooling without having been offered any real chance to think seriously about value issues, to resolve value conflicts in any area, or even to examine the values they themselves live by. The aware teacher needs to be able to identify those factors in the school environment which contribute to this incredible condition.

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Often, the cause of this crippling legacy is not difficult to identify and is correctible; frequently, it needs only a group of thoughtful, conscientious, aware teachers. The fault may lie in an overcrowded syllabus, so that attention needs to be given to a restructuring of learning priorities, or a weeding out of curricular materials. Sometimes the fault lies in the materials themselves—for example, the simplified "workbook approach" which implies learning if the blanks have been filled, or poor editorial comments and gloss notes which provide simplistic answers, or the inflexible arrangement which fails to recognize different instructional levels and individual differences and provides no opportunities for in-depth studies, open-ended discussions, or alternative learning styles. The burden, then, naturally falls upon the aware teacher, who must supplement his textual restrictions, develop his own innovations, and counterbalance the limitations of the system.

Another deterrent may be the teacher himself. Sometimes the methodology of the teacher does not permit value considerations—for instance, the preconceived lesson that precludes digressions into value-related areas no matter how urgent the need of the class, or the lecture of the authoritarian teacher who tells the "correct" answer, gospel-fashion, a practice which effectively cuts off value examination or indeed the exploration of any other possible answers. The aware teacher, however, should be able to use an array of methods, including some of the more creative and innovative approaches, designed to depart from the limitations of the textbook and to require the student to make value decisions on his own. The aware teacher also needs to develop
specific teaching skills, such as planning the learning opportunities, expanding the resources of his classroom, using small-group work, increasing student participation, trying simulation games, and cultivating higher order questioning.

Sometimes the valuing process is inhibited not by the lesson or the teacher directly but by the "atmosphere" in the classroom. The high risk of peer group criticism is compounded by the high risk of teacher disapproval, so that honest opinions are rarely proffered and true discussion is never carried out. The aware teacher needs to know that in addition to preparing material for all his lessons he must prepare his own unique teaching style, his own relationships with students and his own approach to problems that arise in his classroom. He has to create, quite literally, an "atmosphere" in which the young learner will be disposed to discuss controversial questions, with no risk to his grade, his image, or his dignity as a person. In such an atmosphere, the approach to learning problems, even discipline, is consistent, orderly and understandable. Occasionally, the new or inexperienced teacher dare not raise "outside" or controversial issues, because of his own feelings of inadequacy or his inability to cope with disciplinary cases or with administrative disapproval. It may be comforting to know that with experience and growth as a teacher there is a concomitant development in confidence as well as competence.

Sometimes our students are short-changed of value development by de facto conditions such as segregated facilities, outdated textbooks and limited resources—conditions about which the individual teacher may feel he can do very little. However, it is much too easy
to blame the legacy of stunted value development and impoverished moral and mental growth on any physical environment. Awareness of value issues, willingness to make valuing a deliberate part of the instructional process, openness to new ideas and conflicting opinions, and readiness to give of themselves and their resources to make the valuing process effective—these are the characteristics teachers everywhere can develop, regardless of their school environment.  

Finally, the school environment may be deliberately and officially hostile to the valuing process. When the opportunity to examine values is prevented by misguided administrative policy or the influence of powerful community leaders, the students are the victims. The official posture in such cases seems to be one of pseudo-neutrality on anything related to values—all in spite of the hidden value messages being broadcast by every school every day.

All such arrangements send unspoken messages to the student, shaping his attitudes and outlook. Yet the formal curriculum continues to be presented as though it were value-free. Ideas, events, and phenomena are stripped of all value implications, disembodied from moral reality.

Worse yet, students are seldom encouraged to analyze their own values and those of their teachers and peers. Millions pass through the experience of this study which involved visitations to twenty-three elementary and secondary schools in Massachusetts, the valuing process was taking place (or was not taking place) without regard to the physical or financial limitations of the schools. (See Appendix B for names of schools visited.) Teachers who facilitated the valuing process did so under the best and/or the worst environmental conditions. From these observations, the more significant determinants appeared to be the individual educator's consciousness and sensitivity to value issues, his willingness to devote time to ensure that values were indeed examined and discussed, and the freedom he felt he had to pursue the process wherever it should lead.

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19 In the experience of this study which involved visitations to twenty-three elementary and secondary schools in Massachusetts, the valuing process was taking place (or was not taking place) without regard to the physical or financial limitations of the schools. (See Appendix B for names of schools visited.) Teachers who facilitated the valuing process did so under the best and/or the worst environmental conditions. From these observations, the more significant determinants appeared to be the individual educator's consciousness and sensitivity to value issues, his willingness to devote time to ensure that values were indeed examined and discussed, and the freedom he felt he had to pursue the process wherever it should lead.
education system without once having been forced to search out the contradictions in their own value systems, to probe their own life goals deeply, or even to discuss these matters candidly with adults and peers.  

The aware teacher needs to recognize these conditions in the school environment, and to alter them wherever he can. He needs to strive to broaden or change official policy and to convince others of the outright necessity for maturing students to develop, examine and test values. We are warned what failure to help young people to identify and clarify their values will do:

Nothing could be better calculated to produce people uncertain of their goals, people incapable of effective decision-making under conditions of overchoice. Super-industrial educators must not attempt to impose a rigid set of values on the student; but they must systematically organize formal and informal activities that help the student define, explicate and test his values, whatever they are.

The Capacity for Trend Analysis

The teacher who wishes to facilitate the valuing process must recognize the problems that the larger environment entails, especially the changing world in which we live. He needs to develop some skill in trend analysis—that is, to be able to perceive change and to identify the particular problems that change imposes. Further, he needs to become aware of the responses he can make in handling the valuing process, against such a background of change.

20 Toffler, op. cit., p. 369.

21 Ibid., p. 370.
Values in a Changing World

Not only has the surface appearance of modern America changed—with glass-and-gleam high-rise cities, suburban sprawl, the ubiquitous automobile, and the ribbons of highways that tie us together, but also the entire way of life for millions has been profoundly altered. Industrial competence, technological progress, and continuous expansion have meant improved working conditions, greater employment, and more purchasing power for millions, and these benefits in turn have provided opportunities for education, recreation, and travel—blessings that once were the exclusive privilege of the rich.

But more is involved in these changes than attainment of a better standard of living or the provision of creature comforts or freedom from want for nearly everybody. The culture itself has changed: the beliefs and ethics and values by which the society functions.

Many say that the old values are gone, that America has now changed beyond recognition and there are no values which hold for this moment in time in this place. The pessimists and the doomsday prophets have decried the inequities and contrasts that co-exist in our gadget-strewn, plastic-coated world—our unbelievable poverty amid undreamed-of affluence, our reckless abuse of resources in greedy pursuit of material things, while our social problems remain unsolved or un-noticed and our environment becomes polluted. The Sunday supplements feed on our fears, and glib journalists in the more sensational tabloids present a jaundiced view of the state of society, while sentimental traditionalists lament the loss of "the good old days," the current lack
of respect for laws and regulations, and the liberality of legal interpretations that produce permissiveness and changing values.

The point to be made for the teacher concerned with values is his need to perceive the existence of constant and continuing change in the goals and values of our society, and to accept this condition as a fact of contemporary American life. Against the backdrop of such change, it might well be asked what should the aware teacher expect to be able to do? Can an educational system even hope to accomplish its objective, the enculturation of its young? Is there any solace to offer those who feel a void left by the abandonment of Puritan standards or Greek ideals or the Frontier code or Victorian morality, or whatever they felt represented the "American way of life" in the past? The answer would seem to be that there is hope. The aware teacher can indeed come to grips with the problem if he will try to develop a few basic understandings.

The First Understanding: A Non-Static World

One response is that first of all, ours never was a static world. All societies, all cultures evolve from other, sometimes very different, cultures, but adapt in differing ways to events and conditions in the environment. Perspectives, attitudes, philosophies, and values change in response to new experiences, new discoveries, new theories, and new knowledge. Only the most closed society could dare hope to preserve its folkways unchanged or to pass on its values unadulterated to the next generation. American culture was not only an open society, open in the sense that it was an amalgamation of the continuous in-pouring of the habits and ideals of numerous foreign cultures,
but it was also a dynamic, changing, restless society, with an emphasis on the present and the future, rather than a commitment to the past.

The aware teacher needs to perceive change as a constant factor in American history. The country was created by people who wanted change—relief from oppression, a new start, a second chance in life, a representative voice in government, a territory to be explored, a stake to be claimed, an opportunity to be taken for a new and better way of life. Even the rhetoric to describe our history echoes "change" everywhere—pathfinding, trailblazing, homesteading, frontier life, Yankee ingenuity, taming the wilderness, the Pioneer spirit, the opening of the West, and so on.

The Second Understanding: Renewal

Another perspective one may offer the teacher is that values do get re-created. They do not have one single life—having been born in the spirit of one man or one civilization—after which they die forever. Individuals who feel that the "old values" are dead or lost, never to reappear, simply do not understand the evolving nature of man or of civilization.

Nor do values, having been once established, remain static, imperishable, safe and intact, in cold storage to be drawn upon as needed, or to be handed down neatly packaged to the younger generation by parents, clergymen, and teachers. Values can diminish or they can be preserved and strengthened; they can disintegrate or they can grow. They are not Band-Aids to be applied to the hurts of society; they are the expression of the regenerative power of the human spirit. The
creation or the re-creation of values is an on-going, vital, functioning process—like life itself or like man himself. As Gardner writes,

It is an abiding characteristic of man to believe that the old virtues are disappearing, the old values disintegrating, the old, good stern ways no longer honored. Many people today seem to think that our values, our morality as a people, our devotion to virtue and justice resemble a reservoir that was filled long ago (vaguely, about the time of our grandfathers) and has been seeping away ever since. But our grandfathers thought that the reservoir had been filled by THEIR grandfathers and had been seeping away ever since. And their grandfathers thought the same. Why isn't the reservoir empty?

The answer is that the moral order undergoes regeneration as well as decay. Joseph Campbell has written:

Only birth can conquer death. . . . Within the soul, within the body social, there must be—if we are to experience long survival—a continuous "réurrence of birth" to nullify the unremitting recurrences of death.

Nowhere is this more true than in the realm of values. Men are always corrupting the old symbols, drifting away from the old truths. Give us a clean, clear fresh idea or ideal, and we can promise within one generation to render it positively moldy. We smother our values in ritual and encrust them with social observances that rapidly become meaningless. But while some are losing their faith, others are achieving new spiritual insights; while some are growing slack and hypocritical in the moral dimension of their lives, others are bringing a new meaning and vitality to moral striving.  

The Third Understanding: Cultural Shifts

A third response is that the aware teacher needs to understand that profound shifts in values do occur, reflecting the transformations occurring in any culture. It should not surprise anyone that a restructuring of the composition of a population, or the dissolution of a former colonial empire, or the achievement of political independence of a nation

would result in adoption of whole new sets of values. In this century, America has been deeply influenced by two major world wars, a worldwide depression, shifts in the balance of political and economic power, technological growth, and our own emergence as the most powerful nation in the world. We have also been affected by the spread of new social, economic and political movements, so that our priorities in government, in welfare, in social reform, in education, have all been altered, and therefore our values as well.

Cultural anthropologists have studied the shifts in values that have resulted from profound changes in the society. Spindler (1963) reports a shift in American culture from what he calls "traditional" values to "emergent" values. He views the traditional values as including: respect for thrift and self-denial; belief in hard work as a means to achieve success; faith in the individual rather than in the group; and an abiding concern for the future. The emergent values toward which he feels we are shifting include: an emphasis on sociability, group action, and getting along with others; a more relativistic moral code which rejects absolutes; a pleasure-oriented, present-time-oriented perspective; and an other-directed concern for group harmony.23

To these changes, these major shifts in values, Spindler feels educators must adapt:

The anthropologist, and I speak as one but not for all, sees culture as a goal-oriented system. These goals are expressed, patterned, lived out by people in their behaviors and aspirations in the form of values--objects or possessions, conditions of existence, features of personality or character, and states of mind, that are

23 Spindler, op. cit., p. 40.
conceived as desirable and act as motivating determinants of behaviors. It is the shifts in what I believe to be the core values in American culture, and the effects of these shifts on education today, that I wish to discuss. These shifts in values will be seen as the conditions of life to which education and educators, whether progressives, experimentalists, conservatives, or in-betweens, must adapt—and to which they are adapting, albeit confusedly. My emphasis within the value framework will be upon shifts in the conception of the desirable character type, since education can never be freed from the obligation to support, if not produce, the features of personality and social character deemed desirable in society.\textsuperscript{24}

The Fourth Understanding: The Task Redefined

A fourth understanding for the aware teacher to achieve is a realization that our task may be ill-conceived. It may be that no classroom is capable of transmitting values in a state of flux, and the old idea of enculturating is simply no longer viable. Instead of attempting to impose one set of rigid values on our young, perhaps we should be redefining the task.

Our task then would not be to impose our values, but to foster the process by which values are acquired. Our job would not be solely to enculturate but to teach a past cultural heritage plus an ability to think, to discriminate, to engage in decision-making, and to make value judgments. In many disciplines, especially in the sciences but also in mathematics and social studies, the curriculum now stresses means, rather than ends, process rather than product. In the realm of values, the job of the school has come to be not just the passing on of society's folkways and standards variously labelled American, but the promoting of

\textsuperscript{24} Spindler, op. cit., p. 76.
the process by which students can acquire and preserve a set of humane values.

We need to equip our students to engage in this process. We need to offer them practice in testing values. We need to let them recognize the values they already hold—a consciousness-raising and clarifying experience. We need to permit teachers to present value conflicts to children, to be resolved, it is hoped, by them. We need to encourage educators to pursue value-laden issues, to elicit provocative questions, and to welcome difficult, even conflicting solutions. Our task then becomes one of acquainting students with questions rather than answers, of leading pupils to think through a problem and then tentatively to reach an answer.
CHAPTER V

VALUES: THE ENGLISH CLASS AS LOCUS

Literature Study and the Valuing Process

In the American secondary school, the pre-eminent setting for the discovery of values, for the consideration of value-related issues, for the exploration of conflicting value systems—for the whole valuing process—is the English class, most particularly the literature class.¹

If there is one subject area within the organization of the traditional secondary school that seems especially suited for the nurturing of the valuing process, it has to be the English class. True, any class anywhere can indeed be the setting for a consideration of values. In high school, the social studies department examines the political and social values which underlie public policies and illuminate the important events and movements of the past. Foreign language teachers usually attempt to acquaint their students with the history and culture and values of other nations or other civilizations. The art and music classes and any of those subjects loosely classified as humanistic or creative try to communicate aesthetic values. Even the science classes try to pose moral questions, such as those related to the application of scientific knowledge to industry, the establishing of priorities in medical

¹ NOTE: In this study, the term "English class" will be construed as being a literature class. For explanation of the near-interchangeability of these terms in this context and the restriction of this plan to literature study, see Assumptions and Delimitations, page 6.
research, the utilization of environmental resources, and the limits of experimentation—the answers to which are based on values.

Although any subject area can be the jumping-off place for a serious consideration of the values that motivate human behavior, there are cogent arguments for the establishment of the secondary English class, especially literature study, as the ideal locus for the valuing process. It is the contention of this study, set forth in the following chapter, that the one subject area which can best and most easily assume the responsibility for the deliberate inclusion of the valuing process is the English class, most specifically, in the study of literature.

One of the Humanities

Literature, as a humanistic study, is concerned with human values, with answering eternal questions about the worth of life, the uses men make of their lives, the hopes and fears they suffer, the hierarchy of values they set up, and the manner in which those values determine the quality of life.

As one of the humanities, literature not only can permit the study of human values but can serve as a means for examining philosophical and ethical values. The study of literature in the English class thereby takes on an added significance and an awesome responsibility in the lives of young people. Douglas Bush, in an article in The Educational Record, writes of this added duty of English as one of the humanities:

The "humanities" in the original meaning of this and kindred words, embraced chiefly history, philosophy, and literature. These were
the studies worthy of a free man, that ministered to homo sapiens, man the intellectual and moral being, and not to homo faber, the professional and technical expert.

The study of literature... has had to take over the responsibilities that used to be discharged by philosophy and divinity... Most young people now get their only or their chief understanding of man's moral and religious quest through literature... Most of the young people I see find in literature, literature of the remote past as well as of the present, what they cannot find in textbooks of psychology and sociology, the vision of human experience achieved by a great spirit and bodied forth by a great artist.²

An Expanding Role

How does the study of literature accomplish this task? In literature study, the student is helped to develop his own value system by encountering in books the many values men live by. His reading about characters who have had to make ethical and moral choices and his evaluations of these actions provide him with a standard for thinking about his own life choices, his own values. Study of great pieces of literature can present to the adolescent for the first time in his life the many dimensions, heretofore unimaginable, of human living—the kinds of men that do indeed people our earth and the values that dictate and control their actions.

Much that takes place in serious literary study is an experience in discovering, exploring, and extending the student's world. A piece of literature is a view of the world, or a part of it, from the author's point of view, and from a particular scheme of values. Literature is not factual or objective in a scientific sense, or even in the sense that other bodies of knowledge are largely factual information. Great

literature, even when it turns to biography, essays, or memoirs, is written with a personal touch and guided by a personal value system. Unlike mathematics or science texts, works of literature, which become the "texts" of English, are generally written with an acknowledged bias and from a particular perspective. Acquaintance with that viewpoint and with that world through serious, analytical study under a competent, aware teacher allows the student to expand his world and refine his own value system, with a consequent deepening and synthesizing of the valuing process.

Through the teaching of literature, the teacher can help to awaken the minds of his pupils and give breadth and depth and genuine meaning to the responses they make to their experiences. All this is part of the development of insight and understanding on the part of students. Young persons in secondary school are just becoming aware of the problems of living, of the clash of ideologies, of conflicts in values. Their universe is expanding. Literature study provides countless examples of personal crises, seemingly unsolvable problems, and new, strange philosophies, life styles, and value systems. The literary experience can provide a frame of reference, a perspective, through which the student may view himself and his place in the cosmos. Or it can provide a vision of life, the author's depiction of his image of life, as it can be, as it might be, or even as it must not ever be.

Discovery and Exploration

Under a perceptive, aware teacher, the study of literature can do more than present an author's vision of his world. It can be the
means for the teacher to help a student discover his own sense of values. Having students read literature and then expose it to serious reflection and discussion, according to Fowler (1965), are primary ways through which the teacher assists the maturing adolescent to accomplish one of the most important tasks of his development: the discovery and organization of his own values and the formulation of his own philosophy of life. As Fowler envisions it:

The teacher of fiction introduces his students to the world of men and women, to their struggles and passions, decisions and indecision, their strivings for love, fame, or happiness. As the student observes human beings and their interaction, and their conflict with themselves, with each other, or with forces beyond their control, he learns much about himself, about life, and about his own values.

The world of fiction can enlarge his concept of humanity, and of the dimensions possible to man's life. As he learns to look at the novel or the short story as a work of art, he becomes aware of the ways in which the artist has struggled to shape his views of the world and of human beings into significant form. But the central meaning of his experience with literature, the thing that will keep him reading, is finding kinship with men of all periods of time and of many different cultures, and his understanding of their search for answers to problems he recognizes as his own. 3

Helping students in this perception of the problems of others through the study of literature is in part the facilitation of an educational process, a growth experience. It is also in part the facilitation of a process of self-identification in which the adolescent seeks to find his place in the scheme of things, tries to view his own personal feelings in some kind of perspective, perhaps matched or contrasted with those of the characters he reads about, and possibly for the first time tries to examine the values he himself holds dear. Rodgers (1968) defines it this way:

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Besides developing a student's power to create, literature also explores the values which youth seeks to define. The yearning and strife which the young adolescent feels can be somewhat relieved by induction into literature that deals with the human condition. . . . Through the broadening social experience he receives through literature, the student sees how other men have come to terms with the problems of life. The vicarious emotional experience afforded by literature also helps him to view his personal feelings in a broader perspective. Finally, the intellectual experience of entertaining the best of what has been thought and said throughout the centuries leaves him with an understanding of the values men have found of lasting worth in life and literature.4

The latter idea that literature can function as a means to knowing one's self and one's values simply echoes the writings of classical scholars like Newman and Pater and Arnold in the Nineteenth Century, and modern educators like those of the "Great Books" movement in recent times. It was Matthew Arnold, that symbol of the classic Victorian attitude toward learning, who wrote, "In our culture, the aim being to know ourselves and the world, we have as the means to this end, to know the best which has been thought and said in the world. . . . I assert literature to contain the materials which suffice for thus making us know ourselves and the world."5

A Humanizing Experience

But literature study does more than that. The teacher of literature has at his command the means to help his students to grow, to mature, to realize their fullest capabilities, to develop their values, and to become more human. As one educator expresses it,


Books help bring out a potential humanity, lead the individual toward his full status as a human being—in a word, help him to mature or grow up. By growing up, clearly I mean the realizing of certain qualities or attitudes that are potentially present in man but that have to be cultivated if he is to become truly human.

The study of literature, then, provides an experience both in personal creativity and in personal valuing. It is here that a youth establishes his identity as a member of the human family.  

Not only can the literature teacher help to make his student more human, but literature study helps to give the growing adolescent a grasp of problems he has never yet experienced or perhaps even heard about—a vicarious participation in life as it is lived under many different codes and value systems. The perceptive reader can come to feel for himself the emotional crisis that a character undergoes, the conflicting passions that his soul endures, and the tug-of-war in values that his conscience creates. Contained in literature are recognizable human beings of every dimension, acting in situations both real and fantastic, and displaying the most subtle nuances of character, the widest range of values, and all the predilections toward good and evil of which man is seemingly capable.

From the teacher's viewpoint, there is simply no other means and no other subject in the curriculum by which to provide this latitude of experience, this acquaintance with so many flesh-and-blood people who have true-to-life crises—people who not only act or make decisions but whose motivations, drives, doubts, fears, and value conflicts are clear to us and so like our own.

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Because it provides such a vicarious experience, the literature class under a skillful teacher becomes the optimal setting for nurturing the valuing process. The Modern Language Association Literature Committee of the School and College Conference on English calls literature "... not only a record of experience but a record of the values or the ends, the beliefs, the judgments on life that men have from time to time thought worthy of struggle and sacrifice or contemplative sympathy." Herein, the committee report emphasizes, lies its importance—and also the reason that the English teacher's responsibility is so great. Teachers are wise in viewing the study of literature as much more than the assimilation of facts; they realize that their work is only half done unless literary study also arouses the interests and emotions of their students, enters into actual relation with their purposes and pleasures, and so contributes to their sense of values. As the M.L.A. Committee Report expresses it,

The good writer perceives in a new and fresh light the relations between emotions, ideas, and facts; he molds his perceptions into a unity, and by skill in words transmits them to his readers. The good writer raises an individual situation to the level of universal or representative truth; and it is not merely raw experience that he hands on, but always, whether directly or implicitly, his commentary on experience, his judgment of it. ... The study of literature involves not merely a body of knowledge, but also various attitudes toward knowledge; receptivity, alertness, curiosity, intelligent appraisal, and above all a conscious willingness which may require sustained effort, to enter into the experience which a writer has tried to express.  


8 Ibid., p. 49.
The Moral Dimension

Educating the student's feelings and his understanding of values by vicarious experience with literature implies the education of his imagination in conjunction with his own moral sense—or what one writer has called his moral imagination. To say that literature has indeed a moral dimension and and to advocate the education of the moral imagination is not to say that the teacher may decide what is morally right for his students. A long, evolutionary process has taken place in society and in schools since literature or any textbook materials were thought of as direct tools for inculcating the "correct" virtues (or since schools themselves agreed on what constitutes correctness). At one time (1917) in a book called The Teaching of English in the Secondary School, it was possible to preach the following advice to new teachers:

The literary selection (to be taught) must breathe the right ethical and social message. . . . Our most important task in teaching is the building of character, and our most effective agency is the literary selection.9

Ten years later, in 1928, in a text entitled The Teaching of Ideals, W. W. Charters was still able to advocate that the teacher engage in moral instruction at all levels and in every conceivable context. (Not only patriotic qualities and national ideals, but cleanliness, thrift, perseverance, sincerity, sympathy, and the shunning of all "bad habits.") While Charters encourages the development by the teacher of the students' awareness of the rewards and punishments for socially acceptable conduct and the desirability of good "trait actions," nowhere

in the text is there any provision for conflicting ideas of what the
good life represents or any recognition of a hierarchy or a priority
of virtues or values. It is as if there existed only one moral plane,
one right way of conduct, wherein the individual's persistence would
gain the end. It is a black-and-white world in which no one ever has
to make a value-laden, agonizingly painful decision between distasteful
alternatives.10

Today, the giving of such advice by pedagogues or textbooks is
rare, alien, out-of-vogue, and in considerable disrepute. The nobility
of the sentiments is not questioned, nor even the motives of the peda-
gogue, says James E. Miller, Jr., in Literature Study in the High School.
The practice is unfashionable, he says, because (1) such advice repre-
sents a superficial view of literature as containing a "message" which
each child should derive; (2) such counsel is presumptuous in assuming
that English teachers do know what ethical and social messages are
"right" not only for themselves but for everybody; and (3) literature
teachers are or perhaps should be committed to the higher aim of educat-
ing the student's own moral imagination so that he can make his own
moral judgments.11 Such an aim, Miller feels, is most important:

Although it is reductive to conceive literature as sending ethical
messages to readers, it is blindness not to see that there is a
moral dimension (among many other dimensions) in literature. This
dimension is more frequently implicit than explicit, more often
pervasive than concentrated in single lines or sentences. However

10 W. W. Charters, The Teaching of Ideals, New York: The
Macmillan Company, 1928.

11 James E. Miller, Jr., "Literature in the Revitalized Cur-
riculum," Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School
we may conceive of this dimension—whether as a system of values, a vision of the nature of things, a truth—we must somehow come to terms with it in the classroom. . . . As the teacher is concerned with developing and expanding the student's total imaginative capacity, so he must be concerned with all aspects of the imagination, including the moral imagination. He should not become didactic and attempt to inculcate beliefs; rather he should question, discuss, and explore with his students. Such exploration will lead more frequently to complexity than to simplicity, to ambiguity than to precision, to paradox than to resolution. Literature so explored should open to the student a variety of possibilities of values and visions, confront him—like life itself—with a multiplicity of ethical systems or moral perspectives. This expansion and deepening of the student's moral awareness constitutes the education of his moral imagination.12

Just how does literature study educate our moral sensitivity and our ability to make value judgments? San-su C. Lin, writing in the English Journal, states that one of the functions of literature is educating our feelings by helping us to understand them. In imaginative literature, we gain an understanding of people; we see their appearance and actions but we also see right into their hearts and minds; we perceive human nature through carefully selected patterns of details which the authors give us. The characters laugh, weep, suffer, doubt, hope, fear, and despair as they surmount or succumb to temptations and obstacles. We recognize, writes San-su Lin, these same feelings in ourselves. "We not only recognize but understand them, because they have been objectified for us in such a vivid way that we are willing to suspend disbelief even though we know these characters who present themselves for our scrutiny are but fictitious figures."13

12 Ibid.

Furthermore, the double nature of characters in fiction—the fact that they are real on the one hand but fictitious on the other—makes it possible for us to become personally involved, yet retain our critical judgment. Thus, in addition to educating our feelings, literature shapes our value judgments.

Life is a series of choices. We are constantly presented with alternatives and forced to make choices. Freedom to make choices, however, is often denied a disadvantaged child in his actual experience, and he needs vicarious experiences to help him see the possibilities and the consequences imaginatively and examine the validity of the values people hold on to. In the process he will achieve a measure of moral discrimination and an understanding of the value scale that prevails in the individual or the society.¹⁴

**Literature as Exploration**

Perhaps the greatest argument that the literature class is indeed the locus for the valuing process lies in a particular perspective of the role of literature study and the literature teacher—a vision of the function of literature study as a kind of life experience, a vital, evolving process to be discovered, undergone, explored, and assimilated. Much debt for developing this frame of reference is owed to Professor Louise Rosenblatt, whose authoritative study in 1938, *Literature as Exploration*, set the style and tone for a generation of English teachers. Still teaching at Rutgers University, she has just recently updated and republished her treatise, and the model she develops and the advice she gives seem as timely and worthy now as in years gone by.¹⁵

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¹⁴Ibid.

It is Rosenblatt's conviction that literary study, when accomplished effectively under the guidance of a competent teacher, can enlarge the emotional capacity of the reader, can contribute mightily to the development of his insights, perspectives, and understandings, and can counteract the desensitizing influences of the culture all around us. Literature has to be rescued, Rosenblatt states in the introduction to the revised edition, from its diminished status as a body of subject matter and offered "as a mode of life-experience to be engaged in intimately and critically." This, literature is to be experienced, explored, and lived through. Literature, in this view, presents a framework of values, and because they are there, the teacher should make these values conscious. Furthermore, the reader brings values to the work; thus the teacher needs to become cognizant of a kind of "live-circuit" (reader-to-book) that is set up between the author's values and those of the reader. There is then an emotional response required of the reader as he tries through sensitive, careful reading to participate in another's vision. The literary experience then becomes far more than an exercise in reading—that is, in decoding symbols or language. The literary experience at its best involves the capacity to empathize, the synthesizing of past experiences, memories, judgments, and viewpoints, and the development of broader, more mature individual responses, attitudes, and judgments—in brief, the whole process of learning to value.  

Confirmation by Authorities in the Field

Finally, literature in the field emphatically confirms values and value development as having a legitimate place in the English 

16 Ibid.
curriculum, and firmly establishes the English class as the locus for
the valuing process in the secondary school.

Theoretical or philosophical treatises on the teaching of litera-
ture in the high school (Bernstein, 1961; Murphy, 1968; Rosenblatt,
1968) agree that values belong in the English class and indicate that
in the traditional array of secondary school classes, the English
classroom provides the optimal setting for the valuing process. Re-
search in the teaching of English (Burton and Simmons, 1970; Daigon
and Laconte, 1971; Morsey, 1969) confirms the place of values in the
literature class, and uniformly decries the lack of truly qualified
teachers, trained to handle the valuing process or even aware of values
issues in the classroom.

Textbooks for the preparation of teachers of English (Stone,
1961; Fowler, 1965; Loban, Ryan and Squire, 1969) advocate many differ-
ent approaches to the teaching of literature, but all include advice to
the novice English teacher to become aware and to be concerned with
values—the learners', the various authors', society's, and his own.

New curriculum models for the teaching of English (Rodgers,
1968; Moffett, 1968; Hillocks, McCabe, and McCampbell, 1971) stress
the teacher's responsibility to be aware of the student—his interests,
his needs, his latent unexplored powers, and his values—and to try to
arrange teaching styles, instructional modes and syllabus designs
around these individualized patterns. The research and thinking of
James Moffett in this regard is contained in two widely-read books.
One, Teaching the Universe of Discourse, details a kind of learning
theory, a plan to teach students the process of thinking by abstracting
on progressively higher levels. The other, *A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum, Grades K-13*, is an application of his theories and a suggested model for English studies.

Then, in another vein, the Anglo-American Conference of English Educators held at Dartmouth in 1966 (and subsequent fall-out conferences on a smaller scale) produced some significant statements regarding the place of values in the English class. Frank Whitehead of Dartmouth commented that "... the experience of good reading can itself do the job of education in values." Another participant, James Miller, developed the thesis that all literary works embody some vision of life, system of values or moral dimension, although this dimension should not be the key to their artistic value. Miller warned of two fatal tendencies in the teaching of literature: (1) Treating the moral dimension as if it were the sole end of literature—"to extract it, to divorce it from the work of art, and to offer it to students as abstract truth" and (2) Avoiding difficulties and dangers of discussing the moral dimension by ignoring it and concentrating on formal, aesthetic, structural or other elements. "Both impoverish literature and are likely to bore students."

Other comments worthy of note emerged from the Dartmouth Conference. There was a revulsion against any popular demands for wholesome morals in literature. Taking up the issue, one study group was


\[18\] Ibid., p. 92.
presented with a list of basic values, as a guide to teachers and representing the consensus of many educators:

- Worth of the individual
- Brotherhood of man
- Consent of the governed
- Pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness
- Respect for excellence
- Spiritual enrichment
- Devotion to truth
- Moral equality
- Moral responsibility.

In reporting the actions of the members and in commenting on the conference, Herbert Muller wrote,

A believer in democracy should esteem all these values but one member expressed the consensus of the group when he said that the list scared the hell out of him. (The thought of turning ordinary teachers loose on these objectives might scare anyone who cherishes literature.)

Finally, the spirit of Dartmouth, while warning of the dangers in the moral realm in English teaching, emphatically confirmed the place of values in literature and language study. The British teachers defended the "all-important human values that are being neglected in the interests of economy and efficiency, when not sacrificed to both military and commercial interests." The preservation of these values, the authorities on both sides of the Atlantic warn us, is not the responsibility of English teachers alone—but the essence of the seminar's recommendations is again that the study of language and literature must contribute more directly than any other major subject to the realization of both our common humanity and our personal identity.

19 Ibid., p. 92.
20 Ibid., p. 92.
21 Ibid., p. 176.
22 Ibid., p. 177.
VALUES: LITERATURE STUDY AS RESOURCE

A Boundless Resource

Not only is the English class the locus, but the study of literature is itself a magnificent resource for the operation of the valuing process. Even the traditional high school literature program offers boundless variations in approaches, issues, materials, and methods for consideration of values in the classroom. The following is intended as an orientation for the fledgling teacher of English to demonstrate some of the ways literature study can be used to facilitate the valuing process.

The Value-Laden Nature of Literature

All literature is truly value-laden. Literature is, by and large, a series of works in which authors recreate the world in the light of their own values. What one reads is the deliberate effort of somebody to communicate his values persuasively. Whether it be the hard life of the American pioneer heading West or the adventurous life of the advance scout encountering warlike Indians, the novelist writing of the settling of America gives the reader a view of a world that once existed, depicted in the author's words, from his scheme of values.

The secondary school English teacher, then, in a good reading program, introduces a variety of viewpoints, reflecting different systems of values. James Fenimore Cooper in any of The Leatherstocking
Tales gives young people a view of bravery and treachery, of personal honor and wanton ruthlessness, as he sees the frontier life in 1830. But Walter Edmonds, in Drums Along the Mohawk, writing in a far more realistic age, gives a less romantic picture of the early pioneers whose frontier was at the time western New York state. Oliver LaFarge offers a different perspective altogether as he portrays something of the Indian viewpoint in Laughing Boy, the story of a young Navajo silversmith. In My Antonia, Willa Cather brings out the loneliness of the settlers who banded together in colonies on the plains for protection and for economic survival. Perhaps the most lifelike portrayal of pioneer life, with its hardship and struggle with the elements is offered by Rölvaag in Giants in the Earth, which also deals with immigrant life and the transplanting of Old World customs and values into the American culture.

All these novels are part of the generally accepted "in-house" reading lists the teacher has available in the secondary school, or more likely the "in-closet" collection of the typical secondary school English Department. All of them portray pioneer life. Each of them presents an interesting, sometimes fascinating world, peopled by lifelike characters acting out lives and motivated by values given them by their respective authors.

Study of several such works by a literature class can bring about not just a superficial comparison of rustic prairie life but real consideration of the values that prompted the decisions of early settlers, and the underlying values that produced their conditions or sent them West in the first place. Given the opportunity, young people after
reading *Giants in the Earth* might well ask: Should Per Hansa have given in to the nagging of his wife to go for the doctor, an action which was futile for her and fatal for him, as he battled the wild snowstorm that covered the wheat fields? Should his wife Beret have tried to maintain her Old World values in her new environment or have carried the load of guilt she brought with her to the New World? Why is their son called *Peder Victorious*, the title of the novel's sequel? These are value questions. The experience required to answer them is part of the valuing process.

Actually, as every good English teacher knows, the physical setting for a work of literature—a particular place at a particular point in time—is relatively easy for a skilled author to create, by careful attention to detail, that is, by deliberate, selective choice of words to describe and flesh out his creation. It may be a cliché to say that an author paints in words, as an artist does in colors. But the English teacher who wishes to facilitate valuing must point out that the writer, like the painter, depicts his vision, selects his details, and portrays his world out of a system of values. The family members in Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga* operate in a long-gone, plush and placid Victorian London, made memorable for us in countless details of hansom carriage rides, lavish country houses, tea parties or trysts in the garden, and elaborate funeral processions. The American household in that same period is created for us in the tremendously popular play, *Life with Father*, and in the entertaining Clarence Day biography on which it was based. The set is gaslit, the bellpulls and love seats are cut velvet, and the manners and mores are definitely turn-of-the-century.
But both these works, often included in high school literature classes, have much more to offer the teacher than the chance to re-create a rather pretty, if stuffy, Victorian scene. The values of that time, as Lindsay and Crowse and John Galsworthy conceive them, operate everywhere, and the astute teacher elicits their consideration by his classes. Soames Forsyte, The Man of Property, is justly titled, for all his values stem from an all-absorbing love of "things," from a never-ending acquisition of precious objects (obtained as good bargains) and rare paintings (bought for their rarety not for their beauty) until he has a magnificent collection, which represents wealth, which to Soames represents success. Love of property blinds him, ruins his marriage to Irene, dominates his second marriage, and nearly destroys everybody. Yet, as today's students will often point out—living as they do in a materialistic age—Soames is likeable, he does what he thinks is right according to his values, he loves, insofar as he is capable of love, and in the end he is pitiable and pitiful.

Students also find Clarence Day's mother in Life with Father and later in Life with Mother operates from a definite value basis. The aware teacher can point out that Mother Day's every action is a reflection of the concern of her age with propriety, appearances, the subordination of women (even in the home) and the rather vaguely tolerated trickery to combat some of the inequities. Teachers will find that students identify with the problems of parents and children, even fussy, authoritarian parents and only mildly naughty children, and are quick to perceive what are essentially the values of the era, and to distinguish the many differences between then and now.
Timeliness and Timelessness

Such works, read under the direction of an able teacher, might well engender value-based discussions that are timely today: the generation gap, the rights of individuals, permissiveness in society, women's liberation, and so on. But for a much more pertinent account of the conflict between generations, a teacher may wish to have upperclassmen read the Russian classic, Fathers and Sons. They will recognize that the age-old conflict in values divided the generations in 1862, much as it does today, when Arkady the son is torn by loyalty to his father, love of his land, and the attractiveness of modern ideas and new ways, represented by Bazarov, the Nihilist. Then, for another account of the changing values regarding the role of women in society, the teacher can have a class read Ibsen's Hedda Gabler or A Doll's House, whose liberated females the theatre audiences of 1890 found shocking. As students weigh the problems and the options available to the characters and confront the differences in the hierarchy of values then and now, they are engaging in valuing.

Actually, most of the issues that constitute the concerns of youth today seem to be well represented in high school literature programs. With young or immature students, teachers may always suggest "junior books" to promote value clarification along with pictures of others "growing up" and a dash of career counseling (from Hot Rod to Sue Barton). But more importantly, teachers can present works that face up to real crises, and the values that determine their outcome. The Ox-Bow Incident, for instance, explores the effect of violence on those who
inflict it, and the need of each individual for moral courage; To Kill a Mockingbird portrays the ingrained values and prejudices of a small town in the South; John Hersey's Hiroshima, found on many senior reading lists, confronts our fears of the mushroom cloud hanging over us, and probes the values that underlie modern warfare.

For the timeless problem of the responsibilities and duties of the individual under lawful authority such as the military, the teacher can have a class probe the values in The Caine Mutiny Court Martial or The Andersonville Trial, which present genuine value confrontations in very dramatic form. Or teachers of younger readers may use the old classic story The Man Without a Country which offers a provocative portrait of one man's individuality, loyalty, and patriotism, and the unending, ironic punishment he undergoes for his values. But the duty of one man to hold to his values, to speak out, even if only in single voice, against the prevailing values of a whole town can be made splendidly clear when a competent teacher has his students read and discuss Ibsen's play, An Enemy of the People. It is ironic, perhaps comical, the teacher can note in passing, that today some persons see the drama as being relevant because it is ecological--it deals with the problem of the purification of the town's water supply--and thus they miss the glorious case Ibsen makes for the fact that the minority may be right, and in any case must be heard.

The Inevitability of Values

The teacher of English must understand that exposure to great literature without exposure to some value system is an impossibility. The mere idea of a value-free story or poem is a contradiction, since
its very creation is an imaginative exercise, stemming from the subjective, value-laden mind of the author.

In imaginative literature, especially prose fiction, the author creates a moment or a scene, an image or a portrait, a character or a whole city full of people, an event or fifty years of events in the lives of his characters. All the basic elements—plot, characters, setting, theme, and so on—are dependent on the values the author gives them. The characters—a Shylock, a King Creon, a Babbitt, or an Ahab—reflect their value systems in the roles they play, the decisions they make, the reactions they have to the events of their lives. Other characters in other works operate from other sets of values, and ponder other questions. What is the worth of life or the use of living to the hapless hero of Ethan Frome as he aims his sled for the tree at the bottom of the slope? Or to Sir Thomas More as he ponders his fate in A Man for All Seasons? Or to Willie Loman, after years on the road, in Death of a Salesman? Or to Hamlet as he asks his timeless question? Student analysis and classroom discussions of these characters must inevitably generate value questions and engender the valuing process.

There are other literary elements that the teacher may use to engender the valuing process. The plot—that imaginative arrangement of incidents bringing about a pattern of events, a conscious building toward a deliberate conclusion, with all the concomitant happenings and intrusions and by-paths which add richness to the story—is itself a selection of details from a vast array of possibilities, reflecting a scheme of values. A battle can seem a glorious undertaking or a foredoomed inevitability. A war can seem noble or ugly; its participants can appear
heroes or victims or pawns. We might well ask ourselves (and teach students to ask themselves) why sympathy is aroused for Macbeth, facing a battle he himself has made necessary, but not for good King Duncan whom Macbeth has murdered? Why do we weep for the men in the trenches in Journey's End or What Price Glory? yet our sympathy is also with Henry Fleming when he runs from the battle in Red Badge of Courage? It would seem impossible not to facilitate the valuing process when literature offers heroes, cowards, bystanders, and victims portrayed against every conflict from the Trojan Wars to Viet Nam.

Nor does the plot need to be melodramatic or crisis-ridden in order to reflect a value scheme. A consideration by teacher and students of the incidents the author selects, and the question of why he uses those happenings will immediately involve values. One of the most useful questions in a literary discussion is that of why the author fashioned the plot to turn out as it did. Why, in The Pearl does Kino finally throw his treasured pearl into the sea? Why, in The Old Man and the Sea, does Hemingway have the fish reduced to a bony skeleton when the old man finally gets it to shore after his long, hard struggle? Why, indeed, is the ending of any good story the way it is? What values have dictated that the outcome should be thus?

The Many Worlds of Literature

The teacher of English needs to be aware that the setting, too, is value-strewn. Much that constitutes setting is sheer description, but the special little details evolve from an author's unique vision and a special set of values. The backdrop against which a plot unfolds
is often much more than a stage set or a recognizable or well-conceived cave or castle, street or town. A setting may be a total environment, the thing which makes the plot exciting, the characters intriguing, and the ending unavoidable. The setting may do more than create the mood (the cold, damp walls of *A Cask of Amontillado*, the foggy London darkness of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, or the windswept, ominous moors of *Wuthering Heights*); it may set in motion the whole tangle of events (the hidden, dark passages of *The House of Seven Gables*, the rugged barrenness of Egdon Heath in *The Return of the Native*, or the unrelenting bleakness of the Welsh coal mines in *How Green Was My Valley*). And it is the values permeating those environments that in the end make those novels work.

But teachers know that the setting can do more. It can represent, in perfectly symbolized form, the values which signify the purpose or the theme of the author. And it is here that a teacher can assist his students in the valuing process. High school students often get their first taste of the novel of exposé from a cross-disciplinary assignment, a book they are reading for both social studies and English classes. They learn a little of American history and a great deal about American business and labor practices, corporate empire-building, class struggles, political in-fighting, and the influence of organized crime—and all the values that these conditions represent—from the novels of Frank Norris, Upton Sinclair, and the "muckraking" school of writing. The author’s values permeate such works; in a sense, they are the *raison-d’être* for the writing of the novels. The whole point of the class novel, the central core around which it seems to be built, is the exposition of some
existing, usually deplorable, conditions, which represent some of society's values that need to be changed.

A Case in Point

The novels of Charles Dickens, for instance, would be difficult to present in class without arriving face-to-face with Dickens' value system and with some of the values in the society he creates. The two works found most often in the high school course of study, *Great Expectations* and *David Copperfield*, abound in expressions of Dickens' disgust with Establishment practices, with his unremitting indictment of society's callousness, and with his concern for the downtrodden, poor, and disadvantaged of London's streets. Mr. Bumble's workhouse, the bottle factory, and Dotheboys Hall stand as symbols of the values British society held regarding the care of unfortunate children.

Presumably it is possible, no matter how foolish, to teach Dickens' works without examining the values therein. All his social protest and the subsequent British movement for reform of working conditions might be glossed over or just mentioned in passing, with no serious consideration of the ethical code of his time, the inequities and injustices, or the hypocrisy of Victorian morality which lauded industrial progress but was blind to the exploitation of the poor, the young, and the powerless.

But how much better if in a classroom the teacher can bring out the nuances of character, against a background of the values of the London Establishment in 1860. In *Great Expectations*, the aggrandizement and subsequent snobbery leading to Pip's downfall can be very
illuminating as his values are exposed. Actually, through Pip, the teacher can offer young people a marvelous study in values. Pip accepts as his due the offer of wealth from an unknown benefactor and rejects all the humble beginnings he once had held dear, but later he suffers total disillusionment when he discovers the source of the money and realizes the emptiness and falseness of his entire life. Teen-agers often discover a bit of themselves in Pip and his values, and the encounter becomes an experience in value clarification.

On the other hand, David Copperfield, as an adult, is a model of propriety and justice, whereas his tribulations as a child offer some rare chances for a literature class to weigh the values of society regarding the abuses of labor, the mistreatment of the unwanted, and the part that economic gain plays in perpetuating a system or in exploiting its victims. Dickens does make justice triumph, first when the kindness of Aunt Betsey Trotwood mitigates the cruelty of Murdstone, the overbearing stepfather, and later, in most unlikely form, when Wilkins Micawber discloses the villainies of Uriah Heep’s bookkeeping.

In a study of Oliver Twist, frequently found on high school reading lists, a teacher can use Fagin’s lessons in thievery in his school for pickpockets to command interesting classroom debates. The teacher, aided possibly by a dramatized long-play recording of the novel (there is a simplified one in which Basil Rathbone triples as Bumble, Fagin, and narrator), can elicit a lively discussion as to which character would be the more moral or the more inhumane, which the most culpable or the least guilty (when both are seen to be evil): Bumble, who keeps a slave-like workhouse for boys and mistreats them
until they either run away or die; or Fagin, who provides creature comforts for his charges but who teaches them to steal and to participate in the evil ways of the London underworld.

Even the least Dickensian of his novels, *A Tale of Two Cities*, another old standard in high school, offers the teacher a study in values. True enough, war as an issue or revolution as a course of moral action barely emerges from the novel. Yet the excesses of the French Revolution and the warped values of those cast into power Dickens describes in detailed accuracy, based on Carlyle's histories. But the teacher can demonstrate that it is the human factor that counts—the values involved in the dutiful conduct of Lucy Manette regarding her long-imprisoned father, or the conduct of Sidney Carton in offering the ultimate sacrifice of his life for Charles Darnay. Discussion of these can be the basis for a genuine valuing experience, a consideration of all the old eternal questions of making one's actions worthwhile, one's causes important, and one's life or death meaningful.

**Other Worlds in Literature**

There are many worlds with many values that writers of fiction create and teachers of English can utilize in encouraging the valuing process. When students in secondary school come upon Sinclair Lewis' novels, they often recognize, perhaps for the very first time, some of the values in American society, and some of the values they themselves hold. They read *Arrowsmith*, and ponder the values that limit or support medical research; they discover the world of *Babbitt* and *Main Street*, and find that the small-town values of Gopher Prairie and Zenith are
very like their own. The realization is often a shock, and the process is one of value clarification.

The astute teacher can point out that there is a vast difference between the world of *The Friendly Persuasion* and *The Great Gatsby*, each of which is found on reading lists for eleventh or twelfth grade. It should not be the practice of the literature teacher to teach or advocate either set of values—the homespun Pennsylvania Dutch gospel of the first or the tinny, cash-register values of Gatsby's Roaring Twenties Long Island house parties of the second. But consideration of these values is inescapable in a study of the works, since values do comprise such a large part of each novel, and the author seems to point them up at every turn. Discussion by students of the materialistic or the spiritual nature of an era or a culture inevitably brings forth contrasts with their own, and pupils are once again engaged in an aspect of the valuing process.

Sometimes students, like other readers, seek a perfect world in books—not just an escape from reality—but another view of what life might indeed become. Through the years, novelists have been happy to share their fantasies. Any of the Utopian tales, whether in the form of satirical warnings or the consummation of a perfect world, inevitably offer the teacher a chance to facilitate valuing. Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* occasionally finds its way onto lists of supplementary readings, but far more often we find Aldous Huxley's prophetic *Brave New World*, Edward Bellamy's incredible *Looking Backward*, and George Orwell's frightening *1984*. Seniors in high school, about to leave the protective cocoon and enter the workaday world are often more conscious than
their teachers of the seemingly uncanny powers of Huxley, as they perceive their own society becoming more technological and depersonalized. And as they examine the values they find in their own not-so-brave new world, they sometimes begin to see how horrifyingly close their values come to those predicted for the world of 1984.

Form and Content

Under the direction of a skilled teacher, as the student begins to learn the art of reading literature, he encounters not only the elements that structure the work (incidents that weave the plot, the devices that build suspense, the imagery that creates a mood or paints a picture, the dialogue that delineates a character, and so on) but inevitably, the content. And that content, which represents life as the authors see it, through their own value screens, is often not the sole reason for selecting that work. Nevertheless, it is there; it is inescapable. The structure of a work or its perfection as a literary piece does not stand out alone and separate from the work or from the substance of what the author is saying. Usually, the indivisibility of form and content becomes important—in fact, appears for the first time—when students take up poetry.

In teaching how to read poetry, the teacher introduces his pupils to line and stanza form, inverted word order, figurative language, alliterative and onomatopoetic devices, metaphors that heighten the effect, and rhythm and rhyme and meter—all of which typify poetry and the understanding of which should help the reader comprehend and enjoy the experience of a poem. He also, quite naturally, encounters content: ideas,
visions, emotions, shared recollections, tales, fantasies, characters—all portrayed by the skill of the poet and through his value filter.

As we teach the student the many forms of poetry, it is inevitable that we also deal with its content, and therefore its values. (There are many who insist that in good poetry the sound and the sense, the form and the content, are so fused that they cannot ever be considered separately.)

The opportunities for teachers to have their students discuss and compare values absolutely abound in poetry, if for no other or more compelling reason than the procedure the class must undergo if they are to comprehend on any meaningful level what the poet is trying to convey. To understand and enjoy a good poem at its deepest level generally calls for perceptions beyond what is demanded in a novel or short story. The unusual, compressed, dramatic words, the tone or the voice that pervades the poem, the metaphor that speaks on different levels, the recurring image, the well-turned or hard-hitting phrase—all these come into an effort by a teacher and a class to get at what the poet "means." And thereby all of the students and their teachers are involved in valuing and in the facilitation of the valuing process.

As students grapple with the way a poem gains power by juxtaposition of words or a perfectly constructed metaphor, they also grapple with the ideas that have been juxtaposed, line to line, or stanza to stanza, or buried within the form and shape of the poem. When a teacher of literature has his students attempt to experience the poem and to find the statement the poet is making, they are often dealing with a direct expression of human values and as they probe they are engaging
in the valuing process. Actually, the concerned teacher will have no difficulty in finding appropriate material to encourage the valuing process. The old-fashioned virtues of patience, honesty, kindness, love of family, courage, honor, and integrity, are to be found in every kind of poetry of every era. The "patriotic" values—love of country, loyalty, bravery in battle, devotion to duty, unselfish sacrifice and the like—are found in abundance in the anthologies and poetry volumes in use in our secondary schools. Then the so-called "American" ideals, associated with the writings of our Founding Fathers, such as democracy self-government, human rights, freedom, equality, justice, and the pursuit of happiness, are well represented in the American poetry anthologies. Even the "now" concerns that students sometimes think the current generation invented—respect for human dignity, a just and lasting peace, discovery of self, the futility of war, wasteful exploitation of the earth's resources, brotherhood, and individualism—are similarly included.

Almost any value or any system of values in the world is to be found among poems the teacher can use in the literature class. Almost any subject, concept or value has always been fair game for the poet, and therefore available for the teacher to select if he deems it appropriate for the learning situation. For instance, the teacher may elect to consider a single value, such as the worth of the individual, and thus take up Robert Burns' "A Man's a Man for A' That" or Edward Rowland Sill's "Opportunity" or Stephen Crane's "The Blade of Grass" or even Milton's "On His Blindness." In another class the teacher may well lead his students to discuss the values of the pastoral life and the
life of scholarly solitude in *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, or ponder the fate of "Miniver Cheevy" ("Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn / Grew lean while he assailed the seasons; / he wept that he was ever born, / and he had reasons.") The teacher might want to have still another group take up a concept like truth or beauty and study Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" ("Beauty is Truth,—Truth Beauty,—that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.") Later they can ponder Emily Dickinson's "I Died for Beauty" which also deals with the inseparable nature of truth and beauty, or discuss her other portrait, "Tell All the Truth":

Tell all the truth but tell it slant,
Success in circuit lies,
Too bright for our infirm delight
The truth's superb surprise;

As lightning to the children eased
With explanation kind,
The truth must dazzle gradually
Or every man be blind.

Students and teachers can find the spiritual and ethical values in American life reflected everywhere by our own poets. The lesson can begin with catalogue-type listings such as those in Walt Whitman's "I Hear America Singing" or "Democratic Vistas." The teacher can assist students to find other values, other expressions of the American dream in the poems of the New Englanders like Longfellow, Whittier, Thoreau, and James Russell Lowell, or through the later poems of James Whitcomb Riley, Sidney Lanier, Hamlin Garland, and Henry Timrod, or into the more recent declarations of Edgar Lee Masters, Robinson Jeffers, and Edwin Markham to the moderns like Stephen Vincent Benet, Vachel Lindsay, Sara Teasdale, Edna St. Vincent Millay, the other Lowells, Amy and Robert, and of course, Robert Frost, who somehow always dominates poetry anthologies for younger readers.
Or, a class may wish to ponder the eternal values, and take up poems about living, and dying, and loving. The teacher will find the many guises of love are well represented in student anthologies, particularly chronological arrangements of British literature, which take the student from John Donne through the Elizabethans, the Cavaliers, the pre-Romantics, the Romantics, the Victorians, and the "moderns" of the Twentieth Century. Even at a young age, students generally like to ponder the faith of Kipling in "When Earth's Last Picture Is Painted" or the old-fashioned values of W. B. Yeats in "The Ballad of Father Gilligan" and they react quickly to William Ernest Henley's "Invictus" ("I am the captain of my soul; / I am the master of my fate.") or to the mystical poems of William Blake.

Teachers will find that students respond to understatement, to the ironic presentation of a set of values, even if it is mildly comic as in the following:

Oh, how I love Humanity,
   With love so pure and pringlish
And how I hate the horrid French,
   Who never will be English!

The International Idea,
   The largest and the clearest,
Is welding all the nations now,
   Except the one that's nearest.

This compromise has long been known,
This scheme of partial pardons,
In ethical societies
   And small suburban gardens--

The villas and the chapels where
   I learned with little labor
The way to love my fellow man
   And hate my next-door neighbor.

--G. K. Chesterton
If teachers encourage them, students also respond deeply to poems about injustices in the world, to social evils, or the increasing depersonalization of society, such as is presented in W. H. Auden's ironic piece, "The Unknown Citizen JS/07/M/378" ("Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd: / Had anything been wrong, we certainly should have heard."). Then, there are some poems whose values are impossible to ignore, like those of this quatrain:

"The Golf Links"

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

--Sarah Cleghorn

A favorite topic of students, if not always of their teachers, is war. Any consideration of war poems means an inescapable confrontation with humanity's changing attitudes and values regarding war. Consider the change in values from Emerson's "Voluntaries":

So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When Duty whispers low, "Thou must,"
The youth replies, "I can."

to the romantic attitude of Rupert Brooke's World War I sonnet,

"The Soldier"

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England.


to Randall Jarrell's blunt, bitter five-line portrait of modern warfare:

"The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner"

From my mother's sleep I fell into the State,
And I hunched in its belly till my wet fur froze,
Six miles from earth, loosed from its dream of life,
I woke to black flack and the nightmare fighters.
When I died they washed me out of the turret with a hose.
Sometimes a teacher will realize that understatement and irony can be as effective as bluntness. Consider the valuing process that a clever teacher could elicit from the seemingly innocuous free verse of "Plato Told" by E. E. Cummings or the ironic statement of Stephen Crane's "War is Kind" or the satiric bite of the following:

"Grass"

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.  
Shovel them under and let me work—  
    I am the grass; I cover all.  
And pile them high at Gettysburg  
And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.  
Shovel them under and let me work.  

Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor: 
What place is this?  
Where are we now?  

    I am the grass.  
    Let me work.  

--Carl Sandburg

But teachers will find that students also appreciate a more positive and optimistic view of the human condition, even carefully hidden in the irony of the poem. With an aware teacher, this less familiar work should be a neat study in values; and fun, as well:

"Maine"

When old cars get retired, they go to Maine.  
Thick as cows in backlots off the blacktop.  
East of Bucksport, down the washboard  
From Penobscot to Castine,  
they graze behind frame barns: a Ford  
turned tractor, Hudsons chopped to half-ton trucks, and Chevy panels, jacked up.  
tireless, geared to saw a cord of wood.

Old engines never die. Not in Maine,  
where men grind valves the way their wives grind axes.  
Ring-jobs burned-out down the Turnpike  
still make revolutions, turned marine.  
If Hardscrabble Hill makes her knock,  
Main rigs the water-jacket salt: a man can fish forever on converted sixes,  
and for his mooring, sink a V-8 block.
When fishing's poor, a man traps what he can. Even when a one-horse hearse from Bangor fades away, the body still survives: painted lobster, baited--off Route 1--with home preserves and Indian Knives, she'll net a parlor-full of Fords and haul in transient Cadillacs like crabs. Maine trades in staying power, not shiftless drives.

--Stephen Dunning

Obviously, value discussions and value contrasts arise easily and profitably from the study of poetry. Teachers have a limitless opportunity to facilitate valuing through poetry, because of the sheer numbers of poems now in print (and therefore readily accessible and easily reproduced for almost instant classroom use) and because of the incredible variety of statements, expressions, dreams, and visions and therefore values that constitute poetry today.

The Nonfiction Experience

Teaching the reading of nonfiction in high school would appear to be a natural avenue for the discovery and exploration of many kinds of values. So much of what is loosely gathered under the literary umbrella of nonfiction is value-oriented: biography, autobiography, journals, commentaries, personal anecdotes, historical accounts, reports of investigations, statements of personal opinions and viewpoints. Conflicting arguments and discussions of social, economic, and political questions, and formal essays and informal articles of every persuasion and on every conceivable subject.

But, unfortunately, nonfiction gets only peripheral recognition in the English programs of most secondary schools. In view of the popularity of nonfiction with the book-buying and book-borrowing public,
and in view of the amount of nonfiction that the average adult encounters daily in newspaper and periodical literature, such neglect is an inexcusable oversight. An overcrowded syllabus is generally cited as cause.

Sensitive teachers can make a serious effort to rectify this imbalance when they come upon it—and in the process can vary the program and facilitate the valuing of their students. A valid case can be made for the use of all kinds of pertinent material in the schoolroom—the daily newspaper, popular magazines, current biography, the Sunday supplements, feature articles, literary criticism, quarterly reviews, in-depth studies of subjects of interest to students, serious coverage of any current public issue, and just about all forms of the mass media. The opportunities for the exploration of values under such a program seem limitless. Mary Elizabeth Fowler, in Teaching Language, Composition and Literature, underscores the importance of such opportunities:

A wide range of reading in nonfiction invites students to examine their lives, their beliefs, their ideas about society and about the good life—the great, universal ideas through which man has always searched for answers to the questions of the purpose and meaning of his life and the ways it should be lived.¹

Often the teacher can organize a nonfiction reading program around a theme or an issue—and the partisan or opposing viewpoints represented will uncover values hitherto unseen. Sometimes the thematic groupings have already been accomplished by the textbook publishers,

who juxtapose contrasting opinions so as to elicit maximum controversy, and prevent single-channel transmission or one-dimensional views. For instance, literature grouped around a single concept such as "Honor," or "Personal Courage" or "The Twentieth Century: Man's Last Frontier" signifies a value-based association to begin with. Even within a theme, a teacher can find material for value exploration. The same anthology that includes Henry David Thoreau's words on individualism will probably also include Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Self-Reliance." The comic element which may be represented by James Thurber, Robert Benchley, or Stephen Leacock, can play its part, for the issue being satirized is generally one of values. An anthology that emphasizes biography will include the values set forth in an autobiographical excerpt by Helen Keller, pleas for the values of the rugged outdoor life represented by Teddy Roosevelt, the value of self-sacrifice in the life of young Tom Dooley, and the values inherent in overcoming odds in lives as disparate as those of Admiral Richard E. Byrd and Eldredge Cleaver.

It is true that the quality of biographical writing and personal reminiscence varies greatly, and sometimes the quality (the form) may be subservient to the story or the subject (the content). Or the groupings within a literary text under a single banner may be arbitrary, and the writing uneven. Literary justice may not always be served, but frequently the valuing process can be brought to a high art, as students perceive the many dimensions of human actions and the many facets of a seemingly simple idea.

Even historical documents may make up a section of literary anthologies. American principles and values, often reflecting their
borrowed origin, appear in "The Mayflower Compact" or excerpts from *The New England Primer* or Patrick Henry's speech before the Virginia Convention. The value discussions should be lively and enlightening.

The rather underrated category of nonfiction can be a marvelous resource for value facilitation, especially when it includes the personal reporting of Thor Heyerdahl or Edward R. Murrow, the explorations of William Beebe or Jacques Yves Cousteau, the scientific investigations of J. Robert Oppenheimer or Edward Teller, the diaries of James Baldwin or Moss Hart, the flying accounts of Anne Lindbergh or Antoine de Saint-Exupéry--all such entries offer not only excitement and adventure from an arm chair, but opportunities for young people to increase their knowledge, expand their horizons, and clarify and develop their value systems.

**The Lesser Works**

Even literature of lesser quality has its place in the facilitation of the valuing process. Often, an English teacher or a whole English Department has in its program certain novels chosen for their "relevance" or their appropriateness to age groups, or "inherited" from a bygone era or a bygone teacher and still available in numbers in its book room. Sometimes the literature program provides options or supplementary readings of popular materials--adventure stories, mysteries, Westerns, lightweight romances or "teen-age" novels. Most of these are not top flight literature, but they often have an advantage with less able or poorly motivated groups, in that they do get read. Sometimes they can become the means for genuine value discussions, since the characters (a simon-pure hero and a faultless heroine) operate in a black-and-white milieu,
where values are solid and clear, and the plot never turns around a conflict in values.

These melodramatic exploits have little literary quality, but they are popular with younger readers, and they can serve as a bridge to better reading. In a responsive English class, even students of lesser ability can be helped from one plateau to another, from the exaggerated qualities and simplistic values of one kind of book to the more subtle and more enduring kind of reading, and in the process learn a little about values and valuing.

A Note of Caution

In the midst of all the proposals for facilitating valuing in the English class, a serious warning needs to be sounded. It is not the mission of the teacher, no matter how Messianic he may feel, to teach or preach to his pupils his own values or the values he finds in the literature. It is not his job to pick out or to emphasize in literary study only those values he agrees with or feels comfortable with. Nor does he have the right or even the privilege of choosing a work for his students to read because of the values he thinks it reflects.

In the first place, English as a "tool" subject is not supposed to be taught for its content, for the values within a work. The job of the English teacher, on one level, is to teach his students how to read literature, whatever its contents and values. While the content is inescapable, and often quite delightful and legitimate as the basis for dynamic lessons, it does not represent the main reason for studying a work, for good literature has reasons of its own for being studied.
On another level, the English teacher is supposed to help his students to grow and to learn how to make intelligent choices, not to prescribe his values for him. As several distinguished authorities in the field have suggested, "to view literature as a formula for moral action is to mistake its nature and to miss its rewards." Our purpose, they tell us, is to teach the considerations involved in making wise choices, not to teach them the choices that must be made. In terms of the literature class, the aim is to offer young people continued experience in evaluating the effect of different beliefs on conduct and the "influence of habitual conduct on the destiny an individual creates for himself."

Furthermore, it is a misconception of the role of the teacher and the school to choose works for a literary program in order to transmit a particular set of values. (See Chapters II and III for a consideration of the changing function of the educational system vis-à-vis values and the paradoxical position of the teacher on the cultural continuum.)

Finally, choosing or teaching literary works on the basis of one's own values and prejudices is not only presumptuous but extremely limited and confining, as well as shortsighted, and an underestimate of the ways young people learn. As one expert tells us, "We cannot teach values, although students learn them in our classrooms." Instead, the

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2Walter Loban, Margaret Ryan, and James R. Squire, Teaching Language and Literature, (Grades Seven-Twelve), New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1969, p. 630.

3Ibid., p. 638.

4Ibid., p. 630.
need is "for helping the student set standards for achievement and for behavior, for making self-evaluation an integral part of learning, for developing understanding of the resources of literature and the power of language--both of which lead to the discovery of values."\(^5\)

The Teacher's Task

So, the list is long, the literature varied, and the variations endless. In the final analysis, the English class when the teacher is concerned with the values reflected in the literature becomes a place for the enlargement of the students' sympathy, for making them understand the commonality of the human experience, for giving them a glimpse of a variety of human motivations--and thereby offering them standards and value systems against which to measure their own.

This is not a single giant step from darkness into enlightenment, but an evolving process of educating the feelings and the imagination of students and thus their ability to value.

But it does require imagination, and the task of the literature teacher is in part the encouragement of the student's imagination, not only so that he can place himself on a raft on the Mississippi with Huck Finn and thus lose himself in the delights of a good story, but so that he can feel what Jim felt as a fleeing slave separated from his family, or what Huck felt as a kind of rebel against the values of a small town in Missouri in the late 1800's. The imaginative development nurtured here is an enlargement of the spirit, so that the sensitized reader studying *Cry, the Beloved Country* becomes enraged at the plight of the

\(^5\)Ibid., p. 631.
Umfundisi in white South Africa, and maybe, just maybe, learns to transfer his enlarged sympathies to the real-life problems of minorities in American society.

By encouraging students to develop this kind of broadened imagination, the teacher can help the student of Shakespearean tragedy feel how easily the desire for power corrupts the spirit. He can help his students to feel compassion along with loathing as King Claudius prays; they can sympathize with both Brutus and Anthony as they gird for final battle; and they can ponder the end to which the vaulting ambition of Macbeth and his Lady have brought them. It is not enough that the instructor take up the question of the futility of Macbeth's quest, or his blindness to his own faults, or the ironic turns that Fate and the witches' prophecies have wrought. The aware teacher will have his students consider the nature of ambition when it takes precedence over integrity, honor, reason, or even love. Students are quick to note the priorities, that is, to structure Macbeth's lopsided value system, and thus to engage in the valuing process.

Once again, it is not that we are teaching values per se—not our own, not the community's, not the author's. We are teaching students how to value, using the resources of the curriculum, and that is quite a different thing. We are demonstrating that values exist, and that they permeate all kinds of literature, even when they purport not to (Darkness at Noon, the poetry of Frost or T. S. Eliot, the Greek tragedies such as Cedipus Rex). We are demonstrating what values do and how they operate ("When I Was Young and Twenty," The Scarlet Letter, Our Town). We are demonstrating that values need to be thought about consciously (All Quiet on the Western Front, Shelley's "Ozymandias,"
Richard III). We are demonstrating that values often need to be discovered by young people (Bacon's essay "On Books," Cardinal Newman's "On Being a Gentleman," John Gunther's Death Be Not Proud). We are demonstrating that an encounter with one value system may lead to a refinement of our own (Joseph Conrad's novels, E. M. Foerster's "This I Believe," "Loveliest of Trees"). We are demonstrating that values in literature help us to clarify our own values (Face of a Hero, To Sir With Love, "By the Waters of Babylon"). Finally, we are demonstrating that values as they are acquired need to be tested or compared (Inherit the Wind, John Masefield's "Cargoes" and the new drama, The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail). Thus, indeed, our students will have experienced the valuing process as they engaged in the study of literature in English class.
VALUES: AWARENESS AND THE ENGLISH TEACHER

A Special Challenge

If all teachers need awareness as it pertains to the valuing process in the classroom, then the secondary school English teacher has a special responsibility to be aware. With the literature class in high school as the locus for the facilitation of the valuing process among students, the literature teacher has a prime duty to become aware of the many manifestations of values in the teaching of English. The following is an attempt to provide an orientation for the new English teacher so that he may develop precisely that awareness—of the significance of value biases in the selection and presentation of literary materials, of the dangers in the imposition of values by teachers, of the role of values in the dynamics of class and community, of the parameters of literature as a guide for moral conduct, and of the challenge that the aware English teacher faces in facilitating growth in the valuing process.

Awareness in the Selection of Works

The study of literature is in one sense a commitment to read and examine carefully some generally worthwhile works of imaginative literature—books of literary quality and an acceptable nature, however ill-defined the standard of quality or acceptability. (No attempt will be made here to set up precise criteria to determine quality literature;
such an effort would be biased and presumptuous, as well beyond the scope of this study.) The point is that even among works of agreed-upon literary quality, a selection of those to be pursued by students of a given English class must be made, and it is usually made on the basis of values.

Beginning teachers are rarely aware of the value bias that goes into the selection of literature for class study. As a matter of fact, novice teachers have no time to think of how books were chosen for study or how a syllabus was prepared— they already have enough to cope with in learning how to teach, preparing lessons, and studying and reading the pre-selected books (sometimes, for the first time).

Experienced teachers often forget the value bias that prompted the selection of works to be studied. In fact, they need to remind themselves constantly that their own values and those of their colleagues generally determine which works shall be taught, and what emphasis shall be given to each, in the syllabus, in the day-to-day schedule, and in the actual teaching of a class. Usually, teachers tend to choose works which share their own value framework. They must be made aware of the need to make conscious choices of materials for better reasons than that they incorporate value postures they feel comfortable with.

Furthermore, literature teachers need to become aware that, as with any other choice we make, there is a value bias in what is not taught as well as in what is taught. Certain values are represented, for instance, if a school decides to have its students read only "classics." Quite other values are indicated if someone decides that only contemporary works shall make up the syllabus, in the belief they are the only readings that can possibly be relevant or meaningful to today's urban children.
In any event, values do indeed dictate selections. Choices must be made; some works therefore have to be emphasized, others neglected. New works appear; old materials go out of date, even out of print. And since English teachers are generally the determiners of the reading choices of their literature classes, they must become aware of themselves and their own values with regard to the selections they make. And that awareness may be enough.

Awareness and the Imposition of Values

Once the literary pieces have been selected, and all concerned are at least aware of the values embodied in their choice, the English teacher also needs to develop a kind of self-awareness about his own attitudes, his own values regarding the literature he is teaching. This awareness means a self-consciousness, as he teaches, about furthering his own causes and opinions, and self-restraint in imposing his own values on his classes.

Authorities in the field have warned clearly of the fine distinction between encouraging students to develop values and imposing values on them. Fowler states,

Adolescence is the seed time for the development of a philosophy of living. We cannot and should not teach our students what values or beliefs to have, but we can introduce them to books which explore many ways of living and believing and encourage them to read about what others may have thought important enough to live for and die for.¹

Hillocks, McCabe, and McCampbell in a newly published text for English teachers, *The Dynamics of English Instruction*, offer another warning:

It is not the responsibility of the English teacher to impose ideas and values, but to help his students understand how language works, cognitively, affectively, and aesthetically, so that they can examine the values that are conveyed and shaped by language and can use language to formulate, synthesize, and evaluate their own values.\(^2\)

The aware teacher, then, has the task of helping his students develop taste and sharpen their powers of discrimination among values, without imposing his own value spectrum on theirs and without rejecting or deprecating their growing aesthetic, moral or literary tastes. The process is not easy, we are warned. The self-control needed is difficult to acquire, and the results difficult to measure. According to Rodgers (1968), discrimination as an objective of a single English teacher's endeavor can at best be a vaguely defined goal. A realistic teacher, she says, "will probably work toward developing power in critical thinking in his students and beware of assigning his own tastes and prejudices as absolute criteria of value."\(^3\)

Rodgers also warns the teacher to beware of offending by belittling attitudes and values which are peculiar to a social group or an individual. As an example, she cites those teachers well trained in literary appreciation who can alienate students or even thwart their


emotional development by aesthetic snobbery, a disdain for the truths and values communicated by the materials their students enjoy, for example, in the popular press.  

Awareness: The Dynamics of Classroom and Community

The English teacher needs to become aware of the dynamics of his own classroom as they relate to the valuing process and to the literature he teaches. Such awareness requires that he develop insights into the special needs of his students, and that he be conscious not only of their different abilities and interest levels but of their diverse operating values and the various stages of their value development. He must understand the special relationships of readers to books; he must choose and approach works of literature with sensitivity to the special nature of the class he is teaching.

The response the reader makes to the work is vital. Accepting that viewpoint, and possessing sensitivity, the teacher will respect the values that students bring to any work. The mind of the student is not a "tabula rasa" on which a teacher or an author may write his message. Each student comes from a complete milieu, distinctly his own, with a value scheme of some kind, no matter how primitively formed. There must be a shared respect—the teacher for the loyalties rooted in the ethnic or family background of the student, and the student for that same background—but also a recognition of the commonality of human experience that transcends expressions of ethnic group or geographical locale.

4 Ibid., p. 88.
Awareness of the dynamics operating in one's classroom—the values held, the give-and-take of conflicting opinions, the individual differences within the group—also implies the teacher's awareness of the prevailing taste of the community from which the students come. One should at the very least know when a subject is sensitive and controversial or when a literary piece flies in the face of community standards. On the one hand, the teacher should not have to live under the constant threat of literary censorship or interference with his teaching by self-appointed guardians of morality; on the other hand, the teacher, if he wishes to be at all successful, does need to develop a sensitivity to what constitutes acceptability and good taste in the community—in other words, the values of that community.

It is imperative that such sensitivity be fostered in new teachers. In Don't Smile Until Christmas, the assembled personal journals of six first-year teachers, Kevin Ryan warns of the almost inevitable conflicts the beginning teacher faces in this area. Not only is it a change of environments from the warm, supportive atmosphere of college to the realistic problem-laden class, and from the familiar role of student and the high status of upperclassman to the isolation of professional life and the low level of apprentice. It is often an abrupt change in values as well, generally from a liberal environment to a more conservative one. As a result, the novice teacher may find himself in difficulty on at least two levels, expressing and defending his own values among his colleagues, and attempting to defy the values of the community.

According to Ryan, the beginning teacher, having come straight from the university ("that veritable hot-bed of emergent values")
frequently brings to the school a new gospel which he hopes to preach to the unenlightened. But though he comes trailing glory from the university, the older faculty members have difficulty "accepting an untested, unseasoned rookie as an emissary of light." To complicate the problem, the beginner usually has intense views, and little experience in handling value questions with other adults.  

On a different level, Ryan finds the beginning teacher rarely aware of the reality of the world he invades. There is a great disparity between what the novice feels should be and what is, and he seems totally unaware of the expectations of the community regarding his role:

Once a client and occasional critic of the institution, he is now an employee and representative of the institution. His values frequently lead the beginning teacher into trouble. While some would assert that the public schools belong to students and teachers, in fact they belong to the people. They are society's mechanism to transmit the culture to the young.

... The local school, then, is the institution in which the local society's values are reflected and taught. Since they are hired to fulfill the mission of the school, teachers are expected to reflect and teach those values.

Such a statement is not a popular viewpoint for an educator to take, and it may come as a shock to the new teacher. But it does represent a consensus of many school systems, a perspective of which new teachers everywhere need to be made aware.

Awareness: The Parameters of Literature

The teacher of English has a special need to be aware of just what literature can and cannot do. Reading, enjoying, and truly

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6 Ibid., pp. 182-183.
understanding good literature can bring about some significant results in enhancing one's life, and (particularly as pertains to the valuing process) in enlarging the scope of one's perceptions, making him more sensitive, and deepening and broadening his experiences. But it is not a guarantee nor even a guide to right conduct for the individual reader.

In their copious work, *Teaching Language and Literature, Grades 7 - 12*, which serves as the definitive text for many English methods courses, Loban, Ryan, and Squire make a point of saying that literature, unlike propaganda, is not intended to secure immediate, practical results. It is not a poultice to be applied to weaknesses in moral perception. Between *Macbeth* and *Mein Kampf* a difference exists, and that difference is immense. The precarious harmony of any work of art is a balanced structure of innumerable tensions, qualities, and relationships. "... Because it can enlarge our awareness of values and refine our discrimination among values, literature is a force of tremendous potential for education."\(^7\)

The teaching of literature is not in itself a prescription for moral conduct. The impossibility of literature as a prescription for right living is demonstrated by the Literature Committee of the M.L.A. School and College Conference on English when it states that if a student has inclinations toward stealing automobiles, it is at least problematical whether reading about *Macbeth*, "who stole a kingdom," will

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act as a very powerful deterrent. In any case, Macbeth is "hardly to be read as a document written in the interests of crime prevention."

Nor is it a directive on how to resist temptation or how to proceed next in the practical situations of life.

In literature, the committee report reminds us, the student can find the record of men's experience and the image of human nature, of folly and nobility, of crime and retribution, of generosity and avarice, of charm and stupidity, of weakness and heroic strength. But literature, taken as a whole and in its infinite variety, does not indoctrinate the reader in any one single set of values--it provides a record of the many different values by which men have lived and died, suffered or found satisfaction. The books are never closed and the audit never final, the report reiterates, on these primary questions of value. The record begins in the past and is still active in the present. It is a continuous record of moral struggle, not a closed record of moral dogma. And, it adds, since literature is an art, it presents the record of values in the most concrete emotional terms. Its function "is not directly and by precept to make good neighbors and kind hearts, but to lead the student, as he develops, to consider the ethical complexity of life, to understand it more fully, and to make a more enlightened choice of his own loyalties." If there is one direct ethical result that we might expect the teaching of literature to have, it is in "simply leading the student to perceive that life can be lived on levels other than the familiar one of his own daily existence."

Awareness: The Readiness Is All

Finally, the English teacher incurs the obligation to be aware of the many special dimensions of his role as facilitator in the valuing process of his students. First, he will realize that all effective teaching is helping students in one way or another toward an objective, usually some conception of the good or happy life, emanating from some system of values. As a teacher, he must be aware of the all-pervasive nature of values in his classroom; as a teacher of literature he must be acutely aware of the power, the challenge, the opportunity that the study of literature in his classes can bring to his students as they engage in the valuing process.

The aware English teacher will accept his responsibility to raise value questions in his classes, even uncomfortable value questions, or those for which he himself still has no satisfactory answers. Raising such questions is an obligation. But raising the questions is not settling them once and for all. Teaching is not telling. Encountering value differences and value conflicts is part of the searching for answers, and thus part of the valuing process as students grow up. It is also basic to literature study.

Young people are becoming aware, sometimes bewilderingly, of the clash of values among men. Literature, as a humanistic study, is necessarily concerned with human values. Underlying its study are such eternal questions as these: What is the good life? What do men do with their lives? What do men live by and for?9

The aware English teacher will walk that precarious tightrope between indoctrination of moral values and total abstention from moral

considerations in the classroom. He will know that literature, which is the substance of his teaching, was not conceived in a moral vacuum.

Whatever the form—poem, novel, drama, biography, essay—literature makes comprehensible the myriad ways in which human beings meet the infinite possibilities that life offers. And always we seek some close contact with a mind uttering its sense of life. Always, too, in greater or lesser degree, the author has written out of a scheme of values, a sense of a social framework or even, perhaps, a cosmic pattern.  

He will also know that study of that literature cannot take place in an atmosphere devoid of values.

The teaching of literature inevitably involves the conscious or unconscious reinforcement of ethical attitudes. It is practically impossible to treat any novel or drama, or indeed any literary work of art, in a vital manner without confronting some problem of ethics and without speaking out of the context of some social philosophy. A framework of values is essential to any discussion of human life.  

The aware teacher will know that there are no easy answers, no short-cuts, no simple solutions in facilitating the valuing process in the English class. But there is the literature, and it is a rich resource: 

We need no prescriptive maxims in our study of values in the classroom. All we need is awareness of the experience of the human race. . . . Literature gives an illumination to the study of values, which prescriptive maxims lack. So too do the methods we use to teach literature and the ways we devise to help students gain power over language.  

The aware English teacher will know that personal values are built slowly over a long period of time, out of the total pattern of

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11. Ibid., p. 16.

individual experiences. Thus, he will not attempt to implant traits directly, no matter how commendable, or to indoctrinate his students in a particular course of action.

The tightrope image is appropriate, for there are very real dangers of falling into either the net of habitual moral preaching or the pit of moral vacuousness. The former implies a lack of understanding of how habits and traits are acquired; the latter implies gross ignorance of how values permeate all that we do.

To understand both what we can and what we cannot expect to do with our students, we need to consider how young people discover values. Many elements in one's background and environment assume significance—home, friends, church, school, community, all aspects of the culture of which one is a part. Influences in one area may fortify or nullify those in another. Thus classroom experiences must, if they are to have any effect, generate cumulative force over the six secondary-school years. . . . Our purpose, if understandings are to bear fruit in behavior, is to place the student as often as possible in situations where he is allowed to make his own decisions and where he must assume responsibility for the choices he makes. Such a program throughout the six secondary-school years, although it cannot insure volition, does provide the necessary practice and understandings. It takes much traveling in "goodly kingdoms" to discover for oneself even a few of the whys of living.\(^\text{13}\)

The truly aware teacher of English will understand the real nature of the valuing process and its importance in the lives of his students and in the lives of all of us. He will comprehend and possibly will glory in the role he must assume vis-à-vis the valuing process. He may even agree with Professors Sidney B. Simon and Howard Kirshenbaum on its importance in teaching: "If we had to choose but one objective for our teaching, it would be to help students search for values."\(^\text{14}\)

\(^\text{13}\)Ibid., p. 638.

The aware teacher of English will never confuse values with the process for refining and developing them, and will recognize the gap that always exists between ideals and their attainment. He will recognize, along with anthropologist Margaret Mead, "that in the tension between ideals and practice which must fall behind those ideals, lies the dynamic of American democracy--that the whole point of hitching one's wagon to a star lies in the tension on the rope."\(^\text{15}\)

The aware English teacher can help his students to formulate a personal idealism and to attain to the fulfillment of his ideals. The inalienable rights set down by our forefathers did not specify happiness, but the pursuit thereof—and it is here, dealing with the "tension on the rope," that the aware teacher can be of such immeasurable service. The opportunities are there; the challenge is his. The truly aware teacher of English can be a noble force in the education of the young. And the values they develop may well be the noblest part of his teaching and the most satisfying reward of his life's work.

A personal conviction has permeated this dissertation: that values are a legitimate concern of the school, a proper subject for inclusion in the curriculum, and an essential part of the area of instruction of the English class; and, furthermore, that the development of the students' values—the examination, exploration, and consideration of values and values issues, in effect, the whole valuing process—needs to be encouraged and facilitated in school, particularly in the English class. This entire dissertation has been written in order to bring this challenge to the attention of those who are about to become teachers of English and those who are preparing them to do so.

If this study has done its work, the new or prospective teacher will be able to see that the valuing process is indeed an integral part of education with a long and honorable tradition, and that its nurturing is a legitimate, valuable goal of the literature class. If this study has served its function, the novice literature teacher or one concerned with the preparation of such a teacher will have become aware of some of the many dimensions of the valuing process and will have become sensitized to that process and to the many ways in which he can encourage its growth.

Moreover, another personal bias is reflected in this dissertation: Although a commitment to values and to the nurturing of the valuing process is important to the effective teaching of English, values
should not be taught nor the process engaged in, to the exclusion of the other legitimate claims for English teaching. Rather, it is the firm contention of this dissertation that fundamental concerns like competence in reading and composition, facility in language usage, increased capacity for analytical and logical thinking, growth in understanding and appreciation of literature, and the development of imagination, creativity, and self-expression—all are the proper domain of the English class. In this study, there has been a deliberate effort to preserve a "both/and" rather than an "either/or" approach. Awareness of the valuing process in the classroom is not meant to be achieved at the expense of the denigration or elimination of other fundamental concerns of English teaching. They must complement each other, for they are not mutually exclusive.

Finally, this study is not the last word on the subject of the valuing process in the English class. Rather, this dissertation was undertaken in response to a perceived need--its intent was to offer a means of acquainting the teacher of English, especially the novice teacher, with the valuing process in the classroom and with his potential role in encouraging that process.

Very deliberately, this study has addressed itself to one aspect of the problem. New designs can now be created and other dissertations can now be conceptualized to teach the individual teacher specific techniques and strategies which will help to translate his new-found awareness into action. The work needs to be done. The challenge is there. Values, in one view, are "the things that matter, what people believe in strongly enough to live by, fight for, even die for."¹

Surely, then, nothing can be more vital as an area of research, in the whole range of teaching. And nothing can be more noble, more satisfying, and at the same time just possibly more fun, than seeking and finding ways by which to nurture the valuing process in our young people.
APPENDIX A

Suggested Model for Facilitating Growth in the Valuing Process

using

GIANTS IN THE EARTH

by

O. E. Rølvaag
Giants in the Earth

Conflicts in the novel

Discuss the multi-layered, omnipresent conflicts in the story.

(e.g.) The Insiders (Norwegians) vs. The Outsiders (all other settlers; Irish homesteaders

Traditional Judeo-Christian concepts; the Bible as law vs. Law of the West; frontier moral code

Old World Customs and ways vs. New World, American customs

Strength vs. Fear

Close-knit Community vs. Isolation from all others

The Ordinary Man vs. The Fury of the Elements

The Seafaring Past vs. The Land-locked Present

Ancient Laws of Property-holding and Homesteading vs. Pulling up and burning stakes of Irish settlers

Love vs. Fear and Guilt

Man and his Conscience vs. Almighty God; rejection of traditional laws and values

Hope for the Future vs. Despair and Guilt

Decisions of the characters

1. What important decisions had to be made by Per Hansa? By Beret? By the Solum brothers? By Hans Olsa? By Sorrine? By Tonseten? By the itinerant minister?
   a. What are some of the values that underlie these decisions?
      (e.g. Caring for the sick Indian chief, in spite of the distrust of the Indians for the white man's remedies, and despite the fear of the entire colony for the destruction of their crops and houses by marauding Indian bands.)
Giants in the Earth

Morality in the novel

Several significant questions of morality seem to underlie the story, sometimes hidden, frequently expressed. Lincoln Colcord, the translator of Rølvaag's work, in his preface cites "the human cost of empire building, rather than its glamour and romance" as being one of Rølvaag's main concerns. He gives as obvious example the problem of the distress of Beret, who simply could not take root in new soil. He even calls Beret's homesickness the motif of the tale.

1. What is the human cost of the little Norwegian settlement, the families who emigrated from the Old World, leaving all its social and spiritual and cultural ties as well as its physical comforts, to try a new life as pioneers?
   a. Was the toll in human misery necessary? Worthwhile? Morally acceptable?
   b. Should a girl like Beret follow her husband, wherever his path or his opportunities lead? Always?
   c. Should a loving husband like Per Hansa make such a choice, knowing the cost to his wife?
   d. When should people emigrate from their culture? What might prevent them?
   e. Is the settlement and the bringing of "civilization" to an untamed land in and of itself a "good" thing?
   f. What are the factors that, generally speaking, make "good" immigrants anywhere?
   g. Are there examples today of immigration to developing cultures? Is there a human or a moral cost?
2. A type of moral problem is connected to the existence of minorities within a given culture. What are some of the factors that work in favor of minority groups and against minorities within a population? Are some of these factors value differences as well as cultural patterns?

a. What are some of the moral factors that affect the question of cultural preservation amidst the conformity of the group?

(1) Were the Norwegian settlers interested in preserving their own values and morals? How do you know? Were they at the same time interested in amalgamating, in becoming "American" and adopting American values?

(2) What are some of the values that underlie the "melting pot" concept? What values might underlie pride in an ethnic background, and preservation of that cultural pattern?

3. What are some of the problems that face immigrants in a new land?

a. Are there problems that are common to all immigrating peoples?

b. Are there some problems that are particular to America?

(1) Do those same problems exist, in a sense, for those coming to the United States today?

(2) Does the solution to these problems depend on values?

c. What kinds of values do people bring with them when they decide to settle in a new land?

(1) Is the transplantation of such values inevitable?

(2) Is the transplantation of such values possible?

d. What kinds of values and conditions might immigrants be attempting to escape from?

(1) What kinds of values play a part in their decision—either to flee from existing conditions or to search out more desirable conditions?
4. What does Per Hansa mean, at the end of the story, when he states that there are some who should never emigrate because they cannot be happy with what they see the future will be?
   a. Are there such people? Is Per Hansa, in your opinion, right?
   b. What values are represented, generally, by those who uproot themselves to a life of hardship for today, but with a promise of a better life tomorrow?
   c. What values are represented by the larger perspective, the long-term view? What kinds of decisions are based on the postponement of gratification, the foregoing of instant satisfaction?

   (1) Are such decisions value-laden? Are they necessary?

5. What are some of the values the Norwegian immigrants brought with them to Dakota? Did they hold on to those values? If so, at what cost?
   a. Would it have been better for the Norwegians to have tried to become more "American?" Why? Would such actions have been successful? How would they have changed the story?
2. Examine, using force field analysis, one of the conflicts or one of the significant decisions of the settlers. (See sample force diagrams attached.)

a. In the light of these forces, what values determine the decision?

b. Was the decision, in your view, a good one? Was it a logical decision, given the nature of the operating forces? Was it a humane decision, determined after sufficient reflecting and recognition of all viable alternatives?
### Giants in the Earth

#### Force Field Analysis--Suggested Diagram

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Returning to &quot;Civilization&quot;</th>
<th>Staying on the Prairie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Driving forces supporting decision to remain as settlers in Dakota</td>
<td>Restraining forces pushing decision to give up and go home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chance to carve out one's own destiny; freedom from laws and restrictions of the Old World</th>
<th>Loneliness of the Prairie; isolation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adventure, excitement</td>
<td>Unfamiliarity; homesickness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich land, fertile soil; Dakota: the &quot;Sunshine State&quot;</td>
<td>Hard work of clearing land, building houses, roads; severe winters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness of the Prairie; apparent limitlessness of land</td>
<td>Confinement of winter; the feeling of being closed-in, even abandoned in the snowed-in sod huts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride of accomplishment</td>
<td>Discouragement; lack of progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope for a secure, better life tomorrow, as more homesteaders arrive</td>
<td>Fear of Indians; fear of other homesteaders; lawlessness of West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope for one's children's future</td>
<td>No schools; loss of all &quot;refinement&quot; and culture; loss of old customs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth, strength, will to work hard against great odds</td>
<td>Magnitude of the task ahead; fear of illness and death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of community with other Norwegians; friendship, true neighborliness, love of man</td>
<td>Lack of communication with non-Norwegians; language barrier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good harvest; long-term prospects for happiness</td>
<td>Drought; grasshopper plague; abject poverty; shortages of good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Giants in the Earth

Suggested Force Field Diagram

**Characters Per Hansa and Beret**
- Returning to "Civilization"
- Driving forces supporting immigration to United States, settling in Dakota

**Characters Per Hansa and Beret**
- Staying on the Prairie
- Restraining forces pushing idea of giving up and going home

| Robust, optimistic, adventurous spirit of Per Hansa | Timidity, shyness, serious nature of Beret |
| Love of Per Hansa for Beret, wanting to make a good life for her and the family | Beret's feelings of guilt for leaving parents and community to follow her husband |
| Love of Beret for Per Hansa | Beret's feelings of guilt and punishment for birth of child |
| Fearlessness, courage of Per, no matter how difficult the obstacle | Beret's fears, compounded with mental attitude, from isolation, loneliness, alienation |
| Per's humanity—his goodness and his weaknesses | Beret's narrow view of true "Christian" goodness; her fear of loss of God's love |
| The children's future, full of hope and opportunity for better life | Beret's feeling that her children will become "savages" in the wilderness |
| Per's inventiveness, originality (sailor's nets to catch ducks, lime whitewash for the cabin) | Beret's wild imagination, her ghostly fears; her inability to cope |
Giants in the Earth

Specific Questions

1. Is this a novel of plot? Of character? Of setting? On what do you base your answer?

2. Which is the stronger character—Per Hansa, Hans Olsa, or Beret? Why?

3. As in Ethan Frome, The Return of the Native, and other novels, the setting creates a mood or an atmosphere which envelops the characters, the plot, and the themes. How does the author manage to recreate the prairie and all its opportunities and dangers? What specific things help create the tragic mood?

4. What mistakes did the pioneers make which could have prevented some of their troubles, and at least one final catastrophe?

5. What is Beret ashamed of? Is she carrying too much of a burden of guilt, so that success in the new land is doomed beforehand?

6. How does Per Hansa handle the problem of his wife's mental disease? In what ways could he have helped her? How much of her condition do you think she caused, herself? Would a preacher have helped? What solution, given the same conditions, would be offered today?

7. What was your personal emotional reaction to the story? Did it leave you depressed, inspired, grateful? What would have been your reaction to the hardships the people had to undergo?

Thought Questions

1. Who, really, are the "giants in the earth" in the story? What elements are finally triumphant?

2. Since the story of these pioneers ends in death and defeat at the hands of Nature, does it follow that any theme for the book must negate or deny Man's triumph over Nature, his exploration of land,
1. Most Americans are familiar with the image of the pioneer American, an image made manifest by a wealth of novels, stories, motion pictures, and television dramas. In what ways is that image maintained or supported by *Giants in the Earth*? In what ways is the portrayal different? Which seems to you more noble? More likeable? More true-to-life?

a. Are we harmed when a view of life or a symbolic character which is essentially false, is presented to us? If so, wherein lies the damage?

b. On the other hand, must we always be realistic in our re-creation of heroes? The American cowboy, dramatized in song and story, we recognize as the romanticized hero of our most colorful period. Do we not distinguish between the real and the unreal even when we read and watch cowboy stories?
c. Is this not essentially mythology, in a sense? Does the preservation of its myths hurt or help a country? How?

d. What about national pride? Given our unique heritage, is not the American pioneer, with all his traits of rugged fearless-ness, indomitable courage, and fierce independence a "natural" for us to want to foster as our ideal in an image-conscious time?

e. What are the dangers or the benefits of preserving such an image? Can images, especially stereotypes of a nation or a race or a profession ever be utterly destroyed? If so, how?

2. It has been said (in a College Board Writing Sample, for instance) that the modern American, having no frontiers to conquer, can never be the great man his pioneer ancestor was. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? You may disagree even with its basic premise, if you wish.

a. Were the physical frontiers the only ones for man to conquer? If not, what other comparable frontiers remain to challenge the modern American?

b. Are there still physical frontiers? If so, what are they, and what are we doing about conquering them?

c. Are frontiers, in the sense of challenges, necessary for man to progress? Are they necessary for his happiness?

d. Aside from the question of the existence of frontiers, is the modern American "softer" than his forebears? If so, to what do you attribute this condition and what can be done about it?

e. Is modern man "softer" in other ways than just the capacity to overcome physical barriers? What part does deprivation, sacrifice, and suffering play in building the inner man? In the light of the solving of man's physical ills and the raising of his standard of living, are there not even more dangers to his character?
APPENDIX B

Detail of Schools Visited in the Course of This Study

California:

1969
San Francisco
Palo Alto
Mountain View

1969
South San Francisco Junior High
Gunn High
Mountain View High

Western Massachusetts:

1969 -
Agawam
Belchertown
East Longmeadow

Granby
Holyoke

Springfield
West Springfield
Westfield

1971
Agawam High
Belchertown Junior-Senior High
Birchland Park Junior High
East Longmeadow High
Granby Junior-Senior High
Holyoke High
Holyoke Trade High
Holyoke Catholic High
Forest Park Junior High
M. Marcus Kiley Junior High
Cowling Junior High
West Springfield Junior High
West Springfield High
Westfield Junior High

Eastern Massachusetts and Cape Cod:

1971 -
Hudson
Mattapoisett

Chatham
Orleans/Eastham

1972
Hudson High
Sippican Elementary
Rochester Memorial
Mattapoisett Elementary
Old Rochester Regional High
Chatham Elementary
Chatham Middle
Chatham High
Nauset Regional High
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