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AMERICAN COMPOSITION

AND RHETORIC

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AMERICAN COMPOSITION AND RHETORIC

By

Donald Davidson

Professor of English, Vanderbilt University

THIRD EDITION

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

New York

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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

THE Third Edition of *American Composition and Rhetoric* retains the general design of the First Edition and the more extended treatment of narrative and argument which was added in the Second Edition. But certain changes have been made. New illustrative selections have been substituted—or, in a few instances, added—where such changes seemed advisable. In Chapter III, the instructional material accompanying "Project 4, Ideas," has been worked over and extended. In Chapter V, the treatment of "Logical Pattern" has been revised and amplified in order to emphasize the importance of word order in relation to syntax. Some changes have been made in Chapter VI, "Words," and in the portion of Chapter VIII which deals with annotation of the research paper. Minor revisions and corrections have been made at various other points in the book, the entire text of which has been carefully reconsidered; and new material for themes, paragraph study, and exercises has been provided.

In this task of revision I have benefited greatly by the generous suggestions of my colleagues at numerous institutions throughout the United States, and in many instances my changes reflect consideration of their specific comments. It seems proper, therefore, not only to reaffirm my statement, made in the Preface to the First Edition, that a book of this sort is "almost as much a product of tradition as of new and individual effort," but also to note that, the longer such a book is in use, the more it tends to represent the joint knowledge of earnest teachers who must daily face the flux and stir of the modern world with a subject Protean in many of its outward manifestations but, in its bed-rock principles, firm and unchangeful.

Feeling, as I do, a warm sense of the common enterprise, I have tried to shape this book to express—as far as a mere textbook can—the alertness to Protean qualities and the firmness of principle that seem to distinguish American teachers of writing. A modern specialist in grammar, applying statistical methods to the study of the forms and functions of words, may seem to be arguing that, by some kind of majority vote, what grammarians or rhetoricians once condemned as "bad" may now be elected "good." The teacher of writing, alert to the

ways of Proteus, applies the grip of principle and asks: Does this reputed "goodness" or "badness" have any relevance to the larger, the all-important task of writing well? That teacher must pass judgment on the excellence of the whole, and of the parts in relation to the whole, without being diverted into analytical exaggeration of the importance of parts as dissociated phenomena. Whatever judgment he may make is entitled to respect. Indeed, where composition and rhetoric are concerned, the judgment of one wise and devoted teacher or the example of one great writer may well outweigh a landslide of statistics. This textbook is written in the belief that such judgments are of the highest educational importance; and that a course in writing is most truly educative when it treats every product of the act of writing as an organic unity, an end to the total excellence of which all the separate aspects of study are but means.

I am deeply grateful to all who have assisted me through written suggestions or in other ways. My thanks go also to the various authors and publishers who have given their permission to reprint copyrighted material. Further acknowledgment of such permissions is made in footnotes referring to specific items.

D. D.

Vanderbilt University
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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THIS book is written on the assumption that the study of composition and rhetoric is valuable in itself, over and above its obvious instrumental uses, and that, if it were not thus valuable, it would not now be a universal requirement in American institutions of higher learning. The accidents of our educational system, rather than the nature of the subject itself, have confined this study largely to the freshman year, and have conspired to make the introductory writing course include a little of everything. At one time the composition course was a school of rhetorical elegance. Later it became a "daily theme" course, in which students learned to write by making a habit of writing and got principles and taste by sheer contagion. Next, the sudden expansion of our educational system made the course a process of reviewing and repairing—a veritable school of abuse which kept the freshman perpetually on the dunce's stool. Still later, it essayed to be journalism and used magazines for textbooks. Finally, it has played with scientific analogies and become a laboratory course, or has turned still more ambitious and become an orientation course with writing for a by-product.

With so much adventure behind us and so much of present experiment to draw upon, this may conceivably be a proper moment to argue that composition and rhetoric is a subject in its own right —not an inferior branch of other subjects, not a mere postscript to high school, not an apologetic preparation for presumably larger tasks which after all are none too specifically provided for in later studies.

The general purpose of this textbook, therefore, is to treat the subject of composition and rhetoric in such a way as to encourage respect for its dignity and independence. The book assumes that the subject-matter of an introductory writing course, though it must be adapted to the needs of college freshmen, is actually the principles of composition and rhetoric as such, in their genuine sovereignty, and not a specialized set of methods and usages found between the covers of freshman textbooks and nowhere else on earth. For there is writing in the world, as there is a science of chemistry;

but is there a special college writing any more than there is a special college chemistry? It seems a modest presumption to hold that the dignity of the subject may well interfuse even its elementary stages and to think that it ought to do so at all stages if English studies are to be kept in equal esteem with other subjects, which certainly make few compromises with a beginner.

In more specific application, this textbook recognizes existing tendencies and needs, and attempts to rationalize their just and realistic claims rather than to strike out in some boldly experimental direction. The early chapters provide for the usual work in theme organization, paragraphing, sentence structure, and the like, in combination with assignments in simple expository writing. The Handbook, through its review of grammar, punctuation, and common errors, furnishes material that is adapted both for study and for reference. At the same time, the aim has been to deal with both little and large problems so that they are brought into the organic unity suggested in the point of view defined above. In the earlier chapters I have therefore endeavored, while simplifying the approach, to make it firm as well as practical, and to lead by natural progression to the more complex tasks of later chapters. The arrangement of the book implies such a progression, but does not forbid a different sequence of study.

The illustrative selections are somewhat more copious than is usual in books of this kind. They are chosen to give a variety of illustrations of subject-matter, methods, diction, and style; to give opportunity for comparative analysis; and to acquaint the student with the canon of good writing and, for that matter, of good thinking, on subjects neither too topical nor too remote. The emphasis in these selections is put rather strongly, but I trust not too exclusively, upon the American situation in its diverse aspects; and in many points of usage the book favors American rather than British standards.

Every book of this kind is almost as much a product of tradition as of new and individual effort. I could not begin to make adequate acknowledgment of my debts to teachers, scholars, and editors upon whom, consciously or unconsciously, I may have drawn; but I do wish to note my specific indebtedness to Melvin Curl's *Expository Writing*, Robert M. Gay's *Reading and Writing*, and John Crowe Ransom's *Topics for Freshman Composition*, as admirable textbooks

that could hardly fail to influence in certain respects the author of a modern American textbook of composition and rhetoric.

I wish to thank the periodicals, publishers, and authors that have given me their kind permission to reprint. Specific acknowledgment of my indebtedness is given in the footnotes accompanying the selections.

I owe much to the counsel and help of my colleagues of the department of English of Vanderbilt University: Richmond Croom Beatty, who read the manuscript, and Edgar H. Duncan, by whose criticism and direct assistance I have benefited greatly throughout the preparation of the book. I am grateful for suggestions from William C. Frierson of the University of Alabama, Edd Winfield Parks of the University of Georgia, F. Cudworth Flint of Dartmouth College, and Raymond Bosworth of Simmons College. I wish also to record my thanks for the generous assistance of Isabel Howell and Frances Cheney, of the Vanderbilt University Library, Ivar Lou Myhr, of Ward-Belmont College, and Mildred Haun.

To W. D. Howe and Thomas J. B. Walsh of Charles Scribner's Sons I owe more than common thanks for steadfast encouragement, patient consideration, and practical advice.

And I should express much more than common thanks for the scholarly and unremitting assistance of my wife, Theresa Sherrer Davidson.

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American Composition and Rhetoric

Chapter I

THE STUDY OF COMPOSITION AND RHETORIC

As an independent nation, our honor requires us to have a system of our own in language as well as in government. Great Britain, whose children we are and whose language we speak, should no longer be *our* standard, for the taste of her writers is already corrupted and her language on the decline. But if it were not so, she is at too great a distance to be our model and to instruct us in the principles of our own tongue.—Noah Webster, in *Dissertations on the English Language* (1789).

NOAH WEBSTER, maker of the first great American dictionary, felt the Spirit of '76 working in the language as well as in the politics of his time. A little rashly, he predicted that the American tongue would some day be as different from the language of England as Dutch, Danish, and Swedish are different from German.

Webster prophesied too much, but his intuition was right, his prophecy not altogether wrong. Americans still speak and write English. The course in Composition is generally spoken of as a course in English Composition. Yet the language is not the "King's English." It has been Americanized. The standard of usage in the United States tends ever more strongly to become an American rather than a British standard. Indeed, the tables have been turned, and American usage for some time has exerted a very noticeable influence upon British usage. The study of composition and rhetoric in twentieth-century America must begin with an honest recognition

of such facts. It is a study undertaken in America, by Americans who may be expected to share in Webster's feelings to no small extent.

Yet the sweep of international culture and the force of great traditions are too strong to allow us to have, in an extreme sense, "a system of our own." The instrument of language is old; the principles of good writing are universal. The study of writing must be for Americans what it is for people of all nations: a study of language and of the thought which uses language as its instrument.

In former times college students were likely to be concerned much more with spoken discourse than with written discourse. They studied rhetoric, in the old sense of the word, rather than writing. The word *rhetoric* comes from a Greek word meaning "orator," and the study of rhetoric was for many centuries mainly a study of oratory, or of a composition that imitated oratory. For better or worse, we have discarded the standards which, even as late as the time of Washington and Jefferson, put the emphasis on oral rather than on written performance. Today we study composition *and* rhetoric—or the principles of correct and effective writing.

Without laboring too much over definitions, we may say that *composition* refers chiefly to structural arrangement, organization, the putting together of parts to make a whole; and that *rhetoric* refers to the skill or artifice used in making the composition persuasive and effective. The study of these closely allied subjects rests upon a knowledge of grammar and usage; it must also make full use of the resources of logic.

The subject matter of composition and rhetoric is not as solid and precise as the subject matter of physical science, or history, or any other "content course." Nevertheless, the foundation is still knowledge—knowledge that must be acquired and mastered before the instrument of language can be used successfully in writing. Primarily, this means knowledge of language itself. The student must go beyond the uncritical knowledge of words that he has had ever since he began to talk. He must make his knowledge systematic and discriminating. To his earlier knowledge of grammar he is expected to add a comprehension of the part that grammar plays in fixing meaning and relationship. He should be in a position to realize that words do not change their forms or take certain prescribed groupings without reason, but that such changes and group-

ings are inherited conveniences which may serve, like traffic signs, to guide his thought. He should now learn that the correctness of this or that form depends not upon a grammarian's whim but upon a tradition of usage that grammar merely attempts to describe. The vocabulary of English, he should see, is a rich and varied store of words, his racial inheritance, a public treasury of language from which he can take according to his needs; and he can be sure that every conscious effort he makes to increase his private store is a step toward making his knowledge actually useful.

All this, however, is merely a knowledge of instruments. In the study of composition and rhetoric the emphasis will not be merely on *what* the student knows of grammar or language, but rather on *how* that knowledge may be used to express thought. A prose composition is language, grammar, mechanics, brought to life and put into action by well-controlled thought and feeling. Only thus can writing have meaning and effect. Only thus can the student employ his knowledge intelligently and purposively. It is not enough to write a grammatical sentence, although that is the first requirement. A good writer must know *how* and *why* this correct grammatical expression is more or less useful than another one, equally correct. He must know *how* some words behave in a given passage, and *why*, if put into another context, they change the meaning of what is said. In short, he must learn to command his resources rather than merely possess them.

Two Kinds of Resources. Every student should possess and command two kinds of resources: first, the resources that belong to him as an individual—a person unique, peculiar, apart from other individuals; second, the resources that are common to all educated persons and that represent an inheritance stored up for everybody's use. The first kind may be called personal; the second, traditional.

The student's personal resources at a given moment are a compound of his native gifts and his education up to that point. Whether he can write well depends in part upon the talents he was born with and in part upon the use that he has made of his education, in school and out of school. No doubt he excels in some things and is weak in other things. He has had a good teacher one year, a poor or uninspiring teacher another year. He was born into a bookish family and found it the most natural thing in the world to write well; or perhaps he has had to struggle against a distaste

for books and writing. Possibly he is weak in grammar, but he has a fine flow of words. Or he can write easily, but never could spell. He has travelled much, or he has stayed at home. He has certain pronounced likes and dislikes, or is indifferent, or is bored. He is going to be an engineer, a lawyer, a doctor, a scholar; or he is just improving his mind.

Since the student is going to be required to use his full store of personal resources, this is a good time for him to take inventory of what he has. Where is he strong? Where is he weak? The instructor will find out in time. Perhaps the instructor will bring to light points of strength or weakness that he never dreamed of. That is part of the aim of a course in writing. The student should realize that, although he is a member of a class and will be asked to follow out a uniform system of instruction, it is not the purpose of the system to check his individuality, but rather to bring it out. He is expected to remain an individual, to draw upon his own store of ideas and experiences, to look within himself, to reflect and ponder, indeed continually to explore himself and rediscover himself. If he does this, what he writes will be his, and his only.

But it would be a hardship if he were forced to rely altogether upon himself, with no help from without. It is true that power of self-expression is one of the objects of his study. It is true that he can teach himself a great deal—even that in the end he will really learn only what, under guidance, he has taught himself. Yet self-expression might become a distaster, not a privilege, if we had to stand always alone and be forever original. He who rebels against grammar might think better of grammarians if he had to make up his own grammar from the beginning. The student may congratulate himself that most of the hardest work has already been done, and done for him. For instance, he does not have to invent a language. That has already been attended to, though perhaps not completely. The grammar is there, too, well enough established at all but a few doubtful points. The dictionaries are there, with more words than any single individual can ever command. The writings of all the world, the full resources of a library, the living world of periodicals and books—these are waiting to be taken and used. And one of the great rewards of a course in composition and rhetoric is that it increases a student's understanding and appreciation of books and ideas. Whether he learns to write brilliantly

or just moderately well, he will have a keener eye for all sorts of writing than if he had never himself attempted to write at all.

Such are the resources of tradition. They belong to all humanity. In laying hold upon them, the student takes up his rightful inheritance. He is carried by the united strength of all civilization. Not in one year or in many years can he master all that tradition has stored up. But it is of great importance at the beginning of a composition course to understand the proper use of traditional resources. They are found in a convenient form in the dictionary, which the student must consult and ought to own; in the textbook, which is an ordered selection from the vast accumulated resources of tradition—a selection made in the light of contemporary needs; and in books of reference of all sorts.

Most important of all resources are the works of writers, British and American, who have formed the literary tradition. It is not likely that a student who is unwilling to read will ever be able to make the best possible use of his powers as a writer, no matter whether his powers are large or small. It is advisable to lay out a course of reading over and above class requirements and to follow it up systematically. Lists of suggested readings are given in this book. Their special purpose is to help the student in his composition assignments by directing him to writers who have encountered and solved the very problems that confront him. Their general purpose is to tempt him to become fully acquainted with the canon of good writing in works by British and American authors.

Yet good reading alone does not make good writing. We learn by doing. The composition is the thought made into the deed. The student must begin to write before he knows all that there is to know about writing. The natural subject for him to begin with is a subject on which he is an authority—himself.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

An autobiographical theme is likely to be one of the early assignments in a composition course. The instructor has his purpose in making such an assignment. He wishes to know the members of the class as persons, rather than as mere names on a roll. The writing of an autobiography is naturally a solitary task, and the

reading of it by the instructor may be assumed to be private and sympathetic. The student is expected to introduce himself confidentially to his instructor, and the presumption is that he will wish to make the most of his opportunity, which will not come often, in a lifetime.

Aside from that fairly exciting possibility, the assignment reminds the student that his own experience is probably the most important source of material for his themes. Later he will go to sources outside himself. Now he turns to what is most familiar—his personal experience.

As it exists in his mind, however, it may be vague and shapeless. His problem is to give that experience a significant shape. He cannot tell everything. He must select what will represent him as he would wish to be represented—those parts of his experience which actually go together so as to make a unified composition.

An aimless chronicle of events from birth to entrance into college will not have shape. An autobiography is not a dry collection of data: "Born at Stroudsburg, Kansas, 1935. Father's occupation, banking. Church, Presbyterian. Attended grade school and high school at Stroudsburg. Had an operation for appendicitis in my junior year at high school and so failed to make the basketball team. Made it in my senior year. Also edited school paper. Best grades, in history. Disliked mathematics and Latin. Expect to major in economics."

Even if expanded into a thousand words, such an account would be dull. The first problem is to find significant events and put the insignificant ones aside. Look back, consider what has been decisive in your life history. What singular chain of events has brought you into a college composition class in this year and place? What facts, what experiences, what influences will you emphasize? What is it that the world has never understood in you? There are various ways of answering such questions effectively and honestly.

You may decide to make your autobiography a character study. If so, single out some dominant trait and arrange your autobiography around it. Or you may have a queer mixture of traits. Are you lazy, and yet well-meaning? Do you have a turn for music or painting or mechanics? Have you had to fight bashfulness, or are you a pre-eminently social creature? Whatever the trait that you select, centralize your autobiography about it. If you have been

a bashful person, show how your bashfulness affected your life: perhaps it kept you in a corner with a book when others were at play; perhaps you overcame it when you decided to go out for the team or try for the glee club. If you have no exceptional traits, make that fact your story; explain what it means to be "just average."

You may prefer to dwell upon background and influences. Did you have to overcome certain obstacles in coming to college? If you had to fight poverty, show how, step by step, you won the fight. Has the life of some region or locality been the dominant fact in your life? Is it a Western ranch, a Southern farm, a Pennsylvania mining town, a great metropolis? Have you been influenced by some friend or relative? Have you modelled your life after some personal hero?

As a third choice, you may select some event that changed your life—a fire, a flood, a long illness, a trip, a religious experience, a sudden removal of your family to some new place, a revelation, at some critical moment, of what you could and would do.

The second problem is how to arrange your sketch: where to begin, where to end, what to do in between. If your autobiography is a character sketch, you may begin with some early incident that illustrates your dominant trait (stubbornness, resourcefulness, bookishness, or the like), and then show how this trait has affected your career. (The order of time will give you a good arrangement if you wish to show the influence of some friend; up to the time of your meeting with him, your life was thus and so, and afterwards it was—whatever it was.) If you concentrate on some event, you may begin with it, relate it in some detail, and then explain how it has affected your life. Or you may reverse this order: show yourself, in a snapshot, as you are now, and then give the events or analyze the causes that explain the portrait. The easiest plan is to give a brief sketch that "places" you as a person and then to deal with experiences that you deem important. If you follow this plan, you must not ramble. Make your selected material lead to some clearly defined estimate of yourself.

The third problem is language. Write as simply and directly as you can. Do not try to be pretentious. Do not be flippant. Be plain and straightforward.

The pronoun *I* will naturally appear in your personal history. Do not shrink from it. It is not an indelicate word. Autobiographies

are generally written in the first person. Their chief value is often in their frankness, and frankness is not egotism.

On the other hand, you may assume the mask of the third person if you wish. You may gain a perspective by writing as if your story were the story of somebody else, whom you are studying, for the moment, a little critically.

THE BOYS' AMBITION[1]

By Samuel L. Clemens

When I was a boy, there was but one permanent ambition among my comrades in our village on the west bank of the Mississippi River. That was, to be a steamboatman. We had transient ambitions of other sorts, but they were only transient. When a circus came and went, it left us all burning to become clowns; the first negro minstrel show that ever came to our section left us all suffering to try that kind of life; now and then we had a hope that, if we lived and were good, God would permit us to be pirates. These ambitions faded out, each in its turn; but the ambition to be a steamboatman always remained.

Once a day a cheap, gaudy packet arrived upward from St. Louis, and another downward from Keokuk. Before these events, the day was glorious with expectancy; after them, the day was a dead and empty thing. Not only the boys, but the whole village, felt this. After all these years I can picture that old time to myself now, just as it was then: the white town drowsing in the sunshine of a summer's morning; the streets empty, or pretty nearly so; one or two clerks sitting in front of the Water Street stores, with their splint-bottomed chairs tilted back against the walls, chins on breasts, hats slouched over their faces, asleep—with shingle-shavings enough around to show what broke them down; a sow and a litter of pigs loafing along the sidewalk, doing a good business in watermelon rinds and seeds; two or three lonely little freight piles scattered about the "levee"; a pile of "skids" on the slope of the stone-paved wharf, and the fragrant town drunkard asleep in the shadow of them; two or three wood flats at the head of the wharf, but nobody to listen to the peaceful lapping of the wavelets against them; the great Mississippi, the majestic, the magnificent Mississippi, rolling its mile-wide tide along, shining in the sun; the dense forest away

[1]From *Life on the Mississippi.*

on the other side; the "point" above the town, and the "point" below, bounding the river-glimpse and turning it into a sort of sea, and withal a very still and brilliant and lonely one. Presently a film of dark smoke appears above one of those remote "points"; instantly a negro drayman, famous for his quick eye and prodigious voice, lifts up the cry, "S-t-e-a-m-boat a-comin'!" and the scene changes! The town drunkard stirs, the clerks wake up, a furious clatter of drays follows, every house and store pours out a human contribution, and all in a twinkling the dead town is alive and moving. Drays, carts, men, boys, all go hurrying from many quarters to a common center, the wharf. Assembled there, the people fasten their eyes upon the coming boat as upon a wonder they are seeing for the first time. And the boat *is* rather a handsome sight, too. She is long and sharp and trim and pretty; she has two tall, fancy-topped chimneys, with a gilded device of some kind swung between them; a fanciful pilot-house, all glass and "gingerbread," perched on top of the "texas" deck behind them; the paddle-boxes are gorgeous with a picture or with gilded rays above the boat's name; the boiler-deck, the hurricane-deck, and the texas deck are fenced and ornamented with clean white railings; there is a flag gallantly flying from the jack-staff; the furnace doors are open and the fires glaring bravely; the upper decks are black with passengers; the captain stands by the big bell, calm, imposing, the envy of all; great volumes of the blackest smoke are rolling and tumbling out of the chimneys—a husbanded grandeur created with a bit of pitch-pine just before arriving at a town; the crew are grouped on the forecastle; the broad stage is run far out over the port bow, and an envied deckhand stands picturesquely on the end of it with a coil of rope in his hand; the pent steam is screaming through the gauge-cocks; the captain lifts his hand, a bell rings, the wheels stop; then they turn back, churning the water to foam, and the steamer is at rest. Then such a scramble as there is to get aboard, and to get ashore, and to take in freight and to discharge freight, all at one and the same time; and such a yelling and cursing as the mates facilitate it all with! Ten minutes later the steamer is under way again, with no flag on the jack-staff and no black smoke issuing from the chimneys. After ten more minutes the town is dead again, and the town drunkard asleep by the skids once more.

My father was a justice of the peace, and I supposed he possessed the power of life and death over all men, and could hang anybody that offended him. This was distinction enough for me as a general thing; but the desire to be a steamboatman kept intruding, never-

theless. I first wanted to be a cabin-boy, so that I could come out with a white apron on and shake a tablecloth over the side, where all my old comrades could see me; later I thought I would rather be the deck-hand who stood on the end of the stage-plank with the coil of rope in his hand because he was particularly conspicuous. But these were only day-dreams—they were too heavenly to be contemplated as real possibilities. By and by one of our boys went away. He was not heard of for a long time. At last he turned up as apprentice engineer or "striker" on a steamboat. This thing shook the bottom out of all my Sunday-school teachings. That boy had been notoriously worldly, and I just the reverse; yet he was exalted to this eminence, and I left in obscurity and misery. There was nothing generous about this fellow in his greatness. He would always manage to have a rusty bolt to scrub while his boat tarried at our town, and he would sit on the inside guard and scrub it, where we all could see him and envy him and loathe him. And whenever his boat was laid up he would come home and swell around the town in his blackest and greasiest clothes, so that nobody could help remembering that he was a steamboatman; and he used all sorts of steamboat technicalities in his talk, as if he were so used to them that he forgot common people could not understand them. He would speak of the "labbord" side of a horse in an easy, natural way that would make one wish he was dead. And he was always talking about "St. Looy" like an old citizen; he would refer casually to occasions when he was "coming down Fourth Street," or when he was "passing by the Planter's House," or when there was a fire and he took a turn on the brakes of "the old Big Missouri"; and then he would go on and lie about how many towns the size of ours were burned down there that day. Two or three of the boys had long been persons of consideration among us because they had been to St. Louis once and had a vague general knowledge of its wonders, but the day of their glory was over now. They lapsed into a humble silence, and learned to disappear when the ruthless "cub"-engineer approached. This fellow had money, too, and hair-oil. Also an ignorant silver watch and a showy brass watch-chain. He wore a leather belt and used no suspenders. If ever a youth was cordially admired and hated by his comrades, this one was. No girl could withstand his charms. He "cut out" every boy in the village. When his boat blew up at last, it diffused a tranquil contentment among us such as we had not known for months. But when he came home the next week, alive, renowned, and appeared in church all battered up and bandaged,

a shining hero, stared at and wondered over by everybody, it seemed to us that the partiality of Providence for an undeserving reptile had reached a point where it was open to criticism.

This creature's career could produce but one result, and it speedily followed. Boy after boy managed to get on the river. The minister's son became an engineer. The doctor's son and the postmaster's sons became "mud clerks"; the wholesale liquor dealer's son became a barkeeper on a boat; four sons of the chief merchant, and two sons of the county judge, became pilots. Pilot was the grandest position of all. The pilot, even in those days of trivial wages, had a princely salary—from a hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty dollars a month, and no board to pay. Two months of his wages would pay a preacher's salary for a year. Now some of us were left disconsolate. We could not get on the river—at least our parents would not let us.

So, by and by, I ran away. I said I would never come home again till I was a pilot and could come in glory. But somehow I could not manage it. I went meekly aboard a few of the boats that lay packed together like sardines at the long St. Louis wharf, and humbly inquired for the pilots, but got only a cold shoulder and short words from mates and clerks. I had to make the best of this sort of treatment for the time being, but I had comforting daydreams of a future when I should be a great and honored pilot, with plenty of money, and could kill some of these mates and clerks and pay for them.

EXERCISES

1. What is the topic of the first paragraph? How is it stated? How does Clemens emphasize the nature and intensity of the boys' ambition? What relationship does this paragraph have to the composition as a whole?

2. What is the purpose of the second paragraph? Is it too long? Would the passage be equally effective if it were divided into two or more paragraphs? What is the value of this passage as autobiography? As description?

3. What is the topic of the third paragraph? In what way does it develop the general subject? Why does Clemens describe in such great detail the career of the boy who "went away"?

4. In what respects does "The Boys' Ambition" differ from Agnes De Mille's "First Ballet Lessons" (p. 12)?

5. List all phrases which depend for their effect on humorous exaggeration. Would the actual boys of this account have found such expressions humorous? If Clemens, as a boy, had written about his ambition, would he have used such expressions?

6. Study the language of the selection. To what extent is it literary, plain, high-flown, colloquial, technical.

Analyze closely the meaning and effectiveness of such phrases as the following: "husbanded grandeur"; "the mates facilitate"; "shook the bottom out"; "come home and swell around the town"; "persons of consideration among us"; "an ignorant silver watch".

Do you know the meaning of all the following terms at first glance?

Packet, levee, skids, pilot-house, texas deck, boiler deck, hurricane deck, paddle-boxes, stage, forecastle, port bow, deckhand, jack-staff.

Look up in a dictionary any terms unfamiliar to you. Was Clemens justified in using words that might not have been familiar to all readers even in his own day?

7. Did Samuel L. Clemens ("Mark Twain") later achieve his ambition? Look him up in the *Dictionary of American Biography.* Or read further in *Life on the Mississippi,* the book from which this selection is taken.

FIRST BALLET LESSONS[1]

By Agnes De Mille

Kosloff agreed to take us as pupils, and out of courtesy to Uncle Cecil he took us free without pay of any sort for as long or as often as we wished to go to his school.

We went down for our audition on a summer morning. The studio was an enormous bare room with folding chairs pushed against the white walls for the mothers to sit on while they watched their daughters sweat. Across one end of the hall hung a large mirror. Around the other three sides stretched the traditional barre. I gave my audition in a bathing suit. Kosloff himself put me through the test. He did not say how talented I was or how naturally graceful. He said my knees were weak, my spine curved, that I was heavy

[1]From *Dance to the Piper*, by Agnes De Mille. Copyright 1951, 1952, by Agnes De Mille. Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown & Co., and the Atlantic Monthly Press.

for my age and had "no juice." By this he meant, I came to learn, that my muscles were dry, stubborn, and unresilient. He said I was a bit old to start training. I was at the time fourteen. I looked at him in mild surprise. I hardly knew what emotion to give way to, the astonishment of hurt vanity or gratitude for professional help. I was sent off (I keep saying "I"—my sister of course was with me, but from the start I took for granted that these lessons were mine. She just came along)—we were sent off to buy blocked toe slippers, fitted right to the very ends of our toes, and to prepare proper practice dresses.

The first lesson was a private one conducted by Miss Fredova. Miss Fredova was born Winifred Edwards and had received her training in London from Anna Pavlova. She was as slim as a sapling and always wore white like a trained nurse. She parted her dark hair in the center and drew it to the nape of her neck in glossy wings, Russian style. She was shod in low-heeled sandals. She taught standing erect as a guardsman, and beat time with a long pole. First she picked up a watering can and sprinkled water on the floor in a sunny corner by the barre. This, she explained, was so that we should not slip. Then she placed our hands on the barre and showed us how to turn out our feet ninety degrees from their normal walking stance into first position. Then she told us to *plier* or bend our knees deeply, keeping our heels as long as possible on the floor. I naturally stuck out behind. I found the pole placed rigidly against my spine. I naturally pressed forward on my insteps. Her leg and knee, planted against my foot, curbed this tendency. "I can't move," I said, laughing with winning helplessness.

"Don't talk," she said. "Down-ee, two-ee, three-ee, four-ee. Down the heels, don't rock on your feet."

At the end of ten minutes the sweat stuck in beads on my forehead. "May I sit down?" I asked.

"You must never sit during practice. It ruins the thigh muscles. If you sit down you may not continue with class." I of course would have submitted to a beating with whips rather than stop. I was taking the first steps into the promised land. The path might be thorny, but it led straight to Paradise. "Down-ee, two-ee, three-ee, four-ee. *Nuca.* Give me this fourth position. Repeat the exercise."

So she began every exercise. So I have begun every practice period since. It is part of the inviolable ritual of ballet dancing. Every ballet student that has ever trained in the classic technique in any part of the world begins just this way, never any other. They were dreary exercises, and I was very bad at them, but these were the

exercises that built Taglioni's leg. These repeated stretches and pulls gave Pavlova her magic foot and Legnani hers and Kchessinka hers. This was the very secret of how to dance, the tradition handed down from teacher to pupil for three hundred years. A king had patterned the style and named the steps, the king who built Versailles. Here was an ancient and enduring art whose technique stood like the rules of harmony. All other kinds of performance in our Western theater had faded or changed. What were movies to this? Or Broadway plays?

I, a complacent child, who had been flattered into believing I could do without what had gone before, now inherited the labor of centuries. I had come into my birthright. I was fourteen, and I had found my life's work. I felt superior to other adolescents as I stood by the adults, serene and strong, reassured by my vision.

I bent to the discipline. I learned to relax with my head between my knees when I felt sick or faint. I learned how to rest my insteps by lying on my back with my feet vertically up against the wall. I learned how to bind up my toes so that they would not bleed through the satin shoes. But I never sat down. I learned the first and all-important dictate of ballet dancing—never to miss the daily practice, hell or high water, sickness or health, never to miss the barre practice; to miss meals, sleep, rehearsals even, but not the practice, not for one day ever under any circumstances, except on Sundays and during childbirth.

I seemed, however, to have little aptitude for the business. What had all this talk about God-given talent amounted to? It was like trying to wiggle my ears. I strained and strained. Nothing perceptible happened. A terrible sense of frustration drove me to striving with masochistic frenzy. Twice I fainted in class. My calves used to ache until tears stuck in my eyes. I learned every possible manipulation of the shoe to ease the aching tendons of my insteps. I used to get abominable stitches in my sides from attempting continuous jumps. But I never sat down. I learned to cool my forehead against the plaster of the walls. I licked the perspiration off from around my mouth. I breathed through my nose though my eyes bugged. But I did not sit, and I did not stop.

EXERCISES

"First Ballet Lessons" is a selection from Chapter 7 of Agnes De Mille's autobiographical account of her remarkable career as ballet dancer and choreographer. (See p. 134 for a review of the book.) In

this particular chapter ("The Kosloff School") Miss De Mille tells how, despite the reluctance of her parents, she was finally allowed to take ballet lessons—when she was already "a bit old"—at the school conducted by Theodore Kosloff, "a member of the original Diaghilev Ballet Russe, who at the time of this incident was associated with Cecil De Mille [Uncle Cecil]."

Note that Miss De Mille conveys not only the essential "facts" of the experience, but also a dramatic interpretation of the facts that makes her account interesting and artistically "true." To discover how this skillful blending is achieved, give attention to the following questions:

1. At what point does the author set down a definite picture of the studio itself and of the teachers? How does she contrive to harmonize these clear impressions of studio and teachers with the rigorous discipline of the ballet, later described?

2. What is the purpose of the contrast between Agnes' childish views and the severe impersonality of the teachers? Is this contrast heavily emphasized or unobtrusively worked in?

3. What is the advantage of presenting Miss Fredova's instructions and Agnes' protests in directly reported dialogue? Trace out the organic connection between Agnes' "May I sit down?" and other parts of the account.

4. Why is the explanation of the fundamental technique of the ballet withheld until paragraph 7? Would the account have been improved, as a composition, if this explanation had been given at the beginning?

5. When, at the end of her account, the author returns to her personal reactions, note the contrast between the feelings here related in some detail and the more vague reactions described in paragraph 1. What part do repetition and contrast play in the design of the composition?

THEME TOPICS

The following titles are intended to suggest ways in which the assignment in autobiography may be treated. Use one of them, or make up a similar title of your own.

What My High School Record Doesn't Tell

My New England (or Southern or Western) Childhood

It Was Then That I Really Knew

My Family Joined the Army (Navy, Air Force)

The Pattern of My Life
A Lucky Chance
The Experience (or Teacher, Friend, Book) That Changed My Life
Father Bought a Farm
My Name and Myself
Return of a Native
Not According to Plan
So We Moved to California
I Always Knew What I Wanted
An Athlete Goes to College
The House on X Street
My Big Mistake and What It Did for Me
Turning Over a New Leaf
As Fate Would Have It
Faith Moved Mountains—and Me
Tradition and I
On Getting a Foothold
A Preacher's Son
Background of a Decision
—And the Next Thing I Knew
Where I "Live" and Where I "Belong"
I Live in the House My Grandfather Built
The Wisdom of Inexperience
Debutante in College
That Faraway Look
The Lonesome Road
Hitchhiking up Parnassus
Prairie to City
On Beaver Creek
I Ought to Have Known Better
Before and After
How It All Began

Chapter II

THE COMPOSITION

1. *THE PROBLEM*

WRITING is a method of communicating thought. It is not the only method. There are situations in which a glance may mean more than words. Gestures and actions often communicate thought. The American Indians had a sign language which could be understood by all tribes. Many people believe that thought can be conveyed telepathically. Speech is the commonest means of communication. If, however, our conversations were reported stenographically or recorded by a dictaphone, we might be surprised to find out how fragmentary our actual spoken words are, when not accompanied by the smiles, nods, winks, finger-pointings, or shoulder-shrugs that we use in talking. It is a common saying that a Frenchman cannot carry on a conversation if his hands are tied.

That old joke will serve to illustrate the handicap under which we all suffer when we come to write our thoughts instead of speaking them. Our hands are tied—except as we use them to shape letters and words. We may write with a twinkle of the eye, or with an angry set of the jaw. We may, as we write, metaphorically saw the air with our hands. But the reader of the writing will see only the words on the page. The page will convey only what the words convey. If, therefore, you wish a reader to infer the twinkle in your eye, you must impart your good humor through the words that you write. This is the first thing to remember. You are limited by the written, typed, or printed page. Do not "read into" your writing an emotion or an idea which you have not actually put there, and do not expect anyone to "read into" your composition something that is not there.

But this limitation is not a disadvantage. Writing has a definite-

ness that other kinds of communication do not have. For this reason, contracts are put into written form, and the wisdom of generations, as well as yesterday's news, is not left to hearsay, but is printed in books and periodicals. And writing can be definite, because both thought and words can be changed, restated, rewritten, until the writer has found a way to convey his thought exactly as he wishes. In short, writing can be controlled almost perfectly. And it can be controlled the more readily because it can be done in private, away from distraction and excitement, and because, through the device of the written word, a man can see his thought on the page before him, in a shape that he can handle, reconsider, criticize.

We may therefore state the general problem of the writer as a problem of control. The President addressing Congress and the freshman writing his first theme must both face this problem. And in order to gain control, all writers must ask two questions: (1) *What* do I wish to say? (2) *How* shall I say it?

To the beginner the problem generally comes as a task imposed upon him. He must write a theme, somehow or other, because the instructor says so. Then all at once a number of questions assail him. What subject shall I choose? How shall I begin? How much shall I write? What shall I put in? What shall I leave out? May I write in my own words—plainly? Or must I try to be literary? May I write to please myself, or must I write to please the instructor?

The answer to such questions is: That depends! Nothing can be decided until the aim of the writing is fixed. Until you are sure what game you are seeking, you will not know whether to take rifle, shotgun, steel trap, or rod and reel into the woods.

Suppose a friend invites you to attend a house party in a distant city and asks for an answer by telegraph. And suppose that your engagements prevent you from accepting. If you had time to write a letter, you could be expansive and intimate. You could say, "Charlie, my friend, you know how it is with me these days. I should like very much to come. I always enjoy your parties. But I am sorry to say that I have a previous engagement and can't get out of it." But the telegram (for the sake of illustration let it be a "straight telegram") allows you only ten words. With excusable indifference to grammar, punctuation, and literary language, you write: GREATLY REGRET NOT ABLE TO ACCEPT INVITATION BECAUSE OF PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT. You

see that the first draft counts up to eleven words. You strike out NOT ABLE and substitute UNABLE, rejoicing that your vocabulary is equal to the emergency.

Your purpose here is to communicate a bare fact with a slight flavor of politeness. These factors guided your decisions: (1) a ten-word limit; (2) the necessity of being polite. All else is dismissed from consideration. You do not have to invent a formula of expression. Etiquette prescribes the formula: "greatly regret . . . previous engagement." You are governed by the principles of economy and politeness.

At the opposite extreme from the telegram is such a large prose work as Charles and Mary Beard's *The Rise of American Civilization.* In this task the authors had to accept certain limitations: (1) the objective content of the subject—actual events of American history from colonial times to our times, and (2) the order of presentation—which is the order of the events of American history. The authors were free to decide other questions: how much space to give to various events; whether to write in a plain style, or in an elaborate literary style, such as Edward Gibbon uses in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire;* how far to go in making historical interpretations, and how far to depend on mere statement of facts; and above all, what interpretation to make.

In making such decisions, Charles and Mary Beard had a guiding purpose. Their approach to American history was governed by their thesis or theme: that social and economic forces have been a major influence in shaping American civilization. Therefore they omitted descriptions of historic events and heroic deeds and emphasized the economic causes behind the events and the social results of the deeds. In treating the Civil War, the Beards give little attention to the battle of Gettysburg and the personalities of Lincoln, Grant, and Lee; but they devote much space to the economic and social consequences of the struggle. In this emphasis they differ greatly from Northern and Southern historians of the period immediately following the war, who gave detailed accounts of battles and paid much attention to personalities. The organization of their "composition," their selection of material, their emphasis on interpretation rather than on mere fact, their division of the book into volumes and chapters, the tone of their writing, to some extent their vocabulary—all were determined by their guiding purpose.

Some writing is as simple as the writing of a telegram. It follows a formula and requires a minimum of decision on the part of the writer. Much scientific and practical writing is of this baldly functional sort. A laboratory manual prescribes the form in which you record your experiment, provides the terms to be used, and enforces rigid economy of language. Technical reports, business letters, some kinds of written examinations, all have their own strict patterns, which have to be followed obediently. Such writing is said to be *conventionalized* or *stylized*.

Most writing is not strictly conventional. On the contrary, it puts upon the writer the responsibility of choosing the means to obtain a desired end. Whether long or short, simple or complex, the written composition takes the shape that the writer gives it. Although there are certain broad patterns and formulas (like those which distinguish prose from verse or the short story from the essay), the writer is not in general held down to prescriptions like those of the laboratory work-book or the business letter. But he will not really enjoy his freedom or be able to use it effectively if he does not master the principles of good writing. His concern is with principles rather than with formulas. The first study is, therefore, the study of organization and of how the guiding purpose influences organization.

EXERCISES

1. Using as a model the above discussion of *The Rise of American Civilization*, analyze one of the following to show how the guiding purpose of the author determines general organization, selection of material, emphasis, and tone:

An article in a current magazine on some political, historical, or literary subject

Some well-known prose classic, such as Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, *etc.*

A "column" by your favorite political commentator

A manual of instruction in tennis, golf, or some other sport

A book about some historic American city or region (for example, Harnett Kane's *Natchez*, Wallace Stegner's *Mormon Country*, H. C. Nixon's *Lower Piedmont Country*)

The history of an American river (see titles in the *Rivers of America Series*, Rinehart & Co.)

2. What is the guiding purpose of Agnes De Mille in "First Lessons in Ballet" and how does it affect the organization, selection of material, emphasis, and tone of the composition?

3. You are writing three letters to three different persons, all dealing with plans for Thanksgiving or Christmas vacation. Will your guiding purpose vary according to the person to whom the letter is written? If so, how will the contents and tone of the three letters be affected?

4. Examine the following for instances of stylization: *Who's Who in America; Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature;* the "front matter" of a telephone directory; an atlas of the United States; the several departments of a magazine or newspaper.

2. *THE GUIDING PURPOSE*

The first step in composition is, then, for the writer to decide what is his purpose. We often say to some vague talker, "I can't see what you are driving at!" Because he has failed to centralize his thought around one definite idea or guiding purpose, we are confused when we try to follow him. Every good composition must have a central idea at which the writer "drives." Probably the well-established custom of calling freshman compositions "themes" grew out of this first necessity. A "theme" is, technically, a limited aspect of a subject, a precise topic, a thesis: George Washington as a Farmer; What Is Streamlining in Automobile Construction? A Defense of Old-Age Pensions; The Spirit of Texas. When you were asked, in the assignment in autobiography, to concentrate upon some character trait or some incident in your life, you were asked to choose a "theme." By an easy extension of the term, an exercise in writing upon a limited aspect of a subject is called a "theme."

Often a beginner in writing is asked to choose a small subject rather than a large one, or to deal with a phase of a subject rather than attempt massive generalizations. This is good advice, but it is only another way of emphasizing the need of staying within chosen limits. In "The Boys' Ambition," Samuel Clemens concentrates on one overwhelmingly important fact: steamboats were so captivating that every boy wanted to follow steamboating as a career. Everything else is omitted or is subordinated to that "theme."

Your limitation of a subject should be of precisely this kind. If

you are interested in machinery, you have a vast field of opinion and fact from which to draw material; but you will not write a good composition if you begin with the vague idea of saying "something about machinery." Instead, choose a definite topic: The effect of the invention of the cotton gin upon the South; the difference between a machine and a tool; the beauty (or ugliness) of machinery; the operation of a particular machine—steam locomotive, internal combustion engine, lawn mower, automatic elevator.

If you are thus to limit your subject, you must decide, *before you begin to write*, exactly what your guiding purpose is. It is best to state it briefly in written form, so that it stands before your eyes. This statement of the guiding purpose is often called the *theme sentence*. It should be *one* sentence, as simple and compact as you can make it. It should answer the question: "What am I trying to say in this composition?"

The guiding purpose of Clemens' "The Boys' Ambition" is to depict the exaggerated, romantic importance that the life of the steamboatman had to boys of his generation who lived on the banks of the Mississippi. The theme sentence for "The Boys' Ambition" might be: "The one permanent ambition of every boy in my village was to be a steamboatman."

If you are writing about the duties of a counselor at a summer camp, your guiding purpose may be stated as follows: "A counselor at a summer camp is not so much a teacher as he is an older brother to the boys under his charge." If you are dealing with George Washington as a farmer, rather than George Washington as a military commander or as President, your guiding purpose might take this form: "Like most Virginia landowners of his day, George Washington was a practical farmer."

Often the guiding purpose is stated in the first paragraph or somewhere near the beginning of the composition. It would be clumsy, of course, to say, "My guiding purpose is to . . ." or "In the following pages I intend to discuss . . ." Generally, if it is used thus, the wording of the theme sentence will be less obtrusive. The first two sentences of Clemens' "The Boys' Ambition" are: "When I was a boy, there was but one permanent ambition among my comrades in our village on the west bank of the Mississippi River. That was, to be a steamboatman." Even if a statement of the guiding purpose does not appear near the beginning, the reader must feel that it is implied.

In your early themes, it may be helpful to write a *separate* statement of your guiding purpose and to put it at the head of your theme, between the title and the first paragraph. Put it at the head of an outline, when you make an outline.

The guiding purpose is, we should always remember, the conscious determination of the writer to make every part of his writing move in *one* direction and conform to *one* clear intention. It is like a counselor who stands at the writer's elbow and helps him when he is in trouble. Since it marks for him the limits of discussion, it can be consulted on the always bothersome problem of where to begin and where to stop. Suppose your guiding purpose is to explain the operating principle of hydraulic brakes. You do not need to begin with the invention of the wheel; the wheel must be taken for granted—your subject is hydraulic brakes. Probably you will want to begin by explaining briefly that the principle of hydraulic brakes is based upon use of the force exerted by a liquid under pressure. You will stop when your explanation of hydraulic brakes is completed; you do not need to add, and should not add, a sales talk on your favorite automobile.

The guiding purpose is especially important in determining the selection of material—that is, what to put in and what to leave out. If your guiding purpose is to emphasize the "older brother" relationship that a summer camp counselor has to the boys in his charge, you will not tell how to get a job as a counselor; you will not discuss the duties of the director, the value of a summer camp for city boys, or the quantity and quality of the food served at such a camp. On the other hand, you may draw upon your own experiences as counselor, if some incident from your experience illustrates a point that you wish to make. You may refer, by way of contrast, to an unpopular counselor who was ineffective in his work because he failed to be an "older brother" and tried instead to be a kind of gang boss or top sergeant.

To a certain extent the guiding purpose will influence even the vocabulary of the composition, its tone, its mood, its style. An explanation of hydraulic brakes cannot easily be written in the vocabulary of Walter Winchell or of William Shakespeare. It is a technical subject and requires the use of technical terms and straightforward language. On the other hand, if Stephen Leacock, Clarence Day, or James Thurber should happen to write about automobiles,

we know that the treatment would be informal and probably humorous. The knock in the engine or the rasp of the brakes might become a point in a joke or in some humorous comment on the difficulties men and women have with machinery.

Above all, the guiding purpose gives unity to the composition. It enables the writer to see his work as a whole and to make the subordinate parts of his composition take their proper places in that unified whole. With a clearly stated guiding purpose, the writing is not left to chance. The writer will not go from one thing to another merely because one thing suggests another; but he will pause to consider the newly suggested item. He will ask himself whether it does actually help him to carry out his purpose, and if it does not, he will exclude it, no matter how interesting it is. In short, the guiding purpose enables a writer at every point to *control* his writing. His composition will not ramble; it will not be vague and disordered, and it will become *one* thing, a unit.

The guiding purpose means singleness of purpose, but it does not mean stark simplicity of purpose. Every paragraph and every sentence may be said to have a guiding purpose, too; and all these lesser purposes add up to make the general guiding purpose. Agnes De Mille's purpose, in "First Lessons in Ballet," may be to tell how a too romantic girl met victoriously the first severe trial of her courage and physical resources; but she cannot effectively achieve this purpose without some description of the dance studio, a characterization of her teachers, and a definite indication of the austerity of ballet training. Her concern with such matters enriches her account; the small, vivid details do not distract from her major purpose, but contribute to it. The pole pressed against her spine, the remorseless counting of Miss Fredova, the "exercises that built Taglioni's leg," the comments on the antiquity of the art of the ballet—all these and other details represent the particulars of the experience which, when rightly guided and controlled, give the whole design its substance. On the other hand, other possibly interesting matters—such as the moving pictures that "Uncle Cecil" happened to be filming at the time—are excluded as irrelevant.

The result is unity. It is not the unity of monotony—a dull repeating of one idea or fact, without variation. It is not the unity of isolation—the single rock on the beach, the lone cipher on a bare page. Rather it is that *organic unity* which has been described as "the

structural union of the parts." It is many things that, when written down together, or "composed," become one thing. A composition has organic unity when nothing can properly be added to or subtracted from it without injury to the sense of satisfaction that a reader may have from it.

How to Choose the Guiding Purpose. The choice of a guiding purpose depends upon (1) the personal taste of the writer, (2) his knowledge of the subject, (3) the nature of the subject itself, (4) the reader. Of these conditions, the first two are to some extent under the control of the writer. The latter two are not altogether under his control.

Personal Taste. Within reasonable limits, choose a subject that interests you as an individual, and present it in such a way as to bring out what seem to you its interesting or important aspects. The *originality* of your work will depend in great degree upon your ability to look at a subject with your own eyes rather than through borrowed spectacles. You are not expected merely to write glib reproductions of what other people say. You may very well make some original contribution, however small, to the subject, and that original contribution will inevitably come from the fact that you, as an individual, have a point of view of your own.

Machines, for example, affect different individuals in different ways. Individual *A*, looking at a steam shovel, thinks of it as a symbol of man's triumph over crude matter. His paper will emphasize the inventive genius that makes it possible for a weak midget of a creature to move tons of earth and rock by pressing buttons or pulling levers. But Individual *B* may quite contrarily be moved to think of how many workers the great machine has displaced, and his paper may ask why man's ingenuity chooses to function in such a peculiarly self-destructive way.

The attitude of the writer may thus affect the treatment of any subject, but that attitude will naturally have freest play when the subject permits or invites an expression of opinion. Autobiographical themes, since they draw upon personal experience, naturally call for a good deal of personal expression. Informal essays—on such subjects as "Why I Like Cats," "On Raking Autumn Leaves," "The Pleasures of Sleeping Late"—are by definition an expression of personal taste, or even of prejudice.

But numerous occasions will arise when a writer's personal tastes

must be suppressed or disregarded. If you are required to write an *explanation* of a machine—say, a steam shovel—your personal opinions and tastes in the matter of steam shovels are of no importance whatever. It is useless to attempt sprightly originality in explaining the manufacture of sulphuric acid or the origin of the United Nations.

Knowledge of the Subject. Ordinarily you should write about a subject that is familiar to you; or, given a general subject with many possible aspects, choose a guiding purpose which permits you to treat some aspect familiar to you. Do not write about Tibetan yaks, if your sole acquaintance with those creatures is in books; write about mules, if you know mules; about dogs, if you are a dog-lover. If you are asked to write a character sketch, write about the news-vender you see every morning, or your favorite uncle, or the historical character whom you know best. In such instances, your guiding purpose will be determined by the degree of your knowledge of the subject.

On the other hand, you may be led to consider an old and familiar subject in a new light. You may have thought, all your life, of earthworms as good only for fishing bait. But now the biology instructor asks you to study the anatomy of the earthworm, and suddenly you discover something of the marvelous in what you thought to be the dullest of earth's creatures. Or perhaps the agronomist asks you to study the relationship between the earthworm and the productivity of the soil. Then you may find yourself wondering whether there would be any vegetation at all, if there were no earthworms to perform their dark and obscure labors beneath the sod.

In other words, new knowledge may give you a new approach, and a new approach means a definite guiding purpose. Intellectual curiosity, which is the spirit of inquiry or the desire to explore new paths of knowledge, will lead you to new subjects and to new treatments of old subjects. Eventually you will be assigned research papers and critical essays. The object of such assignments, in your composition course as in other studies, is to tempt you to break through the limits of your previous knowledge. You may even be expected to write on subjects for which you have a positive distaste or to acquaint yourself with matters in which you have had no previous interest at all. If you can approach such tasks with a fair and open mind, you may be surprised to find your interest kindled

in ways that you could not have anticipated; and at any rate you will have the reward that comes from self-mastery.

The Nature of the Subject Itself. For every writer one of the most important of all principles is attention to the subject and humility in the presence of the subject. In some themes the guiding purpose will be determined altogether by the nature of the subject itself. If your topic is "How to Give First Aid to a Drowning Person" or "How to Stop Arterial Bleeding," a life-and-death issue is involved, no nonsense about personal taste is permissible, your sole purpose must be to tell exactly what are the right steps to take in such emergencies. You must have no guiding purpose that will tempt you to color the facts.

But attention to the subject is of first importance in all written composition, and not merely in such special instances as those noted above. Until you find out what your subject really is, until you have looked at it closely and steadily and explored its various aspects, you will not be in a position to write about it intelligently. When people speak of ideas as "half-baked" or say that such-and-such a person "went off half-cocked," they mean that he had not really considered his subject; he wrote or spoke without taking the trouble to inquire into the matter under discussion. The rule is not always "Look in thy heart and write," as Sir Philip Sidney said in his sonnets to Stella, but far more often it is, "Look at the subject and write."

If you are poverty-stricken in ideas, if, like Sir Philip Sidney, you "bite your truant pen" and wonder what to say, remember that the ideas do not need to be "thought up." They are in the subject itself, very likely, and you have only to discover them and write them down.

The Reader. The act of writing implies the act of reading, and therefore a writer must ordinarily consider who his reader or readers are to be. Samuel Pepys, it is true, wrote his famous diary in a cryptogram, presumably as a solitary amusement, never expecting that other human eyes than his would ever see it. But the exception proves the rule. We wish our writing to be understood and, if possible, to be liked by those who read what we have to say. The guiding purpose, and with it the composition, may therefore often be determined in part by the necessity of appealing to a certain kind of reader. Is the writer's audience expected to be large or small, friendly or hostile, ignorant or well-informed? Is he writing for a group with

mixed opinions, or for a group with one opinion? Such questions undoubtedly have a large part in deciding the strategy of many kinds of writing.

If a housing expert is speaking over the radio on the subject of slum clearance, he will frame his speech to suit the mixed audience that he hopes to reach. He must get the attention and appeal to the understanding of the filling-station attendant, the ward politician, the rural voter who is jealous of urban expenditures, as well as the readers of Lewis Mumford's *The Culture of Cities*. He will therefore try to have enough solid substance in his speech to catch the attention of the most bookish of his hearers, but he will try also to put it in terms simple enough to reach the least educated. The same speaker, if he were writing an article for the *Atlantic Monthly*, might choose an entirely different approach, for he would be writing for a smaller audience, of a more uniform culture.

You will not often be expected to make adaptations as wide as those mentioned above. Your instructor and your classmates are your audience, and you may generally suppose that this audience is prepared to respond to whatever you may have to say. But your guiding purpose will vary somewhat according to the kind of response that you wish to get. If you intend to please and entertain them with a light essay on the difference between plain dogs and dog aristocrats, your guiding purpose will certainly not be the same as if you were writing an informative article on what canned dog-food is. If you are writing an article of opinion on some controversial topic dealing with politics, race, or religion, you had better consider the sensibilities of your readers; you cannot assume that they are all of your own opinion.

In general, it may be a considerable help to you in writing to keep in mind some particular person or group of persons for whom you are writing. Ask yourself, if you wish, what your Aunt Eustacia would say to this. Or write the kind of theme that your roommate will approve. It is better to write for somebody in particular than for nobody at all.

EXERCISES

Examine the topics given below and the lists of possible guiding purposes indicated under each topic. Study at least one of the groups carefully and be able to show what differences in the treatment of the

topic would result from use of the different guiding purposes. Illustrate such differences by composing brief outlines like those given on pages 54 and 55.

1. The benefits of a summer vacation
   a. To show that the expense involved will be justified by the benefits of the vacation.
   b. To convince a friend who is thinking of going to summer school instead of taking a vacation.
   c. To explore the present attitude of one who, after years of rebellion against the family's choice of a vacation spot, now wonders why he ever rebelled.
   d. To explain the predicament of one who has always wanted to visit Banff or some other famous resort, but who somehow "never goes anywhere."

2. Photography in color
   a. To explain the fundamentals of color photography to a person who has previously photographed only in black and white.
   b. To defend color photography against the objections of a friend who prefers painting.
   c. To explain the effects obtainable from the use of different types of films and filters.

3. The presidential election
   a. To explain to a foreigner some of the peculiarities of an American presidential election.
   b. To argue for the superiority of the American type of national election, at periodic intervals, over the European type of national election.
   c. To point out defects of the American system of election.
   d. To show how, in presidential elections, the "party system" developed despite constitutional provisions intended to discourage "factions."

4. The poetry of Longfellow (or of Lanier, Scott, Tennyson, Eliot, Sandburg, or some other poet of your choice)
   a. To show its value as an educational study.
   b. To emphasize its "usefulness" as an interpretation of human experience.
   c. To establish the poet's place in literary history.
   d. To show how the poet was influenced by literary fashions.

3. *ADAPTING MEANS TO ENDS: HOW SHALL I SAY IT?*

The guiding purpose answers the question: *What* do I intend to say? The next question is: *How* shall I say it?

One answer to such a question might be: use appropriate language, and above all clear language. Language is important beyond measure. Power of the word may even at times make up for serious faults in other respects. Thomas Carlyle is magnificent in his diction although his writing is so slovenly in organization as to be nearly unintelligible in some passages; he succeeds in spite of the defect, but we are nonetheless bothered by his disorderliness. Ralph Waldo Emerson used enchanting words and phrases; he was a master of the sentence; but he had little gift for organization; his famous essays are jumbles of fine sentences. The Elizabethans, drunk with the sheer novelty of words, were remarkably eloquent in poetry, but could not organize their prose. The frontiersmen of America had a natural gift of language which has left its mark upon American habits of speaking and writing; and yet they did not have the benefit of the elegant rhetoric taught in the Latin schools and academies of their time.

These, however, are special cases. Since we are dealing here with the whole composition, as a composition, it is necessary to postpone until a later chapter the study of sentence structure and diction. Through the action of the guiding purpose you have chosen the *material* that you will direct toward a certain end, and thus have assured *unity* to your composition. The next step is to *put the material together* so that all the parts of the composition come to the reader in an orderly sequence.

The organization of a composition is the order of its parts, in relation to one another and to the subject as a whole. The parts of a composition are the steps or stages of thought and expression, the "blocks" of thought, large and small, the related elements into which the subject may be broken up or into which it may be divided by its very nature.

In a book, the division into parts is indicated by the chapters and chapter headings; in a long composition there will be sections, with or without subtitles, and these sections in turn will divide into paragraphs; in a brief composition, the division will be indicated by

paragraphs. All these parts, in turn, are in themselves units which subdivide into lesser units. The paragraph will have its subdivisions, which are frequently, though not always, indicated by transitional phrases. The smallest organized unit is the sentence, which has a grammatical organization into subject and predicate and their modifiers. The object of the general organization is to make all the parts work together as one.

The organization of a book is indicated, though sometimes rather briefly, by its Table of Contents. A glance at the Table of Contents of this textbook will reveal a systematic procedure, indicated by the numbers and titles of the various main divisions and subdivisions. In such a Table of Contents we have the equivalent of a topical outline. We are given the plan of the book, the framework for the detailed discussion of composition and rhetoric. Your composition, no matter how long or short it may be, should have an organization equally clear.

The difference between a composition that is not planned and one that is well planned is the difference between a pile of stones and a house made of stone. A pile of stones has no organization; it is a mere heap, a little chaos. A stone house has organization; the stones have been put into place according to a design; they are parts of a whole. A wild landscape may be said to be unorganized as compared with a farm. The aimless scribblings you make while talking over the telephone are unorganized as compared with a pencil drawing.

Good organization comes from keeping your guiding purpose in mind as you write and from seeing that your thoughts develop in an orderly sequence. But what is an orderly sequence? Or what is good order? There is room for choice; there are different ways of organizing a composition.

TWO KINDS OF ORDER

The structural organization of the composition generally depends upon the use of one or the other of two kinds of order:

(1) Natural order—the order inherent in the subject itself, as in a narrative, in which events are related in the order of their occurrence.

(2) Logical order—an order determined by the writer's own reason, as when, in the discussion of a character, we may begin by

clearing away gossip, false interpretations, popular misconceptions, and then go on to analyze the true man.

The distinction between these two kinds of order is simply a matter of the source from which they are derived. In natural order a writer yields to his subject: he follows an event through to its conclusion, taking care that each incident falls into its proper place; or if he is writing an informal essay he follows the instinctive arrangement which the subject takes in his mind. In logical order the writer is purposeful: he makes an arrangement which is constructional rather than instinctive. But it should be understood that the terms *natural* and *logical* may sometimes overlap. What is natural may also be logical, and what is logical may be natural.

(1) **Natural Order.** Use natural order when the subject requires an arrangement in time sequence (chronological order) or when it has a physical shape that must be described (order of space).

Narratives, explanations with a narrative element, and descriptions containing a time element *require* a presentation in order of time, and their organization depends upon careful observance of that requirement. The telephone company follows natural order in the instructions given for using a dial telephone: (1) Remove the receiver; (2) listen for the dial tone; (3) dial the number wanted. An explanation of how to use a dial telephone could not follow any other order. The agricultural expert who is explaining how to prepare a field for corn must follow natural order. All "how to do it" themes, such as explanations of processes, require natural order. It is the simplest of orders and gives an easy, straightforward movement to the composition.

Descriptions of places, houses, landscapes, and many other physical objects will generally require order of space. In describing a landscape, you will naturally proceed from right to left, from near to far, or from some notable landmark, such as a tree or house, to other parts of the landscape. A geographer may describe a range of mountains in terms of its location, its extension north and south, east and west, and of its relation to the coastal plains, river systems, or deserts that border it.

In all such instances, the subject imposes a certain order of treatment upon the writer. He is not free to make changes. The order of the events or the arrangement of the landscape is the order of treatment for his composition, and the source of his organization.

Less easily definable is the kind of natural order which has been spoken of as *instinctive*.[1] The best example of instinctive order is found in the informal essay, where the writer makes a virtue of not controlling, or rather of seeming not to control, the flow of his ideas. He lets them run, and follows them; or apparently he does so.

Perhaps you recall finding a flint arrowhead in some meadow; or you have been looking at a collection of arrowheads and pots in a museum. The arrowhead suggests a picture of what the country was like when the Indians lived here before the coming of the white man. That picture suggests another—the contrasting picture of modern America, with its highways traversing the buffalo plains and its great cities towering where once was only a huddle of Indian tepees. Reflecting on the second picture, you suddenly recall the brutality of gangsters, the death rate from automobile accidents, and perhaps above all the great wars in which we have engaged in modern times. You may then be led to wonder whether the automobile age represents any real progress as compared with the stone age in which the Indian lived.

Such a composition would be an essay, in which the ideas had come together by a process of free association rather than of logic. It would have a design, rather than a logical plan; and the design would come from the series of contrasts into which your reverie had brought you. You would arrange your composition in a form that would effectively bring out the series of contrasts.

(2) **Logical Order.** Logical order requires an act of analysis on the part of the writer. His subject exists in his mind only as an unwieldy lump, or it is merely a jumble of scattered material which makes no sense at all. He seeks to bring this lump or this jumble under the rule of reason. Either he must find a logical arrangement which will bring the subject into order, or he must continue studying it until he identifies in the subject itself some features or some principle, that when related to his own knowledge, will form the basis of organized discussion.

Let us suppose a subject consisting of scattered parts which cannot for the moment be seen in an orderly arrangement. It might be, for example, "Flood Control." Here is a great heap of information in periodicals and government reports—so much information that, the

[1]Or, if a technical term is preferred, the order which may be described as "associational."

more we read, the more we are confused. There is talk about dams and levees; there are figures on soil erosion and reforestation; there are people who preach about little rivers and little dams, and other people who preach about big rivers and big dams; there are lectures on watersheds, terracing, dikes, spillways, dredges, cover crops. The subject evidently does not have a form of its own that a novice can easily follow. How can he be at all systematic in dealing with such a subject?

The first step toward being systematic is to choose a guiding purpose. Evidently there is some argument as to what is the *best* method of flood control. We are not experts, and we do not know what is the best method. We can, however, put all the suggested methods side by side and discuss them, one after the other. The guiding purpose then is: to explain the most important methods of flood control.

What methods are important? We may dismiss from consideration any fantastic schemes for making water run uphill, or for retiring from cultivation all the arable land of the United States. Analyzing the other methods advocated by experts, we find that their suggestions fall into three main groups: there are advocates of levees and spillways, who propose to take care of danger points along the lower reaches of great rivers; there are advocates of flood control along entire river systems; and there are others who wish to stop or check the water before it reaches the rivers. These three groups can be treated in order, in the three main divisions of the composition. A preliminary topical outline will show the plan of procedure:

I. Flood control near river-mouths.
II. Flood control along river-systems.
III. Flood control of the entire countryside.

The problem of logical organization is to group the material under these main headings, which constitute the logical divisions of the subject. The next step is to expand the topical outline. We may decide that "at danger points" is a more inclusive heading for Division I than "near river-mouths." The order of treatment is logical enough for our purposes, for we shall begin with the older methods (levees near river-mouths) and proceed to later devices. The expanded topical outline will read as follows:

I. Flood control at danger points, by means of
   A. Levees.
   B. Spillways.

II. Flood control along entire river-systems, by means of
   A. Multiple-purpose dams on important rivers.
   B. Storage dams on tributary rivers.
   C. Unified control systems for entire watersheds, as in Tennessee Valley.

III. Flood control of our complete natural terrain, by means of
   A. Reforestation.
   B. Control of agriculture through
      1. Terracing of slopes.
      2. Planting cover crops.
      3. Retirement of easily eroded land from commercial use.

In other kinds of subjects, it is best, before establishing the logical divisions of the subject, to find some central idea to serve as the principle of arrangement. In explaining the organization of the House of Representatives, Woodrow Wilson distinguishes this body from the Senate by noting that its function is to get business done rather than to deliberate and debate. This is the central principle of the organization that he seeks to explain; to set forth this principle, as applied to the House of Representatives, is his guiding purpose.[1]

A topical outline of the subject would therefore be constructed in part as follows:

I. The House as distinguished from the Senate.

II. Organized into committees to get business done.
   A. Number and names of committees.
   B. Powers of committees.

III. Powers of the Speaker.
   A. Appoints committees.
   B. Can decide committee to which bills shall be referred.
   C. Regulates calendar of the House.
   D. Controls debate by power of recognizing members.
   E. Controls Committee on Rules.

[1]Woodrow Wilson, *Constitutional Government in the United States,* 1908. (The powers of the Speaker have been modified since Wilson discussed the subject of government, but Wilson's discourse is still a model of clear exposition.)

Logical order can be obtained, then, either by analyzing the subject into its parts, and grouping facts and discussion around the main divisions thus set up, or by following some central principle and noting the ways in which it makes itself manifest in the subject.

These, however, are not the only kinds of logical order. Your subject may suggest the advisability of reasoning from cause to effect, or from effect backward to the cause. For example, it would be logical to explain the systems of representation in the Senate and in the House of Representatives by going back to the debate at the Constitutional Convention. Our bicameral system—the two houses of Congress—is the result of a compromise between the large states that wanted to be represented in proportion to their population and the little states, like Rhode Island and Delaware, that wanted equal representation for all states. Or, if called upon to explain the presence of slum areas in great modern cities, you could begin by giving a picture of the slums, and then work backward to the distant cause: overpopulation, real-estate speculation, industrial conditions, and the like.

It is also logical to proceed from less important to more important aspects of the subject. This arrangement builds toward a climax: the most important point is saved for the end of the composition.

For example, if you are explaining how a skillful trainer chooses, from various promising young bird dogs, the individual dog that he will prepare for field trials, in the hope of winning a grand championship, you may begin by discussing pedigree and may explain the importance of inherited characteristics. Next you may deal with the physical characteristics that a winner must have, whatever his pedigree, if he is to meet the severe test of a field trial. You may then go on to say that a fine pedigree and an ideal physique may make a "good" dog, but that they will not necessarily make a champion. A champion must have certain almost indefinable qualities, among which are an unusual amount of zest and a spirit of originality and enterprise that makes him somewhat independent of the trainer even while he is ultimately responsible to horn or whistle. Your discussion of this unique combination of qualities, which represents "genius" among bird dogs, will constitute the climax of your discourse. By the order of your discussion you will have emphasized the supreme importance of dog "genius", over and above other qualities, however desirable and necessary.

If the subject is treated very informally, the main divisions may be chosen rather selectively. You may show the important rather than all the possible features of the subject. A theme on college friendships may deal only with what interests the writer most: the natural good-fellowship in which college friendships originate; the romantic intensity of such friendships; their lasting quality. These three topics will constitute the three main divisions of the subject, and the effectiveness of the theme will depend upon how well the writer can expand them. If he has imagination and good sense, his writing will hold together even though he has chosen only a few out of many aspects of his subject—perhaps not any of those that a hard-headed sociologist, relentlessly engaged in studying human behavior, would want to use. Yet in this informal treatment, the writing must still have harmony and order. One part of the discussion must lead naturally to the next part. There must be no yawning gaps and no silly irrelevancies. The reader must be left with a sense of completeness and order.

To secure completeness and order, you must *plan* your composition before you begin to write. If it is not planned, it will not be a true composition, but an improvisation, which may or may not by sheer good luck fall into a sensible organization. Prepare an outline—either a topical outline or a complete sentence outline, like the model outlines given in Chapter III. If your instructor does not require written outlines, use the outline anyway as a test of the organization of your theme. If your theme can be reduced to a logical outline, then it is logically arranged, and probably is a well-organized theme. Go over the first draft of your theme to see whether your thought is presented in logical sequence. Ask yourself whether you have chosen the right divisions of your subject and whether you have developed each division fully and clearly. If you have left out anything important, put it where it belongs. If you have put in the wrong thing, take it out and put in the right thing. If you have the right thing, but have put it in the wrong place, change it to another place.

EXERCISES

1. Of the following topics, which would require a treatment in natural order? Which, in logical order? Could any of them be discussed in a composition that would combine natural and logical

order? Will the choice of an order of treatment depend, in some instances, upon the guiding purpose of the composition?

Safe Driving in Winter
Apple Picking Time
A "Bird Walk" in Early May
The Rhythm of the Tides
How to Plan a Picnic Supper
What Is a Sonata?
A Typical Big-city Grocery Store
Breakfast to Midnight on a College Campus
The Sea Islands of the Carolina Low Country
Advantages and Disadvantages of Universal Military Training
A Florida Beach
A Mississippi Levee
"Baby Sitting" As a Social Institution
The Principle of the Jet Engine
Julius Caesar As Shakespeare Saw Him
The Career of the Typical Athlete
How to Open and Maintain a Bank Account
The Life Cycle of the Wasp
A Ticker Tape Parade in New York
An Indian Mound
The California Redwoods
Courage and Foolhardiness
The Idea of Utopia
A Valley Farm on a Rainy Day
Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn Compared
The Value of Tradition
From Cincinnati to New Orleans by Steamboat

2. Of the above topics, are there any that could be developed by the process of "free association" mentioned on page 33? Which would require an organization built upon a "central idea" (page 35)? Which could best be developed by proceeding from cause to effect? From effect to cause? Do any of the topics allow a development that will move toward a climax?

3. Make a brief outline of a theme that you might write on one of the topics given above. If the topic will submit to more than one kind of organization, show in outline form the possible kinds of organization that you think appropriate and sound.

4. *THE MARKS OF GOOD ORDER: TRANSITION IN THE COMPOSITION*

When the development of the subject is orderly, the reader will need little reminder of the steps by which the discussion is proceeding. If the steps are there, do not put labels on them. The reader may be bored by some tedious *firstly, secondly, thirdly* of the kind which in old-fashioned sermons too often suggested the distance between church and dinner rather than the progress of

the soul toward salvation. Clumsy writers are forever throwing up enormous bridges of connection that connect nothing in particular. The good writer will take care to have the thoughts connected, and he will mark his connections only when marking is really needed.

Such connections are called *transitions.* A transition is, literally, a passing over. Transitional devices are the words, phrases, clauses, sentences, or paragraphs which serve to point out the steps of the thought, or the passing over from one thought to the next, or from one division to the next division.

When does the transition need to be marked, and how is the marking to be done?

Within the composition as a whole, marks of transition are needed mainly in the following places: (1) where major divisions of the thought, composed of groups of paragraphs, are joined; (2) where momentary digressions or sudden turns of thought are introduced; (3) at any other point where the reader needs to be specially prepared for what is to follow.

(1) Between major divisions of the thought, the *transitional paragraph* can be useful if it is skillfully managed. A transitional paragraph marks the end of one part of a discussion and the beginning of another. If the composition is long, transitional paragraphs may give a pithy reminder of the points already made and a forecast of what is to follow. In the following paragraph Norman Thomas sums up five points that he has discussed in the first part of his article; then he announces the topics with which he will continue his discussion:

> These statements require illustration by way of proof. It is unnecessary to repeat again facts that we have already given on housing, or the terrible waste in forests, mines, the oil industry, and the price at which electric power is distributed. In the very complicated process under which finished goods are distributed to ultimate consumers there are two major categories of exploitation. The first is due to the nature of the system itself; the second, to that which, nominally at least, is recognized as an excresence upon it—the thing we call graft. . . .—Norman Thomas, "The Consumer Pays."[1]

[1]From *Human Exploitation,* 1934. Reprinted by permission of Frederick A. Stokes Company.

(2) Transitional expressions are needed when the writer leaves the main line of his discussion to make some quick contrast, or to overthrow some mistaken conception, or merely to make a remark "by the way." Such a divergence should always be noted. There is no need to apologize for it, but it must be recognized as a purposeful divergence. The reader must not be permitted to think that the composition has run out of control.

Let us suppose that, in an essay on flood control, the writer wishes to compare the dikes of Holland with the levees along the Mississippi. Such a digression will be marked by a transitional passage:

Although it is not particularly important for this discussion, I may note here the obvious fact that the dikes of Holland furnish no true parallel to the levees at New Orleans, Vicksburg, and Cairo. The dikes of Holland hold back the ocean, which is larger than the Mississippi. That is so. But the ocean receives floods; it never rises in floods, except on the rare occasion of a tidal wave. Its ordinary tides are measurable; their rise and fall can be exactly predicted. The Mississippi, on the other hand, is a fresh-water stream, racing to the ocean. It is turbulent and unpredictable. Nobody ever knows how much it will rise at any given season, because nobody knows how much rain is going to fall within a given time.

If the divergence is considerable, a transitional paragraph may be necessary. If it is slight, a sentence or even a part of a sentence (as above) may be enough to make the connection clear.

(3) It may be necessary to prepare the reader for some change of thought or for a transition from one sub-topic to another. The *transitional sentence* is commonly used to mark a transition between paragraphs or parts of long paragraphs. It is particularly useful in rather formal discussions, in which the logical structure of the composition needs to be emphasized. The following paragraph, taken from a formal essay, begins with such a sentence:

This brings us to another kind of thought which can fairly easily be distinguished from the three kinds described above. It has not the usual qualities of the reverie, for it does not hover about our usual complacencies and humiliations. It is not made up of our homely decisions forced upon us by everyday needs, when we review our little stock of existing information, consult our conventional preferences and obligations, and make a choice of action. It

is not the defense of our own cherished beliefs and excuses for remaining of the same mind. On the contrary, it is that peculiar species of thought which leads us to *change* our mind.—James Harvey Robinson, *The Mind in the Making.*[1]

Words, phrases, and clauses are the most common transitional devices. Some of these devices are *pronominal:* they are pronouns (or pronominal adjectives); or they are phrases containing pronouns, with the antecedent in a preceding clause. Others are *directive expressions.* That is, they direct us how to interpret or approach a given passage. Generally these "directives" are parenthetical expressions, without much grammatical function in the sentence where they are placed. As transitional devices they point out the path of thought. They do not make the path. They mark a coherence which already exists; they help to make clear the sequence of ideas.

The following passages contain examples of pronominal devices:

Indeed, the actual dimensions of the fireplace were even larger. A whole ox, a stag, or an elk could be roasted *there,* or a bear upon occasion.—Hervey Allen, *Bedford Village.*[2]

This equality, which still lingers in Sheridan, making the half-hour drive from the huge neighboring city seem a bridge between two worlds, is a vital part of American culture.—Herbert Agar, *Land of the Free.*[3]

A gift, a faculty if it had not departed, was suspended and inanimate within me. There would have been something sad, unutterably dreary, *in all this,* had I not been conscious that it lay at my own option to recall whatever was valuable in the past.—Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter.*

The following passages contain examples of directive expressions:

Water is a dominant factor in sculpturing the landscape and in determining the depth, fertility, and productivity of the soil. *Consequently,* it plays an important role in the development of civilization.—Bernard Frank and Anthony Netboy, *Water, Land, and People.*[4]

In effect, all these critics said the same thing: The services to

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[2]Reprinted by permission of Rinehart & Co., Inc., publishers.

[3]Reprinted by permission of and special arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Co., authorized publishers.

[4]Reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., publishers.

literature of them all were of the same kind; they revealed a new attitude towards civilization, towards the development of man; they extended the bounds of what could be expressed in literature; they brought in new subjects; they revivified language; they tried to make literature the possession and instrument of the ordinary man. —Mary Colum, *From These Roots.*[1]

In the same way "pure poetry" is nicely metred, whereas Imagism was free. . . .—John Crowe Ransom, *The World's Body.*[2]

Study the best writers and observe the kinds of transitional devices they use and the occasions where they find it necessary to mark transition. The following list will suggest some of the brief transitional devices that you should look for, but remember also to look for transitional sentences and paragraphs.

BRIEF TRANSITIONAL DEVICES

Words: previously, afterwards, however, moreover, nevertheless, also, first, last, next.

Phrases: on the contrary, on the whole, in addition to, by the way, to repeat, in conclusion, generally speaking, for instance.

Clauses: we now see; I suppose; it must be admitted; as I implied earlier; as I have said.

Such brief transitional devices are less often used to link paragraphs or sections of a composition than to link sentences and groups of sentences within the paragraph. The subject of transition within the paragraph will be studied fully later. (See Chapter IV.)

EXERCISES

1. Read an article in the *Atlantic Monthly, Harper's Magazine,* or in one of the literary quarterlies, such as the *Yale Review, Virginia Quarterly Review, Georgia Review, Sewanee Review.* Make a list of all brief transitional devices used in the article; classify these expressions according to form and function. Make a record, also, of transitional sentences used in the article.

2. Make a classified list of the transitional expressions used in "The Boys' Ambition" (page 8).

3. Find and bring to class at least one good example of a transitional paragraph.

[1]Charles Scribner's Sons. [2]Charles Scribner's Sons.

5. *PROPORTION*

There remains one final question: *How much* shall I write on the different parts of the subject? The parts of the composition must not only be set in order; they must be put together in a right *proportion,* so that no one part of the composition is out of balance with the rest.

The answer to questions of proportion may be given first in general terms: Make the composition a well-balanced piece of writing within the limits chosen or allowed. The space given to any part depends upon two things: (1) the importance of that part in relation to other parts; (2) the scale of the composition as a whole—that is, its prescribed limits and the necessity of giving each part its proportionate space within those limits. A map that covers a wall can show the windings of the Mississippi River in greater detail than a map made to fit within the pages of a book; but in both maps the Mississippi retains the same *relative* size: it is the largest river compared with other rivers, as Texas is the largest state compared with other states.

The writer's judgment is the guide in determining what is most important; and to that most important part he will naturally give the largest space. But he must give only so much *proportionate* space; that is, he must conform to the scale of relative proportions set up by the limits within which he is obliged to work. In a theme on intercollegiate athletics, it would be possible to write at length on football as an entertaining show; but that part is a relatively minor part, which could be dismissed briefly. Still more space could well be given to a much more important point—that football is the modern youth's substitute for feats of arms and chivalric adventure. If the theme is 2500 words in length, the writer may decide to give about 500 words to his first point and about 1000 words to his last one. If he is allowed only 600 words in all, he will give about one-fifth of his space (or about 120 words) to his first point and two-fifths (about 240 words) to his last point.

In theme writing the problem of proportion is not a precise mathematical problem. It is enough to understand that each division of the subject should receive as much or as little discussion as it deserves, within the scale decided upon. If any doubt arises as to the relative importance of any single part, the outline can be con-

sulted. The outline will show the relation between one part and another, and of each part to the whole. For the outline is like a map, a blueprint, or an architect's drawing. It shows the scale on which the completed composition is to be carried out.

The inexperienced writer needs to guard against the temptation to write at length when he is treating parts of the subject in which he has a special interest, and then to rush hastily through parts of the discussion which interest him less. If you are writing about dams, do not allow your admiration for Norris Dam or Hoover Dam to tempt you to neglect such less spectacular matters as reforestation and cover crops.

The good writer avoids such temptations by keeping always before him the demands of the subject as a whole. He deals justly with his subject; he is fair to his reader. For he knows that if he puts an emphasis where it does not belong, he falsifies the subject and cheats his reader. If his composition is ill-balanced, it is awkward; if it is awkward, it will be so much the less likely to be convincing.

EXERCISE

Make a topical outline of Agnes De Mille's "First Lessons in Ballet" or of some selection of similar length. Use the outline as a guide to test the relative amount of space given to each part of the discussion. Estimate and justify the proportions used by the author. Note any examples of lack of proportion.

Chapter III

SIMPLE EXPOSITORY WRITING

EXPOSITION is that kind of writing or speech which sets forth knowledge, ideas, facts, problems, or situations in such a way as to convey information and meaning. The purpose of expository writing is to explain rather than to describe, relate, or convince. Exposition is therefore ordinarily distinguished from description, narration, and argument. In the older rhetorics these four kinds of writing are rather strictly divided and are called the four kinds of discourse. In practice, however, these four types of discourse rarely appear in a pure form. One shades into the other. An explanation of a power dam may be descriptive in part, for the writer will want to give his reader a picture of the concrete structure in all its massiveness. The explanation of a process may be as much narration as exposition. Hilaire Belloc's "Mowing a Field" (pages 51–53) is an instance. Narratives, in turn, may contain exposition. History, for example, is a blending of narration and exposition, for the events are related and explained. Argument contains definition and analysis, which are expository in nature. It is best, therefore, to use the terms *expository writing, descriptive writing, narrative writing.* Expository writing is writing that tends toward exposition, even though it may not be pure exposition. Descriptive writing is mainly descriptive; narrative writing is mainly narrative. Argument will necessarily appear when it is proper to support an opinion. Instead of dealing with formal argumentation, we shall study, in a later chapter of this book, the problems of argumentative writing.

By far the greater number of occasions for writing bring us to exposition and therefore call for expository writing. The most familiar questions of human experience are probably these: *How is it done? How is it made? What do you mean? Why does so-and-so behave like that? What is the truth about this situation?*

From childhood to old age, we are asking and answering such questions. The answers are expository. Expository writing finds its

use in the most familiar tasks of everyday life and in highly involved questions of science, philosophy, and art. The boy who explains to his schoolfellow how to play marbles is grappling with the same essential problem of expression as the learned astronomer who explains his calculations in terms of light-years. The big-league pitcher who explains (perhaps through a ghost writer) how he learned to throw a curve ball is using expository writing; and so is the flower expert who tells us how he developed a prize-winning dahlia. The chapter in the history textbook on the causes of the American Revolution is expository writing. So, too, are the report of a congressional committee, the literary critic's review of the latest novel, the newspaper editorial which interprets some foreign event.

PROJECT 1. A PROCESS

Explanations of processes answer the question: *How it is done?* or *How is it made?* In themes of this sort the two major problems of composition are easily solved. The guiding purpose is generally nothing more than the writer's intention to explain the steps of the process, in clear sequence; and the organization is a simple matter of putting these steps in their right order. The principle of the process theme is the same as the principle of the process itself. As in the process it is necessary to do the right thing at the right time, so in the theme it is necessary to give the right information at the right place.

If the process is simple and is within the range of ordinary experience, it presents no special difficulties. The beginning of the process is the beginning of the composition. After the steps of the process have been explained in detail, the theme comes to an end. A theme entitled "How to Start a Fire in the Furnace" may have the following topical outline:

I. Preparatory steps.
   A. Shaking down the ashes.
   B. Removing the clinkers.

II. Building the fire.
   A. How to arrange paper and kindling.
   B. When to put on the coal.
   C. How to secure a quick fire.
   D. How to avoid smoke and waste.

III. Management of drafts.
  A. While the fire is getting started.
  B. After the fire is burning well.

If the process is technical or complex—such as the manufacture of cotton fiber into rayon, the process of renovating a colonial house, or the building of a set for an amateur play—then the problem of organization is not so simple. A complex process will subdivide into several related processes. Each of these has an order of its own. When all are put together in their right order, the theme is organized. To form a plan for a complex process, therefore, you should divide the complex process into simple processes, and develop each one in turn. Sometimes it may be difficult to make such a division. Try to state the central problem involved in the process itself, and build your organization around that central problem. For example, the central problem in the process of reconstructing a colonial house might be: How to introduce modern conveniences without destroying the original design and character of the house.

The following outline illustrates the organization of a theme which deals with a complex process. Observe that each main division of the outline (with the exception of the first main division) deals with one of the lesser processes, which is subdivided into its steps.[1]

HOW BLACK TOBACCO IS PRODUCED

Theme Sentence: Black tobacco culture is an all-the-year task which involves varied types of skill and knowledge.

I. What is black tobacco?
  A. It is black, or "dark," in comparison with Burley or "light" tobacco.
  B. It is a "strong" tobacco.
  C. It is grown mainly in "The Black Tobacco Patch," a restricted upland region in Kentucky and Tennessee.

[1]See p. 128 for an example of an outline that does not follow chronological order.

II. Planting is done in the very early spring.

A. The beds must be put in order.

1. They are "burned off" or steamed to kill weeds and pests.
2. The soil must be carefully prepared.

B. The tiny seed must be mixed with ashes or fine soil to be sown.

C. The beds must be protected from cold and from plant diseases.

III. The transplanting or "setting out" is done in late spring or early summer.

A. The field must be carefully prepared.

B. The tobacco farmer must have weather wisdom if he is to judge the best time for "setting out."

C. The young plants are set out in rows wide enough apart to allow room for cultivation and later growth.

D. The labor of transplanting is back-breaking and tedious.

IV. The tobacco plants require constant attention during the growing season.

A. A certain amount of cultivation is necessary during the early summer.

B. At all times each individual plant must be tended like a growing infant.

1. Tobacco worms are picked off by hand.
2. Plants are "topped" to promote leaf growth.
3. "Suckers" must be pulled off, in order that all the strength of the plant may go into the large leaves.

V. The tobacco is "cut" or harvested in September and October before frost begins.

A. The tobacco farmer must judge when to "cut."

1. He must know when the plants are mature.
2. He must be a judge of weather conditions.

B. The tobacco is "cut" in the following manner:

1. Using a peculiarly shaped knife, workers split each stalk from the top to a point a few inches above the ground.
2. The stalk is cut at this point and placed upside down on the ground.
3. The stalks are placed over "sticks" inserted in the split.
4. The sticks are hung on racks until transported to the tobacco barn.

VI. The next step is "firing" or curing the tobacco.

A. Burley tobacco is generally air-cured.
B. Black tobacco is cured by smoke.
1. A slow fire of hickory or some other good wood is kept smouldering in the barn.
2. It must be watched day and night.
3. "Firing" tobacco is nevertheless a kind of festival.
a. Men may swap yarns, eat, drink.
b. One well-known character used to read Walter Scott only when he "fired" tobacco.

VII. The crop is marketed during the winter or early spring.

A. A wet "season" is necessary for transporting the tobacco to the neighboring market town.
1. Dry tobacco cannot be handled without damage.
2. In wet weather the leaves take up moisture from the air.
3. It is then "in order" and can be "stripped" for marketing.
B. It is hauled to town and deposited on a "floor" in the warehouse.
C. It is then sold at auction.
D. Some farmers, however, sell their crops from the barn.
E. The new crop is often planted before the old one is sold.

The above outline illustrates how each main division of a complex process breaks up into parts, some of which may be subdivided. It is not always advisable to make outlines in such detail.

The beginner is advised not to attempt at once the most complex and technical subjects. It is best to choose a simple process for the first theme of this type.

Whether the process is simple or complex, familiar or strange, do not forget the reader. Define special terms that are peculiar to the process—such as *black tobacco, suckers, sticks, firing, in order,* in the outline given above. Do not assume that the reader knows the meaning of such terms. Some of the simplest and most interesting processes have their technical vocabularies. If you are explaining how to play golf, give the meaning of the terms *mashie, niblick, tee, putter, green.* If you are explaining how to harness a horse, you must make sure that the reader knows the meaning of such words as *halter, bit, crupper, traces, single-tree, check-rein.* Do not

omit essential steps in the process, on the assumption that the reader's knowledge may be taken for granted. If you are explaining how to roast beef, you cannot take for granted a reader's knowledge that the time for cooking depends upon the size of the roast. Remember that clearness of explanation is a first essential. The process of roasting beef can be explained in such a way as to be intelligible only to hotel chefs. Your task is to explain the process so that it will be intelligible to the non-expert reader.

Last, do all you can to make your explanation interesting. If you keep your eye on the subject and take pains to present details concretely and exactly, your explanation will be interesting and will need no devices to "make" it interesting. Do not depend upon stylistic flourishes, clever remarks, pretentious language to "add" interest. Such attempts at ornament attract attention away from the subject. Your duty is to the subject, which ought to be chosen so that it is interesting in itself.

There are, however, certain aids to interest which are quite legitimate. Often they will be aids to clearness as well. If the process is one in which mistakes can easily be made, note the nature of those mistakes and warn the reader against them. It is always interesting to show the difference between the right way and the wrong way of doing things, and such a contrast may help the reader to understand your explanation. Hilaire Belloc, in "Mowing a Field," gives a ludicrous picture of an awkward mower; it makes an effective contrast with his explanation of the right way to mow. Second, remember that any introduction of a human element is an aid to interest. Much of the charm of Belloc's explanation comes from the fact that his explanation is also an account of his personal experience. You, too, may tell how you caught tarpon off the coast of Florida, or how you learned to ski. Or you may create characters who play the rôle of novice and expert in the process that you are explaining: a Percy Dub who slices his golf shots and digs up hunks of turf, and a Bobby Eagle who is an old hand at the game. You may introduce actual characters that you have known: an old Vermonter who has carried his thousands of sap-buckets and knows how to make maple syrup; a Southern planter who knows the ways of cotton; a head bell-boy who knows what happens at the hotel desk; a guide of the North woods; a hair-dresser; a steel-worker; a Cape Cod fisherman.

MOWING A FIELD[1]

By Hilaire Belloc

When I got out into the long grass the sun was not yet risen, but there were already many colors in the eastern sky, and I made haste to sharpen my scythe, so that I might get to the cutting before the dew should dry. Some say that it is best to wait till all the dew has risen, so as to get the grass quite dry from the very first. But, though it is an advantage to get the grass quite dry, yet it is not worth while to wait till the dew has risen. For, in the first place, you lose many hours of work (and those the coolest), and next—which is more important—you lose that great ease and thickness in cutting which comes of the dew. So I at once began to sharpen my scythe.

There is an art also in the sharpening of the scythe, and it is worth describing carefully. Your blade must be dry, and that is why you will see men rubbing the scythe-blade with grass before they whet it. Then also your rubber must be quite dry, and on this account it is a good thing to lay it on your coat and keep it there during all your day's mowing. The scythe you stand upright, with the blade pointing away from you, and put your left hand firmly on the back of the blade, grasping it; then you pass the rubber first down one side of the blade-edge and then down the other, beginning near the handle and going on to the point and working quickly and hard. When you first do this you will, perhaps, cut your hand; but it is only at first that such an accident will happen to you.

To tell when the scythe is sharp enough this is the rule. First the stone clangs and grinds against the iron harshly; then it rings musically to one note; then at last, it purrs as though the iron and stone were exactly suited. When you hear this, your scythe is sharp enough; and I, when I heard it that June dawn, with everything quite silent except the birds, let down the scythe and bent myself to mow.

When one does anything anew, after so many years, one fears very much for one's trick or habit. But all things once learnt are easily recoverable, and I very soon recovered the swing and power of the mower. Mowing well and mowing badly—or rather not mowing at all—are separated by very little; as is also true of writing verse, of playing the fiddle, and of dozens of other things, but of

[1]From *Hills and the Sea*, Charles Scribner's Sons.

nothing more than of believing. For the bad or young or untaught mower without tradition, the mower Promethean, the mower original and contemptuous of the past, does all these things: He leaves great crescents of grass uncut. He digs the point of the scythe hard into the ground with a jerk. He loosens the handles and even the fastening of the blade. He twists the blade with his blunders, he blunts the blade, he chips it, dulls it, or breaks it clean off at the tip. If any one is standing by he cuts him in the ankle. He sweeps up into the air wildly, with nothing to resist his stroke. He drags up earth with the grass, which is like making the meadow bleed. But the good mower who does things just as they should be done and have been for a hundred thousand years, falls into none of these fooleries. He goes forward very steadily, his scythe-blade just barely missing the ground, every grass falling; the swish and rhythm of his mowing are always the same.

So great an art can be learned only by continual practice; but this is worth writing down, that, as in all good work, to know the thing with which you work is the core of the affair. Good verse is best written on good paper with an easy pen, not with a lump of coal on a whitewashed wall. The pen thinks for you; and so does the scythe mow for you if you treat it honorably and in a manner that makes it recognize its service. The manner is this. You must regard the scythe as a pendulum that swings, not as a knife that cuts. A good mower puts no more strength into his stroke than into his lifting. Again, stand up to your work. The bad mower, eager and full of pain, leans forward and tries to force the scythe through the grass. The good mower, serene and able, stands as nearly straight as the shape of his scythe will let him, and follows up every stroke closely, moving his left foot forward. Then also let every stroke get well away. Mowing is a thing of ample gestures, like drawing a cartoon. Then, again, get yourself into a mechanical and repetitive mood: be thinking of anything at all but your mowing and be anxious only when there seems some interruption to the monotony of the sound. In this, mowing should be like one's prayers—all of a sort and always the same, and so made that you can establish a monotony and work them, as it were, with half your mind: that happier half, the half that does not bother.

In this way, when I had recovered the art after so many years, I went forward over the field, cutting lane after lane through the grass, and bringing out its most secret essences with the sweep of the scythe until the air was full of odors. At the end of every lane I sharpened my scythe and looked back at the work done, and

then carried my scythe down again upon my shoulder to begin another. So, long before the bell rang in the chapel above me—that is, long before six o'clock, which is the time for the Angelus—I had many swathes already lying in order parallel like soldiery; and the grass yet standing, making a great contrast with the shaven part, looked dense and high. As it says in the Ballad of Val-es-Dunes, where—

> The tall son of the Seven Winds
> Came riding out of Hither-hythe,

and his horse-hoofs (you will remember) trampled into the press and made a gap in it, and his sword (as you know)

> was like a scythe
> In Arcus when the grass is high
> And all the swathes in order lie,
> And there's the bailiff standing by
> A-gathering of the tithe.

So I mowed all that morning, till the houses awoke in the valley, and from some of them rose a little fragrant smoke, and men began to be seen.

OUTLINES

The making of outlines is generally a part of the instruction in a composition course. It is best to think of an outline as a tool, like a carpenter's square and level, which are used in construction but which in themselves have no great value. An outline *tests* the structure of a composition, much as square and level test the angles of planks and the horizontal condition of a building. It is also a blueprint or working plan which gives a skeletonized picture of organization. Outlines in themselves are nothing; they have merit only in connection with a work in progress. For this reason, it is well to look at an outline of a composition, since only thus can we see the relation of outline to completed work.

The two types of outline in common use are: (1) the complete sentence outline, (2) the topical outline. Below are given outlines of Hilaire Belloc's "Mowing a Field," constructed in each of the two ways. All outlines are analytical: they show the divisions of the subject. The complete sentence outline shows the important

main divisions and the subdivisions of these divisions, sometimes in detail. Every division of the complete sentence outline must be a complete sentence, whether it pertains to an important or an unimportant division of the subject.[1] The various divisions of the outline are indented and grouped to show the relative importance of each division and its connection with the other divisions. A topical outline differs from a complete sentence outline only in using topics (phrases or words) rather than complete sentences. In making outlines, remember that you must be consistent: that is, do not make an outline which uses complete sentences for some divisions and topics for other divisions. The complete sentence outline is useful for planning an extended composition or for noting the organization of a complex composition. The topical outline is useful as a preliminary to writing: it furnishes an economical way of planning and testing a short composition.

Both complete sentence outlines and topical outlines must meet these logical requirements: (1) the major divisions, taken together, must be logically equal to the whole content of the composition; (2) the subdivisions of any part, taken together, must equal that part—that is, cover the topic indicated, no more and no less; (3) divisions must not overlap. In addition, the wording of an outline should be simple, the sentences compact. Punctuation, lettering, numerals should follow the scheme indicated in the models.

(1) **Complete Sentence Outline.**

MOWING A FIELD

Guiding Purpose: Mowing a field is a traditional process.

I. It is best to begin mowing before the dew is dry.

A. Some argue that grass cuts better before the dew is dry.
B. But it is not worth while to wait.
1. You lose good hours of work by waiting.
2. The grass cuts more easily when it is wet.

[1]It is permissible for a subdivision to be less than a complete sentence if, with the preceding item of which it is a subdivision, it forms a complete sentence.

II. The scythe must first be sharpened carefully.

A. Both blade and whetstone must be dry.

B. A certain procedure must be followed.

1. Stand the scythe upright, blade away from you.
2. Grasp the back of the blade with the left hand.
3. Begin whetting near the handle.
4. Move toward the point, stroking downward alternately on each side.

C. The sound of the scythe against the stone will tell you when it is sharp.

III. Skill in mowing comes from experience.

A. As in art, the difference between bad and good mowing is slight but important.

1. The bad mower makes the following mistakes:
   a. He leaves grass uncut.
   b. He digs his scythe into the ground.
   c. He injures the scythe by bad handling.
   d. He endangers bystanders.
2. The good mower makes none of these mistakes.

B. Good mowing consists in letting the scythe do the work for you.

1. Regard it as a pendulum.
2. Stand up to your work.
   a. The bad mower leans forward.
   b. The good mower stands straight and follows his stroke through.

IV. In my own mowing I soon recovered this ancient rhythm of work.

A. I went forward in the traditional manner.

B. At the end of every lane I sharpened the scythe and looked back.

C. Long before six o'clock I had many swathes down.

D. Thus I mowed all the morning.

(2) **A Topical Outline.**

MOWING A FIELD

I. When to begin work.

A. Advantages of starting late.

B. Advantages of starting early.

II. Sharpening the scythe.
   A. Condition of blade and whetstone.
   B. Position of scythe and hands.
   C. Nature of the stroke for sharpening.
   D. Testing sharpness.

III. The secret of good mowing.
   A. Slight difference between the good job and the bad job.
      1. How the bad mower works.
      2. How the good mower works.
   B. Letting the scythe work for you.
      1. The pendulum swing.
      2. Correct position.
      3. Mood.

IV. How I recovered this rhythm.

PRÉCIS-WRITING

A précis is not an outline, but a summary or digest. It is useful as an exercise in grasping the essential ideas of an already completed composition and in stating these ideas in concentrated form. The précis shears away all elaborations of the thought and gives only what is left, in such a way as to make the summary a complete composition. It does not, therefore, skeletonize the original composition so much as it reduces its scale. Many of the articles in *The Reader's Digest* are only précis, so skillfully done that the average reader does not know that he is reading a summary. Since the précis says a great deal within a brief space, it is of great service in taking notes on library assignments and general reading. It is often better to make a précis of an article or a chapter than to write a detailed outline or to record passages verbatim.

Précis of "Mowing a Field"

Some prefer not to begin mowing until the dew has risen. I prefer to begin early so as not to lose the early morning hours. Furthermore, the grass cuts easily when it is wet. The first step is to sharpen the scythe carefully, with alternate downward strokes from handle to point. You will know that the scythe is sharp when it makes a purring sound under the stone.

Mowing well is separated from mowing badly by slight but important differences. The bad mower, ignoring the mower's tradition, works too energetically, and so leaves grass uncut, digs into the ground, injures the scythe, and even imperils bystanders. The good mower goes forward in a steady rhythm. He knows that the scythe will work for him if he treats it honorably. Therefore he lets it swing like a pendulum, and he follows its stroke. He does not lean forward, like the bad mower, to force the scythe, but stands up straight and moves with his stroke. He also yields himself to a mechanical mood and thinks of anything but the scythe.

Thus recovering the art, I went forward in a steady rhythm and had mowed many swatches before six o'clock; and so I mowed all that morning.

ROWING THE EIGHT-OARED SHELL[1]

By Oliver La Farge

What is the nature of it? To begin with, the setting—the green-banked river or the Charles basin ringed by the city, both are beautiful. The shell swinging through open country on a fine spring day is hard to beat. Down on the Basin the water is oily; in the late afternoon it catches the deepening sunset; after dark the advertising signs over the factories are reflected on it, twisting as if the lights were darting snakes; and the swirl of one's oar is shot with color. There is the slight excitement and the echoing change of sound in shooting under a bridge. There is the fresh day on the river as you carry your shell down to the float. Rural or urban water, rowing is set in beauty to begin with.

There is the nature of the stroke itself, the most perfect combination I have ever known of skill and the full release of one's power. It takes more than a dumb ox to make a fine oarsman; the traditional "weak brain and strong back" won't serve. To my mind it begins with the "recovery," the forward reach to get ready for a stroke. You are sitting on a slide, a seat on rollers, which runs on a track about two feet long, set variously according to the type of stroke your coach favors. Your two hands are on the loom of your twelve-foot oar, balancing it neatly. If you lower them too far, you

[1]From *Raw Material*, by Oliver La Farge. Copyright, 1942, 1943, 1944, and 1945, by Oliver La Farge. Reprinted by permission of and arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.

sky the blade of your oar, and the shift of the centre of gravity will make the boat rock and cost you precious headway; if you raise them too high your oar will touch the waves, and you may cause a jolt that will throw the whole boat out of time. So your hands are balancing delicately—next time you see a good crew rowing, watch the oars moving together clear of the water on the recovery, see how narrow that long shell is, and realize the miracle of balance that keeps it steady while those big men swing aft and the long sweeps reach forward. Or watch a green crew; see the oars at eight different levels and the shell wallowing from side to side.

You are moving your hands, your shoulders, and your tail aft (you are facing aft) at three different rates, to bring each to its stopping point at the same time. If you rush your slide to the end of its run, that sharp motion and possibly the abrupt stopping at the end will check the motion of the shell (you can see it happen), and you yourself will fall into the position of your maximum effort with a jerk which will put you out of balance. Hands, shoulders, slide, must move *in related time* one to another, and in perfect time with the other seven men, so that at the right moment you are leaning forward just far enough for reach and not too far for power; your back is arched, not humped; and your balancing hands are holding firmly to the oar. In the very last part of your swing your outside hand—the one towards the blade—has turned the oar a quarter circle, so that the blade, which was parallel to the water, is perpendicular to it.

CATCH! A slight raising of your hands and arms has dropped your blade into the water, and instantaneously your shoulders take hold. That simple action is not quite so simple. If you have not done it minutely right your oar may skitter out above the water, slice too deeply into the water to help the boat, or you may catch a crab—entangle your oar in water so that you can't get it out. That last is virtual shipwreck. It may knock you out of the boat, and it will almost certainly lose a race. Once you and seven other men are driving with all your forces, it is too late to attempt to turn or guide your oar. You must have dropped it into the water so accurately that it will stay with the blade just submerged all the way through your pull and come out willingly. That is part of the turn of your outside hand and the act of slightly raising your arms. This raising of your arms must be neat; you don't let your oar into the water on a diagonal after you have begun to pull (that is, you don't and stay on a good crew), nor do you succumb to the natural tendency which you will see in any fisherman's rowing, to let your hands dive

slightly as you get ready to catch on hard, causing the blade first to rise slightly in the air and then to hit the water with a spanking motion.

An immeasurably short time after your shoulders, your legs start to drive. Now your arms are merely straps attaching your hands to your body; legs, shoulders, and back for all they are worth are pulling on the oar; everything you've got is going into it; but you have taken care that your tail, driven by your legs, will not shoot on the slide ahead of your shoulders.

You have driven through almost to the end of the catch, your slide is almost home, your shoulders are back. Now your arms come in, and just as your knees come down locked, your hands touch your stomach. Here is the prettiest part of the stroke, the shoot of the hands to start the recovery. Remember, your oar is still deep in the water rushing powerfully past your boat; if it becomes caught in that, it turns to a wild machine. As your hands touch your belly they drop, shoot out, in a motion "as fast and smooth as a billiard ball caroming;" at the same time your wrist turns, and the blade is once more parallel to the water—feathered. The shoot of your hands and legs bring your shoulders forward, and you commence your recovery once more.

All of what I have described happens in a single stroke by a good oarsman. This stroke, its predecessors and successors, is performed in a unison with seven other men which is more perfect than merely being in time, with the balance of the body maintained also in relation to the keel so that the boat shall not roll. At a moderate racing rate it is performed thirty-two to thirty-six times to the minute, all of this, nothing omitted, and in a rhythm which keeps the time of the recovery not less than double that of the catch.

That is not the whole of rowing, but it is the basic part of the individual's job in it. Unite it to another fundamental, and you can have a crew.

The other fundamental is unison. I have said that a crew does not merely keep time; it does something subtler than that: it becomes one. This it cannot do if there is bad feeling between any of the men in the boat. A single antagonistic personality can keep eight oarsmen accurately following stroke's oar and the coxswain's counting from becoming a crew rowing together. Crews are not made up on a basis of personalities, but according to the coach's estimate of individual capacities. It is after they are rowing together that they become friends. My crews at Harvard contained men with whom I had nothing in common, men by whom I should naturally have

been bored or antagonized, and who should have disliked me. As we rowed together we became fond of each other. It had no lasting value, but for the duration of our rowing, we esteemed each other dearly. As this feeling grew, so did our boat shake down and become one, and so did we increasingly care for the foul-mouthed, brilliant little devil who was our cox and in a race the instrument, voice, and control of our unity.

EXERCISES

1. Why does Mr. La Farge emphasize, in the first paragraph, the beauty of the "setting" in which the oarsman rows? Is this passage to be taken as representing the author's feelings alone, or does he mean to imply that such feelings are a part of the crew's experience? Is this paragraph merely "introductory"? Or does it link in some significant organic way with what follows?

2. Is Mr. La Farge's use of the impersonal or general *you* ("*You* are sitting on a slide . . .") a practical and effective idiom for his task of explanation? Would the explanation have been improved if he had written "the oarsman"—or some similar expression—at all points where he has used the pronoun *you*?

3. Study Mr. La Farge's subtle and careful analysis of the oarsman's stroke. To what extent does he dramatize and illustrate while he is engaged in explaining the intricate details of the stroke?

Suggestions for Themes

1. Write a theme in which you endeavor to explain, in interesting, human terms, some technical process. Try to do this without cheapening your explanation, without "condescending to the reader," and without doing injury to the inescapably technical features of the process. Suggestions:

How to Graft an Apple Tree (or some other fruit tree)
How to Build an Asphalt Driveway
How to Develop and Print Photographic Film
How to "Shoot the Sun" (*i.e.*, determine a ship's position by celestial observation)
How to Draw Up a Trial Balance
How to Recondition a Motor
How to Refinish Antique Furniture
How to Milk Cows by Machinery

2. Write a process theme in which you try to give new interest to some old and familiar occupation. Suggestions:

Making Camp on a Rainy Day
Carving the Thanksgiving Turkey
Deer Hunting
Sailing a Catboat
Getting in the Peach Crop (or other fruit crop)
Haying, Modern Style
A New England Clambake
A Southern Barbecue
Weaving at a Hand Loom

3. Write a theme based on your knowledge of some process in nature. Suggestions:

How an Oriole Builds a Nest
What Happens When Bees Swarm
An Eclipse of the Sun
The Movement of the Tides
What Makes It Snow
How the Opossum Rears Her Young
How the Beaver Builds a Dam

4. Explain some historic event as the result of a process of change. For example:

The Making of the American Constitution
How Julius Caesar Became a Dictator
How Switzerland Became a Nation
How Oregon Was Settled
The Founding of the Republic of Texas

5. Explain the rise of some artistic medium, *genre,* or fashion in terms of a process of development. For example:

The Beginnings of the Modern Orchestra
The Rise of Jazz
Impressionism in Painting
The Gothic Cathedral
The Development of Radio Drama
Drama on Television

Suggestions for Reading

Audubon, John J. "Deer Hunting," in *Delineations of American Scenery and Character.*
Bingham, Walter Van Dyke. *How to Interview.*

Brown, Dee, and Schmitt, Martin F. "A Roundup," in *Trail Driving Days*, pp. 32–34.
Crafton, Allen, and Roger, Jessica. *The Complete Acted Play from Script to Final Curtain.*
Dana, Richard Henry. *Two Years Before the Mast.*
Davis, William Stearns. *Life on a Medieval Barony.*
Finger, Charles J. "How to Cook a Steak," in *Under Sapphire Skies.*
Fraprie, Frank Roy. *How to Make Enlargements.*
Gulick, Charles. *The Life of the Ancient Greeks.*
Hicks, Amy N. *The Craft of Hand-made Rugs.*
Langewiesche, Wolfgang. "What Makes the Weather," *Harper's Magazine*, Vol. 185 (October, 1942).
Mills, Enos A. "The Beaver and His Works," in *Wild Life in the Rockies*, pp. 53–67.
Richards, I. A. *How to Read a Page.*
Vance, Rupert. "Around the Year with Cotton Growers," in *Human Factors in Cotton Culture*, Chapter VI.
Vestal, Stanley. *Kit Carson.* See Chapter XIII for accounts of buffalo hunting.

PROJECT 2. MECHANISMS AND ORGANIZATIONS

To write of mechanisms and organizations it is not necessary that the writer be an expert mechanical or social engineer. All that is required is attention to the scheme, plan, or working design of some mechanism or organization with which the writer is familiar—or which he may want to study and explain. Mechanisms are not confined to the inorganic world. The human hand is a kind of mechanism. It makes mistakes, but no robot will ever have a hand as flexible as your own human hand. The building in which you attend classes is an organization of a kind; it was built according to a plan, to serve a certain purpose. Charles D. Stewart has an essay entitled "The Bee's Knees." It is a fascinating explanation of the strangely complex mechanism (essentially a set of tools fitted to an insect body) used by the bee to gather honey. Your college is an organization; and the sociologist will argue that your family is also an organization. If you have a special knowledge of some kind of machinery or organization, you can use that knowledge to advantage. In a society as complex as ours there is hardly anybody without

some knowledge of mechanisms and organizations. You will not need to go far afield for a subject or to acquire expert knowledge. Take what is nearest at hand, if you wish. The advantage of the assignment is that you do not need to make up the subject matter. You have only to study it and decide how it must be presented.

In the explanation of a process, this question generally decides itself. Chronological order is inevitable. You must give the steps of the process in their right sequence. Chronological order can also be used in an explanation of a mechanism or an organization. One might, for example, explain a saw-mill by following the progress of a log until the lumber emerges to be stacked for curing; or of a cotton gin by describing the several steps involved in the separation of fiber and seed. Such a treatment would really be a process exposition in which the emphasis has been shifted from the process to the mechanism or organization. In the same way it would be natural to explain the mechanism of the human heart by tracing the passage of the blood from auricle to ventricle; or to explain the organization of a football team by showing what happens in a series of plays and what functions are performed by various members of the team. The difficulty in using this method is that the parts of the machine or the organization must be properly identified and named while the explanation of the process is going on. To give this information at the right time and in the right way is not always easy.

Logical order rather than natural order is therefore generally preferred in expository writing that deals with mechanisms and organizations. But logical order cannot be established until the writer has simplified his problem by searching out and determining the *central or basic principle* of the mechanism or organization. An automobile may be only a mysterious collection of metal, rubber, glass, and upholstery until one begins to think of it as a device for using the expansive power of exploding gases. As soon as this central principle is determined, an explanation of an automobile begins to make sense. Considered in relation to this principle, an automobile resolves itself into three essential parts: (1) a motor or *mover,* which is a mechanism for exploding vaporized gasoline in such a way that the resulting power may be used; (2) a transmission system, for applying the power to the wheels; and (3) a vehicular body, where a driver can sit and control the rolling wheels even while he is rolled along.

Working at the subject in this way, we establish three major divi-

sions of the theme. Logic calls for an explanation of the motor first of all. The three major divisions, in turn, break into logical subdivisions. An explanation of the motor requires an explanation of how the internal combustion principle works in relation to the cylinders, the pistons, and the ignition and fuel-supply systems. Then the explanation proceeds logically to drive-shaft, gears, rear axle, and brakes; and last to the structural arrangements of the chassis and body.

If the subject is an organization, the central principle is likely to be identified with the purpose for which the organization exists. Thus a newspaper can be explained as an organization designed to distribute current information as rapidly and cheaply as possible. All the functions of news-gathering, news-writing, editing, printing, distributing, and financing can easily be related to this central principle.

Sometimes it may be preferable to explain an organization or mechanism in the light of conditions that called it forth. Thus feudalism can be explained as a system of land tenure devised to meet a social emergency—the emergency being the social and economic breakdown of Roman civilization. Eli Whitney's cotton gin was produced, not merely by the genius of the individual inventor, but by the growing demand for cotton textiles that could not be manufactured rapidly and in great quantity by the old handicraft system. The historical approach to a subject gives the writer a natural beginning: he takes hold of his subject at the point where it became significant in human affairs. Furthermore, he can set up a contrast between old and new conditions, and from this contrast he goes on to the important features of the new machine or organization which he wishes to explain.

Whatever approach is used, it is generally best to state the central principle early, perhaps even in the first paragraph. This statement, the "theme sentence," constitutes the nucleus of the discussion. Thus, the first paragraph of an explanation of the Southern plantation might read:

In the romantic literature of the past, the old Southern plantation is generally represented in either of two ways. It was a white-pillared mansion, inhabited by a genial and courtly master and mistress and surrounded by cotton fields in which contented slaves caroled happily at their work. Or it was, to a more hostile eye, a sinister mask behind whose suave front lurked the hideous evil of

slavery. A later view, often called the realistic view, tends to consider the plantation as nothing more than a kind of factory for producing the raw material, cotton. But none of these explanations really hits the truth. *The plantation, in reality, was many things in one: an economic institution, if you wish, but at the same time a farm, a school, a parish, a social center, and above all a home.* If we would understand the plantation, we must consider these many sides of plantation life and see how they are united in one institution.

The theme sentence may forecast important divisions of the discussion, as does the sentence italicized in the paragraph given above. But such forecasting is not absolutely necessary. It is undesirable if it makes the beginning of the theme too formal.

Remember that the main object of themes of this sort is to convey information. Seek to help the reader to visualize the mechanism or organization which you are explaining. Illustration is the most practical method of aiding visualization. You may illustrate by making comparisons, as by saying that the human heart is the world's most efficient pump or that the student council is a miniature Congress. You may illustrate by giving examples: a manufacturer's association, a farmers' league, a labor organization may offer an example of a "pressure group." Or, in technical expositions, you may make a drawing or chart to illustrate your remark. Such charts and drawings are not a substitute for clear explanation, but merely a help.

As in process themes, avoid using technical terms which you do not explain. See that the transition from section to section is clearly marked. Be sure that you have not omitted any important aspect of your subject.

WHAT THE WRIGHTS REALLY INVENTED

By Wolfgang Langewiesche[1]

1. What exactly did the Wright Brothers invent? Every once in a while a silly controversy gets started because somebody discovers that *almost* everything about the airplane was really quite well understood long before the Wrights, and he announces, "They didn't invent the airplane after all!"

[1]From *A Flier's World,* by Wolfgang Langewiesche. Copyright, 1951, by Wolfgang Langewiesche. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.

2. You can answer that simply: they were the first to make an airplane do level, sustained flight; and that is *that.* Also, for many years afterward, their airplanes flew better than their competitors'; so it was not by luck that they were first. But let's take the opposite side for a moment. Let's see what was known by the Wrights' time and what-all they did not have to invent.

3. By 1900, many people knew that flying could be done without a balloon, on *wings.* They understood the wing. They knew it would have to be an "inclined plane," set at an "angle of attack." As the machine went forward, the wing would catch the air and wash it downward, and the air would, in reaction, push it upward. They knew the wing would have to be curved, in cross section, rather than a true plane.

4. More than that: men had actually flown on wings, back in the nineties. Chiefly Otto Lilienthal, whom the Wrights considered their teacher. Though it was only downward-gliding flight, it was flight: sustained steady motion through the air. Lilienthal cracked up finally; dying, he said in his stiff German something that has been invisibly written ever since on every flight test hangar: "Sacrifices must be made." The news of his death was what got the Wrights started.

5. The few who were interested also knew how you might get flight without loss of altitude: the wing would have to be driven forward against the air by a propeller. Propellers had been driving steamships for many decades. Propellers had already driven balloon-type airships. It was clear that this propeller would have to be turned by an engine, most likely an automobile engine. Back in the nineties, Sir Hiram Maxim had built a very large airplane with huge propellers driven by a steam engine. It never flew. It was restrained by rails. Had it not been restrained, it would almost certainly have capsized or tumbled in the very act of lifting-off; just as later on many a new helicopter capsized, for lack of control, before it could get itself quite air-borne. But Maxim's monster did develop enough lift to break the restraining rails! It then cracked up.

6. So, by the Wrights' time, there was no longer a deep mystery to "sustentation" in the air, nor to "propulsion" either. Even the configuration of the airplane was quite clearly envisaged. The wings would have to be long and slender. There would have to be a boom with stabilizing fins. A British mathematician had already calculated the motions of an airplane with stabilizing tail. And some "artists' conceptions" of airplanes, drawn long before the Wrights, look more modern to our eyes than the Wrights' own machine!

7. Then what did the Wrights do? In the first place, a brilliant job of what one now calls research and development. They built a wind-tunnel and systematically measured the forces that act on a wing in flight. In doing this they had to use, self-trained engineers though they were, some highly sophisticated, quite abstract concepts—too abstract to explain here. No—they had to create those concepts before they could use them! The notion that the Wrights were tinkerers is very far from the mark. Using their own data, they gave their wing the right plan-form and the right curvature, in cross section. They got a wing that had more lift with less drag than earlier wings. They made similar improvements in the propeller. They started by creating a mathematical theory of propeller action; and they finally got a pair of airscrews that were highly efficient in converting engine power into forward thrust.

8. Mostly in those two ways—a better wing, a better prop—they juggled the equation of flight until it yielded, instead of a minus item, a plus item: instead of a machine that barely would *not* carry itself in level flight, one that did—by a respectable margin.

9. The Wrights did all this in their spare time; they spent less than $2,000 on the whole project, including even their own train fares to Kitty Hawk. It was one of the most remarkable performances of the human mind—though it takes an aeronautical engineer to see it. They did it with an uncanny sureness, almost without misstep, as if they had been under hypnotic guidance from a present-day professor of aeronautical engineering.

10. In a sense, this was the basic part of their work. A flying machine is, of course, nothing if it cannot keep itself up. Still, it is not the key part of the Wrights' work. It could probably have been done by any good engineering outfit—in ten years, on a budget of $2,000,000. In this phase, that powerful double mind still dealt only with concepts which already existed—wing and propeller. And if the work was brilliant, it was actually better than it need have been. The Wrights could have built a much poorer airplane and still have flown it—with what they invented. Later on, in Europe and here, poorer airplanes *were* flown—with what the Wrights invented.

11. What they invented—the thing that jumped all-new from their heads—was control of flight: control by changing the shape of the airplane. Up to their time, such airplanes as had been flown at all (gliders, of course) had been controlled mostly by shifting *weight*. The pilot hung underneath the machine. He banked it, unbanked it, made it nose up or nose down by swinging his legs about; or—it's the same thing really—he wrestled the machine into the desired

attitude with his strong arms. That was perhaps barely good enough for a light glider. It would never have done for an airplane; no man was strong-armed enough and heavy enough to wrestle with all the forces a rotating engine and a blasting prop would create.

12. Particularly, the Wrights invented control of bank. They knew what student pilots have trouble learning even now: an airplane turns by banking. If you just lean it over to the left, it will curve to the left—much like a bicycle ridden no-hands. So, if they could get control of bank, it would not only mean they could keep the airplane from capsizing; they would have a way to make it fly curves or steer it straight at will. Without this control, they couldn't have flown the best airplane. With it, they could have flown a barn door.

13. They rigged up an arrangement of levers and cables that bent the wing-tips out of shape. It would bend one wing-tip rear-edge-down, so that it plowed into the air at more of an "angle of attack" and pushed the air down harder and made more lift. At the same time it would bend the other wing-tip rear-edge-up, so that it would make less lift: the lift-difference between the two wing-tips made the airplane bank or unbank. It was a little thing, but it was the key to practical flying.

14. All this, and what follows, has been accurately described by Fred C. Kelly, the Wrights' devoted and able biographer. What it gets here is merely a little pointing-up by a pilot. For it goes right to the heart of the art of piloting, not only as it stood then, but as it stands now. The Wrights' understanding of flight was sheer genius.

15. The Wrights' wing-warping was a little thing, but it was deep. It contained an invention-in-an-invention. When they first tried it, on the glider on which all their key work was done, it did not work. When they tried to bank to the *right*, the airplane's nose slewed sidewise to the *left*, and then the ship banked to the left! The Wrights recognized the trouble right away. It was this: when you warped the left wing-tip into a shape that made more lift, you also got more drag out there. When you warped the right wing-tip for less lift, you also got less drag on that side; so the left wing lagged behind, the right wing slid forward, the nose slewed around to the left—and then the whole left wing went sort of dead, from lack of enough forward speed against the air; and it sank down. The Wrights reasoned: the airplane needs a right-left rudder, like a ship's rudder, by which you can counteract this wrong-way slew; *then* it will bank all right. They built such a rudder. They tied the cables directly to the wing-warping control; so, whenever they moved the stick to warp their wings, they would automatically also deflect this tail-

rudder to counteract the wrong-way slew. Now the machine banked and unbanked all right, and *that* was the invention that made the invention work that made the airplane fly.

16. Rather technical. But if this were more widely understood it might help stop useless squabbling in this strangely squabblesome field. You see, some historians and some of the Wrights' detractors have claimed that wing-warping was not original with the Wrights. They claim to distinguish the idea in the Prior Art, especially in the thinking of Mouillard, author of *L'empire de l'air*, published in 1881. The courts never did find so, in the many patent suits the Wrights later had, both here and abroad. But it does not matter at any rate: wing-warping alone would not have worked. It was wing-warping in conjunction with a controllable vertical tail that did the trick.

17. And that was so much more brilliant than you think! Forty years later the average engineering text or how-to-fly book understood flying much less well. The Wrights' understanding was so advanced that their real ideas took a poor hold on flying people. Right in the early years, their mechanized tie-up between the banking-control and the nose-right, nose-left rudder was cut; partly for good reasons, partly for poor ones. Control of nose-right-or-left was made independent of control of bank. The job of working the right-left rudder was given to the pilot's feet, while his hand on the stick controlled the bank. So now the pilot had to learn to "co-ordinate," as we now say: use just enough footwork at just the right time to accompany his hand work. This introduced into flying its biggest, most tedious difficulty. When you learn to fly, you spend more time on "co-ordination" than on anything else. You fly endless S-turns and eights, "chandelles," "lazy eights"—all mostly to learn this footwork. During the war, more men were washed out of primary flight training for "poor co-ordination" than for any other cause: all simply because we try to do by "feel" and muscle what the Wrights did by tying two control-cables to one stick.

18. And that isn't all. Now the pilot found he could swing his nose right or left simply by footwork, without even banking the airplane. He promptly got the idea that this was the way to steer an airplane: steer it like a ship. If you want to go to the left, just push with your left foot and swing your nose to the left.

19. The effect was disastrous; the airplane skidded; often, when a pilot wanted to make a turn, he kicked himself into a spin. The ordinary turn became the most dangerous maneuver in flying—almost every time an airplane fell out of control and crashed, it was in turning flight that the pilot had lost control. As late as 1940 one

could say that pilots, as a group, did not know how to make a turn! And one could back that up with statistical evidence.

20. And even that is not all. Now that the pilot did have this idea of turning steamship-fashion, by rudder (rather than bird-fashion, by banking), he found it even harder to "co-ordinate." The art of flying, which is simple, got itself involved in contradictions. What a pilot *did* and what he *said* he did became two different things. He *did* (if he flew right) just what the Wrights had done: he controlled the turn by banking the airplane; and every time he used his banking control he also used a little by-play of rudder. But he *said*, in the instruction he gave, in the manuals he wrote, that he controlled the turn by rudder. He *said* that at the same time he blended in some bank, just enough to fit the rate of turning and make him sit comfortably in his seat, without sidewise pull. To do this is, logically, about the same as driving a screw into a piece of wood and hammering it in at the same time. You *should* do one; you *can* do the other; but you can't do both. But that's what the books said to do, what the instructors claimed they were showing you. Naturally, "co-ordination" became extra difficult. Actually, the co-ordination between stick and rudder is fairly easy, if you have the Wrights' idea of what the rudder is for. Actually, therefore, flying does not require much co-ordination in the proper sense of the word—accurate control of your own body. It's easier to "co-ordinate" on your rudder pedals than to co-ordinate on clutch, accelerator, gear-shift, and wheel as you set your car in motion. But the poor student was trying to do something by co-ordination that could not be done! Naturally, flying became a mysterious knack. You learned not because of the ideas you had about it, but despite them.

21. By 1935, the airplane with mechanical tie-up between rudder and banking control was re-invented—with important improvements —as a highly foolproof, simple-to-fly airplane. But for years many pilots claimed you couldn't really "fly" it. Or, if you could, you shouldn't. If a fellow didn't have to "co-ordinate" stick and rudder, then why fly at all? That's what flying was all about! Then came the war, and a lot of fresh brains went into flying. By now our understanding of flight is almost back to where the Wrights were circa 1900.

EXERCISES

1. At what point in this explanation does Mr. Langewiesche state the "central or basic principle" of the Wrights' invention?

2. What is the function, in the general explanation, of paragraphs

3–6, which deal with the inventions of Otto Lilienthal and other predecessors of the Wrights?

3. What *stages* in the "research and development" of the Wrights are set forth in paragraphs 7–10? Is this part of the exposition a "process exposition" rather than an "exposition of a mechanism"? (Before answering this question, consider carefully the passage on page 63, beginning "Chronological order can also be used in an explanation of a mechanism or organization.")

4. What is the purpose of the discussion of gliders (paragraph 11)?

5. What is the relative importance in the whole composition of paragraphs 12–16? Would these paragraphs, if not preceded by paragraphs 1–11, suffice to give an adequate explanation of what the Wrights invented?

6. What is the purpose of the discussion contained in paragraphs 17–21?

7. Make a study of the technical terms used in this selection. Is the language too technical for the general reader?

8. Is the writing too colloquial? Too journalistic? Can the author rightfully be accused of trying to make his technical explanation "popular" and "snappy"? Would the explanation be improved if it were written in the manner of Lancaster's "A New England Town"? (See page 74.)

THE ANATOMY OF A LIGHT CRUISER[1]

By C. S. Forester

In H. M. S. *Artemis* a high proportion of the brains of the ship was massed together on the bridge: Captain and Torpedo Officer, Navigating Lieutenant and Officer of the Watch, Asdic cabinet and signalmen. They stood there unprotected even from the weather, nothing over their heads, and, less than shoulder-high around them, only the thin plating which served merely to keep out the seas when the ship was taking in green water over her bows. Death could strike unhindered anywhere on that bridge; but then death could strike anywhere in the whole ship, for the plating of which she was constructed was hardly thicker than paper. Even a machine-gun bullet could penetrate if it struck square. The brains might as well be exposed on the bridge as anywhere else—even the imposing-looking

[1]From *The Ship*, by C. S. Forester. Copyright, 1943, by C. S. Forester. Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown & Co.

turrets which housed the six-inch guns served no better purpose than to keep out the rain. The ship was an eggshell armed with sledge-hammers, and her mission in life was to give without receiving.

Was it Voltaire who said that first? No, it was Molière, of course. Paymaster Sub-Lieutenant James Jerningham, the Captain's secretary, was sometimes able to project himself out of the ship and look down on the whole organization objectively. It was he who was thinking about Voltaire and Molière as he squatted on the deck of the bridge eating his sandwich. Even after three years in the Navy he still had not learned to spend several hours consecutively on his feet the way these others did—they had learned the trick young (for that matter, save for the Captain he was at twenty-seven the oldest officer on the bridge) and could stand all day long without fatigue. In the delirious days before the war he had written advertising copy, spending most of his time with his heels on his desk, and to this day he felt really comfortable only with his feet higher than his head.

One way of thinking of the ship was as of some huge marine animal. Here on the bridge was the animal's brain, and radiating from it ran the nerves—the telephones and voice tubes—which carried the brain's decisions to the parts which were to execute them. The engine-room formed the muscles which actuated the tail—the propellers; and the guns were the teeth and claws of the animal. Up in the crow's nest above, and all round the bridge where the look-outs sat raking sea and sky with their binoculars, were the animal's eyes, seeking everywhere for enemies or prey, while the signal flags and the wireless transmitters were the animal's voice, with which it could cry a warning to its fellows or scream for help.

It was a nice conceit, all this; Jerningham summoned up all his knowledge of anatomy and physiology (he had spent hours with a medical dictionary when he wrote advertising copy for patent medicines) to continue it in greater detail. The ratings, detailed as telephone numbers on the bridge and scattered through the ship, with their instruments over their ears, were the ganglia which acted as relay stations in the animal's nervous system. The rating who had just brought him his sandwich was like the blood vessel which carried food material from the galley—stomach and liver in one—to the unimportant part of the brain which he represented, to enable it to recuperate from fatigue and continue its functions.

The lower animals had important parts of their nervous systems dotted along their spinal cords—large expansions in the dorsal and lumbar regions to control the limbs. The Chief Engineer down in the engine-room would represent the lumbar expansion; the Gunnery

Lieutenant in the Director Control Tower would be the dorsal expansion—the one managing the hind limbs with which the animal swam, and the other the fore limbs with which it fought. Even if the brain were to be destroyed the animal would still move and fight for a time, just as a headless chicken runs round the yard; and, like the very lowest animals, like the earthworm or the hydra, if the head were cut off it could painfully grow itself a new one if given time—the Commander could come forward from his station aft and take command, the Torpedo Gunner take the place of the Torpedo Lieutenant. And, presumably, young Clare would come forward to take his place if he, Jerningham, were killed.

Jerningham shuddered suddenly, and, hoping that no one had noticed it, he pulled out a cigarette and lit it so as to disguise his feelings. . . .[1]

He got onto his feet—he, who never stood when he could sit—because he simply could not remain physically quiescent while emotion banked up inside him. A buzz from the voice tube behind him made him swing round, and he took the message.

"Masthead reports smoke, green one-nine," he sang out, his voice harsh and unwavering, as it would have been if it had been Dora Darby he had been addressing.

"Very good," said the Captain. "Chief Yeoman, make that to the flagship."

EXERCISES

C. S. Forester's *The Ship,* from which the preceding selection is taken, is the story—rendered in fictional terms—of a naval action in the Mediterranean during World War II—an action in which the light cruiser *Artemis* (a fictional name) takes a leading part. This selection, taken from Chaper III, sets forth the basic organization of a modern warship.

1. Is a central principle of organization anywhere stated or implied?

2. What function does Paymaster Jerningham serve in Mr. Forester's explanation of the organization?

3. What device does Mr. Forester use for "aiding visualization" (see p. 65)? Is this device used with skill and success? If you think a more matter-of-fact method would be more effective than the

[1]The omitted passage—important in the general narrative, but not essential to the exposition here presented—deals with Paymaster Jerningham's rueful meditation about Dora Darby, who has just jilted him.

method used, try writing an explanation in which you use Mr. Forester's subject matter, without resorting to the particular device he has here employed.

THE NEW ENGLAND TOWN[1]

By Lane W. Lancaster

With the exception of Northern Maine and a comparatively few incorporated cities where there are only vestiges of town government, the entire territory of the six New England states is divided into towns. According to Professor Anderson's enumeration there are in these states 1464 of these units. The New England town differs from the township as an *area* of government in being considerably smaller and in being irregular in shape. Originally it was more or less co-extensive with the parish and might be looked upon as the political aspect of the early religious congregations. In the beginning the town consisted of a compact settlement which grew up around the town hall, the church, and a fort or stockade, plus the outlying fields of the inhabitants. As time went on and the need for protection grew less, the population extended beyond the village center into a number of more or less distinct communities. In some cases the people in these new centers were dissenters from the original church and moved out when their doctrinal differences were no longer to be tolerated by the majority. Thus, for example, the original three towns of Connecticut grew by division or by migration until they now number 169. In population these towns show great variations, the largest one being in Massachusetts with 47,490 inhabitants, the smallest one in Vermont with a population of seven. The median population varies from 599 in Maine towns to 3967 in Rhode Island. In area the town is considerably smaller than the middle-western township, most towns containing between twenty-five and thirty square miles as compared with an average of forty-four in Michigan, thirty-four in Indiana, and fifty-one in Kansas. Again, whereas the middle-western township west of Pennsylvania is normally an area of six miles square, the New England town is irregular in shape, following natural features of the landscape or conforming to what were originally "natural" community areas.

[1]From *Government in Rural America,* by Lane W. Lancaster, 1937. Reprinted by permission of the publisher, D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc.

In the states of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island a great many of the towns are thickly populated areas, and though many do not have municipal charters, they are empowered by statute to perform the functions generally performed by cities elsewhere. In northern New England, however, the town is primarily a rural area, though in nearly all cases there is a village center for whose inhabitants the town government performs services usually required by small municipalities. In such sections, however, the thing which gives the town its distinctive character is the fact that the village center is not separately incorporated, as is usually the case farther west, but continues as part of the town. The New England town, then, is an area containing both rural and urban territory.

The county has had only a slight development in New England, and for that reason the towns perform many of the functions which elsewhere belong to the county. This makes them a very vital factor in the system of local government in those states. Not only is this true, but the town, being an ancient unit with a stable population and a long history, has entered far more deeply into the popular consciousness than is the case with the western township. Moreover, the town is usually the product of an actual growth, not the result of the surveyor's calculations. While the town organization may exist very largely to perform services for the village center, the unity of the community is preserved by considering both village and country as parts of the same whole.

The original government of the New England town was a pure democracy. The ultimate and actual working sovereignty—under the law of the state—was vested in the body of adult male citizens in town meeting. Here the needs of the town were debated and voted on, the budget was adopted and taxes levied, and the administrative officers were elected and their work passed in review before the voters. The annual town meeting was a social as well as a political event. It was the occasion for "visiting" and making merry, as well as for debating and voting, and was itself the occasion for much shrewd comment by local "characters" who enlivened its sessions. A great deal of praise has been heaped upon it, and much of it has been deserved. It inculcated a sense for public affairs in ten generations of citizens; it gave thousands of men a valuable training by affording them the opportunity to rule as well as to be ruled; and it nourished a feeling of patriotism for the town which, though it might be regarded as merely parochial, was nevertheless a stabilizing force of great social value.

The functions of the town were the immediate responsibility of

the selectmen, of whom there were usually three, and a long list of minor functionaries. These were chosen at the town meeting, and the tendency was to limit terms to a single year, though re-election was permitted and was in fact common. In practice, town affairs were managed almost entirely by selectmen and the town clerk. The selectmen constituted an administrative board in general charge of the town business, subject to the directions of the annual meeting, with power to appoint certain officials not chosen by popular election, and with general supervisory authority over such town functions as were not committed to other officials. They prepared and published the warrant which served as the agenda for the town meeting, prepared the budget of proposed expenditures, acted as agents of the town in the incurring of debt, admitted persons to voting rights, exercised general oversight over the care of highways and the relief of the poor, and generally managed the town in the intervals between meetings.

In many ways the clerk was the most important town official. He was also chosen annually but was commonly re-elected year after year so that in many towns he became a sort of permanent undersecretary for all the town departments. He performed not only the routine secretarial duties in connection with the town meeting and the meetings of the board of selectmen, but was also the keeper of a bewildering variety of records. In his office land titles and mortgages were recorded, marriage and other licenses were issued: he kept and revised the list of voters, arranged for such matters as the town printing, the posting of legal notices, the custody of official bonds, the acknowledging of oaths, and the attesting of documents. He conducted the official correspondence of the town, represented it in its contacts with the state government, and acted as the official auctioneer in the disposal of property seized for non-payment of taxes. In short, from many points of view the town clerk overshadowed all other town functionaries, being more important in the eyes of the townsfolk than even the selectmen. This was due largely to the fact that he tended to be the only permanent official in the town. Even today there are numerous cases on record of clerks who have served twenty, thirty, or even forty years, and there are a few cases in which father and son between them have held the office for nearly a century. Having a command of the town business far more extensive than that of any other official, he tended to become the living repository of the town's governmental tradition, the unofficial historian and genealogist of the community, father confessor to the general public, and keeper of the selectmen's conscience.

A description of the governmental machinery of the New England town does very little to indicate its importance in our political history. The traditional apparatus of town government can today be seen in comparatively few out-of-the-way places; its spirit is basic to an understanding of many things in American government and politics. For the distinctive thing about the New England town was that it was a community. The towns were originally settlements of neighbors and co-religionists whose contacts were frequent and face to face. The town meeting which Jefferson praised so highly was but an adaptation to the civil concerns of such a community of a device long familiar in the conduct of church business. Much learning has been spent in trying to prove various ingenious theories as to town origins. Scholars have feigned to see in the governmental arrangements of the original towns the logical working out of precedents established by the Teutonic tribes of medieval Germany; some have attributed the genius for local self-government to qualities somehow inherent in the "Aryan" branch of the race. A better judgment seems to be that of Channing to the effect that "the exact form that local institutions in the English colonies assumed was due far less to Teutonic and Aryan precedents than to local economic conditions, previous political experience, and the form of church government and land systems that was found expedient." The New England settlers, faced by hostile natives, an ungracious climate, and a stubborn soil, evolved a system of small and compact settlements. The soil would not support a large population, and personal safety demanded village life. Moreover, the form of church government, under which the individual congregation was largely independent of any authoritarian control imposed from above, was naturally adapted to the secular affairs of the community. Town government grew very naturally out of such a set of conditions.

EXERCISES

1. To what extent does Mr. Lancaster rely upon the "historical approach" referred to on page 64? Is this the same thing as proceeding from cause to effect?

2. What is the difference between "town" (in the New England sense) and "western township"? Is this difference important to the explanation?

3. What are the *essential* features of a New England town? Where does the author discuss them? Can they be reduced to a single fundamental principle of organization?

4. Compare this selection with Langewiesche's "What the Wrights Really Invented" in respect to choice of language, organization of paragraphs, general tone. How do you account for any differences?

Suggestions for Themes

1. Write an explanation of a mechanism. A list of suggestions is given below. Be sure that you understand the central principle, essential parts, and method of operation of the mechanism that you choose to explain.

Electric refrigerator
Upright piano
Rifle
Electric mixer (for kitchen use)
Jet airplane
"Power" lawn mower
Hay loader
Sewing machine
Milking machine
Hair drier
Radio set (for receiving)
Radio set (for sending)
"Walkie-talkie"
Steam crane

2. Look up the history of some notable invention and write an explanation in which you follow the style and procedure used by Langewiesche in "What the Wrights Really Invented." For example: the steam engine; the cotton gin; the steamboat; the telegraph.

3. Explain some governmental organization, using the style and method followed by Lancaster in "The New England Town." For example: the United States Treasury; the "county court" (of certain Southern states); the Port of New York Authority; the Highway Department (of any state); the Police Department (of any city or town).

4. State the central principle of one of the following organizations and write an expository theme in which you use this central principle as the unifying element in your composition:

A modern dairy farm
A college fraternity
A "motor court"
An "automobile club" (of the AAA)
The Phi Beta Kappa Society
The delivery department of a large city store
A "dude ranch"
A train crew
A railroad "section gang"
The Community Chest
A department of a modern hospital
The "city room" of a modern newspaper
A religious order
An auxiliary organization of a church
A tourist bureau

5. Explain some organism or natural organization. Use the same principles of composition that you applied to mechanisms and organizations, but remember that you are dealing with vital objects, not machines or logically organized groups. Possible subjects are—

The heart, lungs, eyes, or ears

Marine creatures—such as lobster, shrimp, whale, seal, shark, octopus

Societies of insects or animals—such as the ant-hill, the beehive, the beaver community, a flock of crows

The structure of a flower, a plant, or tree

PROJECT 3. PEOPLE

Thomas Carlyle contended, in his *Heroes and Hero Worship*, that all history is but the biography of great men. In more recent times our historians have seemed to argue the contrary. They have written of how history makes men rather than of how men make history. Yet history, like conversation, seems to begin and end with talk of men and women rather than of mere things. Even in the daily newspaper names make news. The human subject is the most absorbing of all subjects, and a course in composition would be a queer kind of tomfoolery if it stayed away very long from the big people and little people who provoke our curiosity by behaving like human beings.

In writing about people we may use either of two approaches: (1) we may treat the person as an *individual* with such marked peculiarity or distinction as to stand out from other individuals; or (2) we may consider the person a *type*, representative of a place, a time, a tradition, a fashion, a race, a profession. Queen Elizabeth stands out as an individual among monarchs, Audubon among naturalists, the eccentric Rube Waddell among baseball pitchers, John Paul Jones among naval heroes, and so on. Such individuals are distinguished by certain odd or highly developed traits of character. On the other hand Sinclair Lewis' famous creation, George F. Babbitt, is a type. He is thought to embody the ways of the typical business-man. Sinclair Lewis' portrait may or may not do justice to the business-man; it is a good enough likeness to have made the name "Babbitt" a catch-word. It is easy to think of familiar American types: the frontiersman, the Yankee farmer, the Puritan, the cowboy, the Southern planter, the mountaineer, the Negro, the Irishman, the Swede, the flapper of the nineteen-twenties, the Hollywood movie star, the

radio announcer. Exaggerated and made humorous, these types often appear as stereotypes or caricatures: there is a typical stage Irishman, a stage Westerner and Southerner, a stage villain, soubrette, and juvenile leading man in melodramas, and there are the characters of the comic strips. They fit a known pattern; they embody traits common to individuals of the type concerned.

Often enough, of course, the person may be a type and yet be also a striking individual. Both Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln were frontiersmen, in many ways typical frontiersmen; but they were different in their individual traits. Daniel Webster and Ralph Waldo Emerson were both New Englanders; yet as individuals they seem nearly opposite. Every person is a combination of typical and individual traits. A written interpretation of a character will emphasize either one side or the other of the combination, depending on the point of view.

If the subject of the composition is an individual, the problem of the writer is to decide upon the distinguishing traits of character and then to bring these out by giving close attention to supporting details. Robert Louis Stevenson, in writing of Samuel Pepys, finds that one of Pepys' chief traits was his capacity for being interested in a great number of things. Stevenson not only mentions Pepys' "insatiable curiosity," but gives immediately the specific details which support the general statement at the beginning of the paragraph:

The whole world, town or country, was to Pepys a garden of Armida. Wherever he went, his steps were winged with the most eager expectations; whatever he did, it was done with the most lively pleasure. An insatiable curiosity in all the shows of the world and all the secrets of knowledge, filled him brimful of the longing to travel, and supported him in the toils of study. Rome was the dream of his life; he was never happier than when he read or talked of the Eternal City. When in Holland he was "with child" to see any strange thing. Meeting some friends and singing with them in a palace near the Hague, his pen fails to express his passion of delight "the more so because in a heaven of pleasure and in a strange country." He must go to see all famous executions. He must needs visit the body of a murdered man, defaced "with a broad wound," he says, "that makes my hand now shake to write of it." He learned to dance, and was "like to make a dancer." He learned to sing, and walked about Gray's Inn Fields "humming to myself (which is now my constant practice) the trillo." . . . He was a member of Harrington's

Club till its dissolution, and of the Royal Society before it had received the name. Boyle's *Hydrostatics* was "of infinite delight" to him, walking in Barnes Elms. We find him comparing Bible concordances, a captious judge of sermons, deep in Descartes and Aristotle. We find him, in a single year, studying timber and the measurement of timber; tar and oil, hemp, and the process of preparing cordage; mathematics and accounting; the hull and rigging of ships from a model; and "looking and improving himself of the (naval) stores with"—hark to the fellow!—"great delight."[1]

It is necessary that each distinguishing trait be exemplified by supporting details. These details must be concrete. High-sounding generalizations, rhetorical flourishes, polite catchwords, loud eulogies, or vehement denunciations—these will not do. The concrete details are the facts, the really significant part of the character study.

Detail is so important that it is often good strategy to begin a character study with a description of personal appearance. Froude's study of Julius Cæsar begins as follows:

In person Cæesar was tall and slight. His features were more refined than was usual in Roman faces; the forehead was wide and high, the nose large and thin, lips full, the eyes dark gray like an eagle's, the neck extremely thin and sinewy. His complexion was pale. His beard and moustache were kept carefully shaved. His hair was short and naturally scanty, falling off toward the end of his life and leaving him partially bald. His voice, especially when he spoke in public, was high and shrill. His health was uniformly strong until his last year, when he became subject to epileptic fits.[2]

Froude follows this description with a discussion of Cæsar's personal habits and then goes on to discuss his qualities as statesman and soldier. At every point Froude supports his general statements with examples of Cæsar's personal valor, or his devotion to his subordinates, or his genuine patriotism.

The descriptive beginning gives the reader a "thumb-nail portrait" which he can carry in his mind while reading the character analysis which follows. This analysis will generally fall into obvious subdivisions. Froude discusses, for example, Cæsar's ability as a politician, his genius as a soldier, his aims as a statesman, and his accomplishments as an orator and a man of letters. The initial

[1]*Familiar Studies of Men and Books,* Charles Scribner's Sons.
[2]James Anthony Froude, *Cæsar: A Sketch.*

personal description must be kept within proportionate limits. And it must be vivid—it must set forth the real individual.

If the subject is a type, the problem of organization is easier. Center on the qualities of the type and minimize the individual qualities. Again, it is necessary to give supporting details to make the portrait clear and interesting.

There are several possible ways of writing a study of a type:

1. Sum up the type in a single statement which you can expand. In discussing the average attendant at a filling station, you might begin thus:

In off-hours he may be a human individual, as irregular and unpredictable (and perhaps as impudent) as any other contrary American. But at his glittering pump, lettered uniform on his back, wiping-rag in hand, he is a polite robot, a walking tool of quick service that talks by formula and moves as if animated by a push-button.

The sketch of the filling-station attendant would then show just how the human robot performs, what formulas he uses, what typical actions are forced upon him by the routine of his work.

2. Begin the discussion with a statement of wrong conceptions which you intend to refute. Thus, in discussing the Puritans, Macaulay warns his readers not to be misled by the "potent ridicule" long directed at the Puritan party in England. After this warning, he states his theme in the following sentence:

Those who roused the people to resistance, who directed their measures through a long series of eventful years, who formed, out of the most unpromising materials, the finest army that Europe had ever seen, who trampled down King, Church, and Aristocracy, who, in the short intervals of domestic sedition and rebellion, made the name of England terrible to every nation on the face of the earth, *were no vulgar fanatics.*[1]

The rest of the essay answers the question: If the Puritans were not vulgar fanatics, then what were they?

3. The type may be shown in association with the background, habitat, cause that makes him typical. The typical shopgirl is best revealed at the ribbon counter (though the writer may wish to

[1]Thomas Babington Macaulay, *Essay on Milton.*

portray her, after hours, at the movie or the dance-hall). The backwoodsman naturally is not to be dissociated from his cabin in the clearing, or the businessman from his desk, his luncheon club, his golf. This method is particularly valuable for the treatment of regional American types: the Vermont farmer of the East, the lumberjack of the Northwest, the Indian of the Great Plains or of the Pueblo, the rancher or wheat farmer of the Great West, the plantation owner of the Deep South. But the same method can also be used for historical figures. Napoleon Bonaparte, so far as he may be considered a type, may be studied against the background of the French Revolution; William Jennings Bryan, against the background of the Middle West of the eighteen-nineties, when Populism set the prairies afire. General Robert E. Lee may be studied as a product of Virginia.

4. The type may be revealed dramatically by putting an individual into action. Such a character sketch may begin with an illustrative incident or anecdote. If you are dealing with Calvin Coolidge as a typical New Englander, you may begin with one of the "Coolidge jokes" circulated during his Presidential administration. For example, there is the story of a man who had bet that President Coolidge could be persuaded to say more than two words at a time. The man sat next to Coolidge at a dinner and told the President about his bet. "You lose," said Coolidge.

In "Brother Jonathan and Cousin Roderick," reprinted in this section, the two representatives of New England and the Deep South are shown in their daily occupations. They speak their characteristic opinions; they give characteristic views of life. Such character sketches are close to narration. Perhaps they are distinguished from true narration only by their purpose, which is to emphasize typical qualities rather than to tell a story for its own sake.

MARY CHERRY[1]

By Stark Young

The mention of Miss Mary Cherry always reminds me of a silver mug. The only possession that she had in the world, apart from her personal effects, was this silver mug, and she used to bequeath it to

[1]From "The Firm Foundation" in *Heaven Trees*, by Stark Young, pp. 229–241. Copyright, 1926, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

various persons one after the other as her pleasure or displeasure varied among them. She used to make her will several times a year, and the mug naturally held the chief place in each of these documents. Of the chances for pleasure and displeasure she had many, because of her constant visiting from house to house; and the people who had been her heirs, at one time or another, were scattered all over the county.

She had a nephew somewhere in Tennessee, the rector of some small parish, I have heard, whom she visited for a month or so every few years, and held out haughtily as an estate to which she would retire if our part of the world grew unsatisfactory. To him, indeed, many years later, when on-coming generations were less hospitable perhaps or less congenial or less able, under new conditions, to care for an old lady through weeks and months, she went, and under his roof very likely she died, but I know very little of all that. He, I suppose, was the final beneficiary of the silver mug.

Miss Mary Cherry had a theory that the world owed her a living; she used to say as much often. "The world owes me a living," she said. When she was abroad she used to go into the shops, in Memphis mostly, and demand what she happened to need at the time. "I am Mary Cherry," she used to say; "I want a good black cloak." In another shop she would ask to see the proprietor and say that she was Mary Cherry and wanted a pair of good shoes. She was nearly always obliged; so that after all, despite people's astonishment—and there must have been those who were much amazed to have their goods exacted of them in such a fashion—her theory seemed fitted to her state.

On the basis of this same theory of the world and a living for her, Miss Mary Cherry used to invite herself wherever she chose for visits and used to make her stay as long as she chose. She used to arrive at a house dressed in her black silk, riding in a carriage that she had commandeered, and bringing with her her boxes and trunks. She used to stay for a week or a month, as she liked, and then move to some near-by house; or sometimes she lengthened her visits out to the winter. At many of the houses, I believe, she spent whole winters or whole summers, according to her taste. The women in the family sometimes, I think, might have ousted her; they might have screwed up their courage one way or another to rid the house for a time at least of this visitor or discovered some means to discourage her coming. But Miss Mary had some sort of emotional effect upon the men of the family somehow, and through that, doubtless, she worked her will; at any

rate she came and stayed in very many places until she chose of her own sweet will to leave.

She used to establish herself in her room and sometimes used to go so far as to bespeak the room that she had always had; I have known other guests to move their quarters at her coming. She opened all her trunks and bags, boxed the maid's ears, hung up her clothes in the closets and wardrobes, and went down into the kitchen to bake herself the wafers and cakes that she liked to keep in store. My Cousin Lucius used to say that the world might indeed owe Miss Mary a living, but he could never see why a few families should have to do the work of the world. Uncle George used to say that Miss Mary had a philosophy better than the fat of rams and took out whatever annoyances she caused him in stories and arguments at her expense. He used to chuckle and tell us stories out of Miss Mary's life, for there were plenty of them, and he had a rhyme that he would quote of her, which ran

> "When she will, she will, you may depend on't,
> When she won't, she won't and there's an end on't."

Then he would say to me, "Son, Mary Cherry is an old fool."

What she looked like I cannot say. She was doubtless something like a stony landscape, different under different lights, changing with changing moods of time and place. What Miss Mary's features were I do not know. I only know that she was very tall, with a big frame, that she had a craglike forehead, and enjoyed the sight of only one eye, turning her head round in order to see the better; and that she wore a black silk dress or a black bombazine, a cloth whose name well agrees with her warlike qualities, and had one dress of yellow silk with bugles, rarely worn. She had a bonnet that fitted over the crown of her head and tied under her chin. The front of the bonnet rose like a black tiara capped by the spray of wires. On these wires were mounted glittering jet beads that used, I remember, on summer days to be indistinguishable from the flies as she sat in church. She had a tremendous voice—was never trump of half so great a sound, as Uncle George used to say, quoting Chaucer—and she used to sing in church louder and louder and heavier and heavier till she drowned out every one else.

Miss Mary was one of those people who are magnets for events. There were all sorts of stories about the things that happened to her, and the children in the family used to sit and listen to them over and over again. We all grew up with a sort of added glamour in our eyes for Miss Mary Cherry that almost made us forget the

harshness and terror that she had brought with her into our midst when she came to visit. She was one of those people that are born a myth, too typical and too immense for mere private life. She seemed to us to be of the family of Rip Van Winkle or Jack the Giant-Killer or some stupendous and catastrophic prodigy of time.

Thinking of these stories in after-years, I have sometimes felt that in all Miss Mary's incidents she appeared in some relation to the natural world. It appeared to be nature with which she came into conflict and lost or won as the case might be. Only this contest with natural law and the world of physics seemed to hit her stride and to be worthy of her. In it she rose into the mythical dimensions. The loss of her sight in one eye came from no less an agent than the lightning itself. On some visit, at some house or other, she was sitting by the hearth one afternoon when a summer storm was up and the lightning came down the chimney and knocked her eye out. I remember when I was a little boy hearing this story. I used to think my uncle meant that the eye had been knocked clear out of her head and never doubted that some way or other Miss Mary had been able to smack it in again: she could not make it see, however, but that seemed quite excusable, because the eye was a separate character in the story.

In Memphis once, walking along the street, she had been blown by the wind through an iron grating in front of a shop and had broken her leg. And once on the Mississippi River, on her way from Memphis to Natchez, the steamboat sank with a boiler explosion and Miss Mary floated on a bale of cotton for miles and miles with the current and arrived at the port of Vicksburg sitting, Uncle George declared, bolt upright on the cotton bale. "I'll wager," he used to say, "that Mary Cherry arrived bolt upright and ahead like a Roman column. Lightning, the force of gravity, and shipwreck, and flood!"—he said—"Capacity attracts, as they say in Hindu; calamity and Mary Cherry draw naturally together."

Uncle George had one story of Miss Mary in which the natural agent delighted him by being less cosmic and impressive than this wind, water, and fire. She was walking in the garden once, he said, when a little pig got himself under her skirt and began to run round and round inside the hoop. The more she screamed and jumped and kicked about, the higher the pig jumped and the more he squealed. The more he squealed and the higher he jumped, the more Miss Mary yelled and kicked, and so on, he said, *ad infinitum*. . . .

Miss Mary Cherry not only came but she made herself at home.

She called every one in the family "Sister," meaning, of course, sisters in the Lord. It was Sister Betty and Sister Mat and Sister Caroline, who was my mother, and Sister Hester, Sister Eugenia, and so on. She used to take up her room in such a way, I remember, that Heaven Trees seemed, somehow, a house within a house, not divided against but multiplied within itself, a kind of shrine or fortress apartment or something of the kind.

Miss Mary knew a lot of recipes of great repute in the county, for cakes, tea-cakes, Scotch cakes, Shrewsburys, and flap-jacks, which many people in the course of years had tasted at least once. But these recipes Miss Mary guarded jealously as secrets of the temple, and nobody knew a single one of them. When she felt like it, she used to take the keys of the pantry and go out to the kitchen, where she dismissed the servants so that no one should spy on her arts, and make whatever cakes she liked. She took the cakes to her room then and locked them in her wardrobe. She would offer them sometimes to a visitor, but for the most part she ate them when she liked. Sometimes she gave one to each of the children or doled out a cake to a child for waiting upon her or for doing some errand. But for the most part children stayed away from her room because she was always making them do something like cutting out fire-lighters from paper, or pulling out the whiskers on her chin, or even sometimes cutting her nails. At the table, on the other hand, when there was a dish that did not please her, she pushed it away so as not to be obliged to look at it. Sometimes she declined something at the table and sent upstairs for her own box. Or she would say in her great voice: "See here, if chickens are properly smothered you have more crisp." Sometimes she would send dishes from the table even: "Take this back to the kitchen," she would say to the servant, "you've spoiled it." I have seen her often send things so from the table. . . .

People accepted Miss Mary Cherry and all of these doings of hers somehow, I suppose, as they do the elements. They said, "Miss Mary's coming today," or "Miss Mary's feeling unwell," or "That's Miss Mary singing," or "You'd better not let Miss Mary hear you say that," as we say to each other "It's going to rain, do you think there'll be a storm?" I asked my Uncle George once how Miss Mary managed all this living with people and this high style and domination and staying in houses for forty years where she had no blood claim to be and where she made herself such a burden. "Well, son," my Uncle George said, "she's a lady, you know." I never heard any other explanation.

EXERCISE

"Heaven Trees" is the name—possibly fictional—of a plantation house in the "Delta" region of Mississippi, and Stark Young, dramatic critic, novelist, and essayist, uses it as the title of his novel, *Heaven Trees,* from which the preceding selection is taken. *Heaven Trees* depicts the life of a plantation household during the eighteen-fifties. The narrator, Hugh Stark, is son of a Vermont preacher—who has moved to Mississippi—and of Caroline McGehee, of a Mississippi family that owns a nearby plantation. "Uncle George" Clay is owner of "Heaven Trees," and his wife, "Aunt Martha," also a Vermonter, is sister of the Reverend Stephen Gilbert Stark, father of Hugh. Life at "Heaven Trees" is full of homely and amusing features, as well as of much that is romantic, stirring, and strange. Visitors, of all degrees of kin, and numerous friends, are always coming and going, and there is a story about every one of them. Into the novel, in fact, Stark Young has poured a rich store of reminiscence, much of which, we may be sure, is drawn from knowledge of actual persons. We may suppose that the sketch of Mary Cherry is based upon fact—fact interpreted, however, in the light of a certain attitude toward life that enables the people of "Heaven Trees" to tolerate such an unruly guest as Mary Cherry and that, indeed, forms the real theme of the novel. In *Feliciana,* Stark Young has written: "By the time I was seven I felt myself one of a large clan who loved me. . . . I should have been surprised to hear anything but that we are born to die in some beloved air, and that the life of the affections is what we mean by life."

In studying "Mary Cherry" consider the following questions:

1. Is "Mary Cherry" a portrait of a highly peculiar "individual" or of a "type"? In this connection, consider not only the various oddities that mark Mary Cherry as "different" or even "unique," but also the narrator's view (p. 86): "She was one of those people who are born a myth, too typical and too immense for mere private life."

2. Why does Mr. Young begin his sketch with the account of the silver mug rather than with the description of Mary Cherry's personal appearance (p. 85)?

3. To what extent does Mr. Young present Mary Cherry in terms of *things* to which she has some definite relationship? To what extent in terms of her own theories and opinions? To what extent in terms of what other people think of her? Trace out carefully the order of presentation of these three elements of the portrait and

study their interconnections. At this point it may be well to review what was said earlier (p. 31) concerning natural order and logical order.

4. What is the difference between Mary Cherry's relationship to nature and that of the people who accept her "as they do the elements" (p. 87)? What is the thematic importance of Uncle George's statement (p. 87): "She is a lady, you know"? Why is Uncle George's statement placed at this point rather than elsewhere?

5. Note the simple diction, the easy, unpretentious movement of the prose. To what extent does the effectiveness of the prose depend upon: (a) skillful use of concrete details; (b) a natural, easy, almost colloquial type of sentence structure; (c) figures of speech; (d) choice of a conversational, almost matter-of-fact vocabulary rather than high-flown "literary" terms?

BROTHER JONATHAN AND COUSIN RODERICK[1]

By Donald Davidson

Brother Jonathan lives in Yankeetown—for a place-name is often a "town" in New England, and less often a "ville" or a "burg" as in the South. He is a wizened little chip of a man, with blue eyes and a bald head, and he looks frail enough for any northwest wind to blow away. But there is not a wind on this planet strong enough to blow Brother Jonathan off his mountain farm. If any wind contrived to do so, he would climb right back again in the matter-of-fact way that Robert Frost describes in *Brown's Descent*—he would "bow with grace to natural law, And then go round it on his feet."

Brother Jonathan is past seventy years, and his wife Priscilla is well over sixty, but between them they still manage to do most of the daily work, in house and field, for a two-hundred-acre farm, most of which is in woodland and meadow. Nathaniel, their adopted son, helps some now and then; but Nathaniel, who is carpenter, mechanic, cabinet-maker, mountain guide, and tax-collector combined, is busy putting up the new house into which he and Sophronia, his wife, will soon move—they are building it extra large, to take in summer boarders. Sophronia helps Priscilla as much as she can, but she has her own small children to look after. Later on, Brother Jonathan hopes to get a twelve-year-old boy from the

[1]From *The Attack on Leviathan*, 1938.

orphanage, who will do the chores for his keep. But now, Brother Jonathan must be up at daylight to start the kitchen fire and milk the cows. If it is haying-time, he is out in the meadow early with the mowing-machine, which he has sharpened and greased with his own hands, or repaired at his own smithy if it needs repairing. The mower bumps and clicks through the rough meadow, tossing the little man to and fro as he warily skirts the outcrops of stone that will have to be circled with a scythe to get the last wisp of hay.

Later, he changes the patient old horses from mower to wagon and starts in with a pitchfork. It is a sight to see him navigating the loaded wagon from the upper field to the barn, past jutting boulders and through deep ruts. But his pace is easy; he keeps it up all day without undue perspiration or agony, and after supper cuts his wood and milks his cows again in unruffled calm. He does not seem tired or bored. As he milks, he philosophizes to the listening stranger. Yes, times are not what they were, but a man can get along if he will be careful and honest. Foolish people, of course, never know how to manage. The harm all comes from people of no character that do things without regard to common decency. The stars are shining when he takes the pails of milk into the kitchen. Under the hanging oil lamp he reads the Burlington *Free Press* or the *Pathfinder* until he begins to nod.

All the arrangements on Brother Jonathan's farm are neat and ingenious—the arrangements of a man who has had to depend largely on his own wits and strength. The barn is cleverly arranged in two stories, with a ramp entering the upper story for the convenience of Brother Jonathan and his hay wagons, and running water on the lower story, for the convenience of the animals. One well, near the barn, is operated by a windmill; it supplies the stock. Another well, higher up, supplies the house, for Brother Jonathan has a bathroom in the upper hall and faucets in the kitchen. He has no telephone or electric lights. A man can dig and pipe his own wells, and they are finished; but telephone and electric lights, not being home contrivances, require a never-ending tribute to Mammon. He has his own sawmill and his own workshop, where he can mend things without losing time and money on a trip to the village. His garage, occupied at present by Nathaniel's four-year-old car (which is not being used!), contains a carpenter's bench and a small gas engine rigged to do sawing and turning.

The house is built to economize space and retain heat. For all its modest proportions, it is convenient and comfortable. The kitchen is spacious and well-equipped. The pantry and cellar are stored with

vegetables, fruits, and meats that Priscilla has put up with her own hands. The dining-room, with its long table covered with spotless oil-cloth, is eating-room, living-room, and children's playground combined. Here all gather after supper: the women with their tatting and embroidery; the lively dark-eyed boy from the village, with his home-made fiddle; a summer boarder or two, or a visiting relative; and always Brother Jonathan with his newspaper. In one corner is a reed organ, on which Brother Jonathan occasionally plays hymns. In another corner is a desk, filled with miscellaneous papers, books, and old magazines. On the walls hang a glass frame containing butterflies, the gift of a wandering entomologist; an 1876 engraving of General Washington being welcomed at New York, with the pictures of all the Presidents, up to Hayes, around the border; and a faded photograph of a more youthful Brother Jonathan with his fellow baggage-clerks, taken in the days when he went west and got a job in Chicago. Brother Jonathan talks of Chicago sometimes, but he never reveals why he, unlike many other Yankees, came back to Vermont.

The temper of the household is a subdued and even pleasantness, which the loud alarms and excursions of the world do not penetrate very far. The progress of Nathaniel's new house; the next morning's arrangements for gathering vegetables and canning; what Brother Jonathan shall say in the speech he is to make at the approaching celebration of the Timothys' golden wedding—such topics take precedence over the epic contentions of Mr. Hoover and Mr. Roosevelt. Priscilla may go so far as to marvel that anybody can doubt the goodness of Mr. Hoover. (She does not add, as she well might, that Mr. Roosevelt, as a "Yorker," inherits the distrust of Vermont.) Or Brother Jonathan may warm up to politics enough to announce his everlasting distrust for liquorish Al Smith and to confess that, out of firm disapproval for vice, he has once or twice bolted the Republican ticket and voted for the Prohibition party's candidate. But in the South, he supposes, he would be as good a Democrat as the next one. They are all curious about the South—about Negroes—and whether the Southern people still have hard feelings against the North (on this point they seem a little anxious and plaintive). But the talk soon shifts to the Green Mountain Boys, from one of whom Brother Jonathan is descended, or to stories of his childhood, when bears were as thick as porcupines are now—he tells of how seven bears were once killed in the same tree. In these stories Brother Jonathan may put in a dry quip or two, by way of garnishment. He has a store of homely jokes and

extended metaphors, to which he frequently adds a humorous gloss to be sure the stranger gets the point. Then maybe there is a game of anagrams—or on another evening, a corn-roast, with a few cronies and kinsfolk from the village, who talk the clipped Yankee-talk that seems, to Southern ears, as pure an English as can be, with only a little of the twang that dialect stories have taught one to expect.

Brother Jonathan is not dogmatic to the point of testiness, but he is firmly rationalistic on many points. He declares it incredible, for instance, that Catholics can believe in transubstantiation—how can bread and wine *actually* turn into the blood and body of Jesus Christ? Yet oddly enough, Brother Jonathan is neither Congregationalist nor Unitarian, but Methodist, and does not mind repeating the Apostles' Creed, with its formidable references to the Trinity and the Resurrection. I am led to suspect that it is not the doctrine but the authority to which Brother Jonathan is temperamentally hostile. He is used to depending on himself; he does not like to be told things. And his independence is of a piece with the whole conduct of his life. Years ago, when a famous local character eccentrically bought up all the surrounding woodland and farmland and turned it into a forest reserve which he bequeathed to a neighboring college, Brother Jonathan did not sell out. He held on then, he holds on now, with a possessiveness that would be the despair of Communists. He will continue to hold on, as long as trees yield maple syrup—which he will never, never basely dilute with cane syrup—and boarders return summer after summer.

For Brother Jonathan belongs in spirit to the old republic of independent farmers that Jefferson wanted to see flourish as the foundation of liberty in the United States. To conserve that liberty he has his own Yankee arrangements: the "town," which the Southerner had to learn consisted of a village and a great deal of contiguous territory up to the next "town-line"; and the town meeting, at which Brother Jonathan could stand up and tell the government what he thought about it. Of the uses of town meetings Priscilla has something to say, which comes, I reflect, with a little feminine sauciness. A certain individual, she relates, was criticized for not painting the "community house," as he had been employed to do; and when he excused himself on the ground that paint was lacking, his own wife sprang up in the town meeting and cried: "Don't believe a word he says. That paint's setting in the cellar this minute!"

But the Southerner could reflect that such family intimacy might have civic advantages. Brother Jonathan's local government is composed of nobody more Olympic or corrupt than his own neighbors and relations. For him it is not something off yonder, and he visualizes the national government (though a little too innocently) as simply an enlarged town meeting, where good management ought to be a matter of course. In Yankeetown, good management is a matter of course: it maintains a library, it looks after roads, it sees that taxes are paid and well spent. If the State government does not behave, Nathaniel himself will run for the legislature and see that it does behave.

In all this there was much for a Southerner to savor curiously and learn about—as he savored and learned about the strange food that appeared on Brother Jonathan's table: doughnuts for breakfast, maple syrup on pie and cereal, the boiled dinner, the roasting ears that were really roasted in the old Indian fashion. Just as Brother Jonathan's menu suited the soil and the people, so his tidiness and responsibility suited the unobtrusive integrity of his character. With emphasis, one could say: Vermont is upright, vertical, and even yet, Puritan—why not?

And almost two thousand miles away, with an unconcern about the state of the world that parallels but differs from Brother Jonathan's, Cousin Roderick of Rebelville is achieving another salvation somehow not recorded in the auguries of socialistic planning. Autumn is beginning, the scuppernongs are ripe, and he invites everybody to come over and join him in the scuppernong arbor. In the late afternoon a merry crew gather around the great vine, laughing and bantering as they pick the luscious grapes and crush them against their palates. Sister Caroline is there, with a figure as trim and a wit as lively at eighty as it must have been at twenty. Young Cousin Hector and his wife are there—they are "refugeeing" from the industrial calamity that overtook them in a northern city. And there are numerous other vague cousins and sisters and children, all munching and passing family gossip back and forth between bites. Cousin Roderick's own Dionysian laughter goes up heartiest of all among the leaves, as he moves to and fro, rapidly gathering grapes and pressing them upon the visitors. "Oh, you are not going to quit on us," he says. "You must eat more than *that*. Scuppernongs never hurt a soul." The scuppernong vine, he declares, is a hundred years old and nearly always fruitful. But not so old, never so fruitful, puts in Sister Caroline, as the scuppernong vine at the old place, that as barefoot children they used to clamber over.

Then the meeting is adjourned to Cousin Roderick's great front porch, where one looks out between white columns at sunset clouds piling up into the deep blues and yellows of a Maxfield Parrish sky. Down the long street of Rebelville, between the mighty water oaks set out by Cousin Roderick's kin, after the Confederate War, the cotton wagons are passing, heaped high with the white mass of cotton and a Negro or two atop, and the talk goes on, to the jingle of trace chains and the clop of mule hoofs on the almost brand-new State highway, which is so much better for rubber tires than mule hoofs. Over yonder lives Cousin Roderick's Aunt Cecily, a widow, the single indomitable inhabitant of a stately mansion where economics has not yet prevailed against sentiment. Next door is Uncle Burke Roderick, a Confederate veteran who at ninety still drives his horse and buggy to the plantation each morning; he is the last survivor of three brothers who were named Pitt, Fox, and Burke, after their father's eighteenth-century heroes. All around, indeed, are the Roderick kin, for Cousin Roderick, whose mother married a Bertram, bears the family name of his mother's people, a numerous clan who, by dint of sundry alliances and ancient understanding, attend to whatever little matters need attention in the community affairs of Rebelville, where Jefferson's "least government" principle is a matter of course. Before supper, or after, some of the kinsfolk may drop in, for there is always a vast deal of coming and going and dropping in at Cousin Roderick's.

As he takes his ease on the porch, Cousin Roderick looks to be neither the elegant dandy nor the out-at-elbows dribbler of tobacco juice that partisans have accredited to the Southern tradition. He is a fairly tall, vigorous man, plainly dressed, with the ruddiness of Georgia sun and good living on his face. His eyes are a-wrinkle at the corners, ready to catch the humor of whatever is abroad. His hand fumbles his pipe as he tells one anecdote after another in the country drawl that has about as much of Mark Twain and Sut Lovingood in it as of the elisions and flattenings supposed to belong to Southern patrician speech. In fact, though he is really patrician (as the female members of the family can assure you) he does not look anything like the Old Colonel of legend, and in spirit he, too, belongs to the Jeffersonian constituency. He has some of the bearing of an English squire, and a good deal of the frontier heartiness that Augustus Baldwin Longstreet depicted in *Georgia Scenes*. He assumes that the world is good-humored and friendly until it proves itself otherwise. If it does prove otherwise, there is a glint in his eye that tells you he will fight.

Cousin Roderick is the opposite of Chaucer's Man of Law, who ever seemed busier than he was. Cousin Roderick is busier than he seems. His air of negligence, like his good humor, is a philosophical defense against the dangerous surprises that life may turn up. Really, he is not negligent. He does not work with his own hands, like Brother Jonathan, or his Southern brothers of up-country and bluegrass; but in the past he has worked a-plenty with his hands and knows how it should be done. On his several tracts of land, the gatherings of inheritance and purchase, are some one hundred and fifty Negroes whom he furnishes housing, food, and a little money; they do his labor—men, women, children together —they are his "hands." He is expected to call them by name, to get them out of jail, to doctor them, even sometimes to bury them when their "lodge dues" may have lapsed. They are no longer his slaves; but though they do not now utter the word, they do not allow him to forget that he has the old obligations of a master.

As Cousin Roderick makes the "rounds" of his fields—no more on horseback, as of old, but in a battered Chevrolet—he sets forth his notions of economy. As for the depression, that is no new thing in Rebelville. People here have got used to ruination. After the Confederate War came Reconstruction; after Reconstruction, Tom Watson and the Populist turmoil of the 'nineties; a while later, the peach boom, and its collapse; then the Florida boom, with its devastations; and now, this new depression. Like most of his kin, Cousin Roderick has simply retreated into the old plantation economy. He tells how, when he was a young fellow, just beginning to take charge, his father came out to the plantation one day and asked for a ham. Cousin Roderick explained that hogs were up to a good price; he had sold the entire lot, on the hoof, and had good money in the bank. "Sir," said the old man, "let me never again catch you without hams in your smokehouse and corn in your crib. You've got to make this land take care of itself." "And that," says Cousin Roderick, "is what I aim to do." From the land he feeds his own family, the hundred and fifty Negroes, and the stock. Whatever is left, when taxes and upkeep are deducted, is the profit. Anything that grows, he will plant: asparagus, peaches, pecans, onions, peppers, tomatoes, and of course the great staple crops, grain, hay, and cotton. Especially cotton, for no matter how low the price, cotton is money. It is ridiculous, he thinks, to talk of getting people who are hard up for money to reduce cotton acreage. For his part, Cousin Roderick intends to make every bale his land will produce. But if cotton fails, he still can sell cattle,

or cabbage, or timber from his baronial holdings. Land is the only abiding thing, the only assurance of happiness and comfort. He wants more land, not less.

One suspects that Cousin Roderick, however hard-pressed he may be at the bank, is fundamentally right. If he is not right, how does he manage, in these times, to send a daughter to college, and entertain his friends, and keep a cheerful face before the world? The portraits of his ancestors, looking down from their frames above great-grandfather's sideboard or his wife's new grand piano, eternally assure Cousin Roderick that he is right. They won this Eden of sandy earth and red clay, where all things grow with a vigor that neither winter nor drouth can abate. Not soon, not soon will their son give it up.

To the designs of experts who want to plan people's lives for them, Cousin Roderick gives no more than the indulgent attention of a naturally kind-hearted man. He reads the anxious thunderings of the young men who reproduce, in the Macon *Telegraph,* the remote dynamitical poppings of the *New Republic,* and is unmoved; the young men are like the mocking-bird who sat on the cupola of the courthouse while court was in session and so learned to sing: *Prisoner-look-upon-the-jury! Jury-look-upon-the-prisoner!* GUILTY! GUILTY! GUILTY! It is a little incredible that so much planning should need to be done. Don't people know how they want to live? As for politics, long since it became tawdry and uncertain. Politics is for lawyers. Cousin Roderick would no more think of running for the legislature than he would think of moving to China. In that, perhaps, he lamentably differs from his ancestors. But in Rebelville political action is generally no more than a confirmation of what has been talked around among the clans. If you really want things done, you speak quietly to Cousin So-and-So and others that pass the word to everybody that counts. And then something is done.

In Rebelville the politics and economics of the bustling world become a faint whisper. All that matters is to see one's friends and relatives and pass from house to house, from field to field, under Georgia skies; to gather at a simple family dinner where only three kinds of bread and four kinds of meat are flanked by collards, sweet potatoes, corn, pickles, fruits, salads, jams, and cakes; or at a barbecue for fifty or more, for which whole animals are slaughtered and, it would seem, entire pantries and gardens desolated; or to sit with the wise men in front of the store, swapping jokes and telling tales hour after hour; or to hunt for fox, 'possum,

coon, and quail, in swamp and field; or (for the ladies) to attend meetings of U. D. C.'s, D. A. R.'s, and Missionary Societies; or church service, or district conference, or the tender ceremonies of Confederate Memorial Day, or the high-school entertainment; or to hear the voices of Negroes, sifting through the dusk, or the mockingbird in moonlight; or to see the dark pines against sunset, and the old house lifting its columns far away, calling the wanderer home. The scuppernongs are gone, and cotton is picked. But already the pecans are falling. And planting begins again while late roses and chrysanthemums are showing, and, even in the first frosts, the camellias are budding, against their December flowering. What though newspapers be loud, and wars and rumors threaten —it is only an academic buzzing, that one must yet tolerate for manners' sake. Sowing and harvest go together, and summer runs into winter, and in Georgia one is persuaded to take the horizontal view.

EXERCISES

1. In this selection, what are the meaning and the importance of the various names: Brother Jonathan, Cousin Roderick, Yankeetown, Rebelville, Priscilla, Sister Caroline, Uncle Burke? Do the names themselves help in suggesting the types?

2. State the guiding purpose of the selection. What part is played by the phrases "Vermont is upright, vertical" and "the horizontal view" in suggesting the main difference between the Vermont farmer and the Georgia planter?

3. Note that the parallel sketches of Brother Jonathan and Cousin Roderick contain very few general statements. Instead, the concrete details of each paragraph *suggest* or *imply* a general statement which the reader may make for himself. Is this method effective? What are its advantages and disadvantages?

4. Write out, for each paragraph, the general statement which seems to be suggested by the concrete details of that paragraph. For example, the details of the second paragraph imply the following generalization: "All the members of the family take part in the daily work of a New England farm." If you used such sentences as the basis of an essay on the differences between the Vermont farmer and the Georgia planter, how would it differ, in method and effect, from the sketch as it now stands?

5. Study the selection as an example of a parallel treatment of two closely allied subjects. Do the sketches of Brother Jonathan

and Cousin Roderick combine, so as to make one unified composition, or are they really two separate compositions? Does the parallel method help to unify the two sketches?

6. Give the meaning and discuss the effectiveness of the following:
wizened little chip of a man
navigating the loaded wagon
unruffled calm
tribute to Mammon
the loud alarms and excursions of the world
a dry quip or two
not dogmatic to the point of testiness
firmly rationalistic
the old republic of independent farmers
the unobtrusive integrity of his character
not recorded in the auguries of socialistic planning
"refugeeing" from industrial calamity
Dionysian laughter
scuppernong vine
a Maxfield Parrish sky
Jefferson's "least government" principle
out-at-elbows dribbler of tobacco juice
the bearing of an English squire
got used to ruination
this Eden of sandy earth and red clay
anxious thunderings
only an academic buzzing.

BASCOM HAWKE[1]

By Thomas Wolfe

During the first twenty-five years of this century, business people who had their offices in or near State Street, Boston, no doubt grew very familiar with the cadaverous and extraordinary figure of my uncle, Bascom Hawke. Shortly before nine o'clock of every working day he would emerge from a subway exit near the head of the street and pause vaguely for a moment, making a craggy eddy in the tide of issuing workers that foamed swiftly about him while he stood with his enormous bony hands clutched comically before

[1]From *Of Time and the River,* by Thomas Wolfe, Charles Scribner's Sons.

him at the waist, as if holding himself in, at the same time making the most horrible grimaces with his lean and amazingly flexible features. These grimaces were made by squinting his small sharp eyes together, widening his mouth in a ghastly travesty of a grin, and convolving his chin and cheek in a rapid series of pursed lips and horrible squints as he swiftly pressed his rubbery underlip against a few enormous horse teeth that decorated his upper jaw. Having completed these facial evolutions, he glanced quickly and, it must be supposed, blindly, in every direction; for he then plunged heedlessly across the street, sometimes choosing the moment when traffic had been halted, and pedestrians were hurrying across, sometimes diving into the midst of a roaring chaos of motor cars, trucks, and wagons, through which he sometimes made his way in safety, accompanied only by a scream of brake bands, a startled barking of horns, and the hearty curses of frightened drivers, or from which, howling with terror in the center of a web of traffic which he had snarled hopelessly and brought to a complete standstill, he was sometimes rescued by a red-faced and cursing young Irishman who was on point duty at that corner.

But Bascom was a fated man and he escaped. Once, it is true, a bright mindless beetle of machinery, which had no thought for fated men, had knocked him down and skinned and bruised him; again, an uninstructed wheel had passed across the soft-toe-end of his shoe and held him prisoner, as if he were merely some average son of destiny—but he escaped. He escaped because he was a fated man and because the providence which guides the steps of children and the blind was kind to him; and because this same policeman whose simian upper lip had once been thick and twisted with its curses had long since run the scale from anger to wild fury, and thence to madness and despair and resignation, and had now come to have a motherly affection for this stray sheep, kept his eye peeled for its appearance every morning or, failing this, at once shrilled hard upon his whistle when he heard the well-known howl of terror and surprise, plunged to the center of the stalled traffic snarl, plucked Bascom out to safety under curse and shout and scream of brake, and marched him tenderly to the curb, gripping his brawny hand around my uncle's arm, feeling his joints, testing his bones, massaging anxiously his sinewy carcass, and calling him "bud"—although my uncle was old enough to be his grandfather. "Are you all right, bud? You're not hurt, are you, bud? Are you O.K.?"—to which Bascom if his shock and terror had been great, could make no answer for a moment save to pant hoarsely and

to howl loudly and huskily from time to time, "Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow!"

At length, becoming more coherent, if not more calm, he would launch into an ecclesiastical indictment of motor cars and their drivers delivered in a high, howling, and husky voice that suggested the pronouncements of a prophet from a mountain. This voice had a quality of strange remoteness and, once heard, would never be forgotten. It actually had a howling note in it, and carried to great distances, and yet it was not loud: it was very much as if Mr. Bascom Hawke were standing on a mountain and shouting to some one in a quiet valley below—the sounds came to one plainly but as if from a great distance, and it was full of husky, unearthly passion. It was really an ecclesiastical voice, the voice of a great preacher; one felt that it should be heard in churches, which was exactly where it once was heard, for my Uncle Bascom had at various times and with great conviction, in the course of his long and remarkable life, professed and preached the faith of the Episcopalians, the Presbyterians, the Methodists, the Baptists, and the Unitarians.

Quite often, in fact, as now, when he had narrowly escaped disaster in the streets, Bascom Hawke still preached from the corner: as soon as he recovered somewhat from his shock, he would launch forth into a sermon of eloquent invective against any driver of motor cars within hearing, and if any of them entered the fray, as sometimes happened, a very interesting performance occurred.

"What happened to *you?*" the motorist might bitterly remark. "Do the keepers know you're out?"

Mr. Hawke would thereupon retort with an eloquent harangue, beginning with a few well-chosen quotations from the more violent prophets of the Old Testament, a few predictions of death, destruction, and damnation for the owners of motor cars, and a few apt references to Days of Judgment and Reckoning, Chariots of Moloch, and Beasts of the Apocalypse.

"Oh, for God's sake!" the exasperated motorist might reply. "Are you *blind?* Where do you think you are? In a cow-pasture? Can't you read the signals? Didn't you see the cop put his hand up? Don't you know when it says to 'Stop' or 'Go'? Did you ever hear of the traffic law?"

"The *traffic* law!" my Uncle Bascom sneeringly exclaimed, as if the mere use of the word by the motorist evoked his profoundest contempt. His voice now had a precise and meticulous way of speech, there was something sneering and pedantical in the way

he pronounced each word, biting it off with a prim, nasal and heavily accented enunciation in the manner of certain pedants and purists who suggest by their pronunciation that language in the mouths of most people is vilely and carelessly treated, that each word has a precise, subtle, and careful meaning of its own, and that they—*they* alone—understand these matters. "The *traffic* law!" he repeated again: then he squinted his eyes together, pursed his rubbery lip against the big horsy upper teeth, and laughed down his nose in a forced sneering manner. "The *traffic* law!" he said. "Why, you pit-i-ful ig-no-*ram*-us! You il-*lit*-er-ate ruffian! You dare to speak to me—to *me!*" he howled suddenly with an ecclesiastical lift of his voice, striking himself on his bony breast and glaring with a majestical fury as if the word of a mighty prophet had been contradicted by an upstart—"of the traffic law, when it is doubtful if you could *read* the law if you saw it,"—he sneered—"and it is obvious to any one with the perception of a schoolboy that you would not have intelligence enough to understand it, and"—here his voice rose to a howling emphasis and he held one huge bony finger up to command attention—"*and* to interpret it, if you could read."

"Is *that* so!" the motorist heavily remarked. "A *wise* guy, eh? One of these guys who knows it all, eh? You're a *pretty* wise guy, aren't you?" the motorist continued bitterly, as if caught up in the circle of his refrain and unable to change it. "Well, let me tell *you* something. You think you're pretty smaht, don't you? Well, you're not. See? It's wise guys like you who go around looking for a good bust on the nose. See? That's how smaht you are. If you wasn't an old guy I'd give you one, too," he said, getting a moody satisfaction from the thought.

"Ow-w! Ow-w! Ow-w!" Bascom howled in sudden terror.

"If you know so much, if you're so smaht as you think you are, what *is* the traffic law?"

Then, assuredly, if there was a traffic law, the unfortunate motorist was lost, for my Uncle Bascom would deliver it to him verbatim, licking his lips with joy over all the technicalities of legal phrasing and pronouncing each phrase with a meticulous and pedantical enunciation.

"And furthermore!" he howled, holding up his big bony finger, "the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has decreed, by a statute that has been on the books since 1856, by a statute that is irrevocably, inexorably, ineluctably plain that any driver, director, governor, commander, manager, agent or conductor, or any other person who

shall conduct or cause to be conducted any vehicular instrument, whether it be of two, four, six, eight or any number of wheels whatsoever, whether it be in the public service, or in the possession of a private individual, whether it be—" but by this time, the motorist, if he was wise, had had enough, and had escaped.

If, however, it had been one of his more fortunate mornings, if he had blindly but successfully threaded the peril of roaring traffic, my Uncle Bascom proceeded rapidly down State Street, still clutching his raw bony hands across his meager waist, still contorting his remarkable face in its endless series of pursed grimaces, and presently turned in to the entrance of a large somewhat dingy-looking building of blackened stone, one of those solid, unpretending, but very valuable properties which smells and looks like the early 1900's, and which belongs to that ancient and enormously wealthy corporation which lies across the river and is known as Harvard University.

Here, my Uncle Bascom, still clutching himself together across the waist, mounted a flight of indented marble entry steps, lunged through revolving doors into a large marble corridor that was redolent with vibrating waves of hot steamy air, wet rubbers and galoshes, sanitary disinfectant, and serviceable but somewhat old-fashioned elevators, and, entering one of the cars which had just plunged down abruptly, banged open its door, belched out two or three people and swallowed a dozen more, he was finally deposited with the same abruptness on the seventh floor, where he stepped out into a wide dark corridor, squinted and grimaced uncertainly to right and left as he had done for twenty-five years, and then went left along the corridor, past rows of lighted offices in which one could hear the preliminary clicking of typewriters, the rattling of crisp papers, and the sounds of people beginning their day's work. At the end of the corridor Bascom Hawke turned right along another corridor and at length paused before a door which bore this inscription across the familiar glazed glass of American business offices: The John T. Brill Realty Co.—Houses For Rent or Sale. Below this bold legend in much smaller letters was printed: Bascom Hawke—Att'y at Law—Conveyancer and Title Expert.

EXERCISES

1. What is the reason for partially withholding the identity of Bascom Hawke until the last sentence of the last paragraph? Are any clues to his identity suggested in the course of the article?

2. Discuss the effectiveness of the introduction of Bascom Hawke in paragraph 1. Is the first picture of him dramatic? Does it suggest details that follow to fill in the portrait? Is there any reason for assigning him to a definite time and place?

3. What is the topic sentence of paragraph 2? Show how the idea of an overhanging fate unifies this paragraph. What is the reason for introducing direct quotation?

4. Show how, following upon the idea of a guiding fate, phrases suggest Bascom Hawke's "ecclesiastical indictment." List phrases from paragraph 3 and following, that harmonize with this idea.

5. In the next section of the portrait, how is Bascom Hawke's "precise and meticulous way of speech" emphasized?

6. Discuss narration as a method of explaining this individual. How does the prolongation of Bascom Hawke's trip to his office emphasize to the reader the importance of the destination? How do the various incidents along the way help to explain his character?

7. Note instances of comparison, both implied and expressed, that help lift this selection from the level of the factual.

8. Discuss the effectiveness of the following phrases:

cadaverous and extraordinary figure
a ghastly travesty of a grin
convolving his chin
rubbery underlip
facial evolutions
scream of brake bands
a bright mindless beetle of machinery
simian upper lip
a quality of strange remoteness
a sermon of eloquent invective
Chariots of Moloch
Beasts of the Apocalypse
evoked his profoundest contempt
irrevocably, inexorably, ineluctably
pursed grimaces
redolent with vibrating waves

LINCOLN AS A TYPE OF THE BACKWOODS HERO[1]

By Dixon Wecter

Lincoln's boyhood is rich in legends dear to America. He made possible the final romanticism of the log cabin—though some said he was great because of his background, while others believe he was great in spite of it. Certainly, from a soil of poverty on the

[1]From *The Hero in America*, by Dixon Wecter, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941.

prairies of Indiana and Illinois sprang his fierce ambition, his lack of conventional dignity, his sympathy for the common man, his humility which blended with a sturdy and serene self-confidence. But thousands of other lads, from the same environment, failed to be Lincolns. This paradox is one which never fails to fascinate the people. Lincoln himself was too good a politician not to make some use of his origins. In Springfield, after hearing his political rival Colonel Dick Taylor praise the plain people. Lincoln stepped to Taylor's side and opened the Colonel's coat to reveal a ruffled shirt and gold seals. Then, it was said, Lincoln made his own speech, recalling his boyhood and flatboat days and his single pair of buckskin breeches which shrank in time till "they left a blue streak around my legs that can be seen to this day." This was an *argumentum ad hominem* that surpassed logic. Later, in 1860, when Lincoln's name was coming before the whole country, one of his politically wise friends, Richard Oglesby, had gone out to the old homestead and looked up John Hanks. He asked "what kind of work 'Abe' used to be good at." After scratching his head, Hanks replied, "Well, not much of any kind but dreaming, but he did help me split a lot of rails when we made the clearing twelve miles west of here." Hanks was then persuaded to carry two rails from the old fence into the Illinois State Republican Convention. They bore the punning slogan—

ABRAHAM LINCOLN
THE RAIL CANDIDATE
FOR PRESIDENT IN 1860

Lincoln characteristically refused to guarantee that he had split these identical rails, but said he had cut many like them, or better. The rails did more than symbolize the self-made pioneer. As a warm Lincoln delegate wrote, they "were to represent the issue of the coming contest between labor free and labor slave, between democracy and aristocracy." They confirmed, for all time, one aspect of his legend. The humorist Orpheus C. Kerr, during the Civil War, reported that "when Abe was an infant of sixteen, he split so many rails that his whole county looked like a wholesale lumberyard." This was the Paul Bunyan touch, the true epic flavor. Later, after Lincoln's death, old John Hanks toured the country in "the Original Lincoln Cabin" built in Illinois in 1830, charging twenty-five cents admission for adults and ten for children, and advertising he would "answer such questions as may be propounded to him."

Boyhood stories were told by simple folk who enjoyed the fame of having known Lincoln. If their memories were dim, their ideas in the main were strictly conventional. Through the mist of forty or fifty years they recalled that Abe was never late to school—in itself a modest record, in view of Dennis Hanks's testimony that Lincoln had only six months' schooling in Indiana. He was "very quiet during playtime, never was rude," and "noted for keeping his clothes clean." Like other heroes in minority, he was a great peacemaker and the scourge of bullies. He never drank, chewed, or smoked. He never swore—an aspect of the Lincoln legend which was sometimes carried to extremes. David Homer Bates, a former telegraph operator in the War Department, in 1926 published a book stressing the President's moral perfection. "'By jinks,' Lincoln exclaimed one day, under pressure, in the telegraph office. Almost instantly he looked self-accused and apologetic. To the suggestion that 'by jinks' was not swearing, he replied that, according to what his mother told him when a child, it was *swearing* and wrong."

Dennis Hanks boasted about their common skill in shooting squirrels, and told how "Abe was tickled to death" when he shot a fawn. But others related how young Lincoln's tender heart made hunting and fishing distasteful. He could not bear the sight of rabbit blood, it was said, and kept cruel playmates from putting hot coals on a mud-turtle's back. Yet a more celebrated story told how Lincoln had proposed to his fellows that they sew up the eyelids of a drove of hogs that rebelled at being driven aboard the flatboat for New Orleans. Generations of Illinois farmers, sitting before the stove in crossroads stores, liked to argue about Abe's theory—whether a hog could be handled better with his eyes sewed shut. One version says Lincoln refused to do the sewing, but held the animals for this operation. Another, that he justified the act by saying—with the psychology of a wartime President: "In a battle with wild hogs we must use war tactics." Beveridge, most painstaking biorapher of Lincoln's youth, rejects the story solely because of Lincoln's proverbial kindness to animals. A latter-day volume is called *Dogs Were Ever a Joy to Lincoln,* but the most trustworthy evidence shows Lincoln's great fondness for cats. He owned many throughout his life, and petted kittens wherever he saw them. He too was self-sufficient, and he walked alone.

Lincoln's life fulfills well enough his political nickname of "Honest Abe," which plain people have always liked. But two famous stories—how as a shopkeeper he walked several miles to

return a few cents' overcharge, and how he closed shop to set right the short-weight of a quarter pound of tea—are sheer invention. Not even local memory supports them. But tales of Lincoln's long walks to borrow books are well attested. "My best friend is the man who'll get me a book I ain't read," he said. Fable shows him studying before the open fire, despite his stepmother's recollection that he "didn't [read] after night much, went to bed early, got up early and then read." Art and cinema picture him in a variety of uncomfortable postures, head resting on a log or feet propped high against a tree trunk, perhaps leaning upon a shock of fodder or stretched on the counter of Offutt's store, with book in hand. Surely, by the meager standards of his community, Lincoln had a vast appetite for books: surveying, law, poetry, history, biography. Such a passion was then less typical of the prairies than of New England, with her learned blacksmiths and philosophical peddlers. It was Lincoln's good luck to best the Yankees at their own game of self-help, and become the great idol of that cult. As a remote example, some fifteen years ago the America-Japan Society offered prizes for essays on Lincoln by Japanese students; these compositions, in many styles and moods, had one common denominator, namely that Lincoln was a poor boy who became the greatest man in his country. The most extreme instance of Lincoln as the epitome of self-help is reported to the author by Professor Helen White of the University of Wisconsin. "Abraham Lincoln," wrote one of her freshmen, "was born in a log cabin which he built with his own hands."

Young Lincoln's most celebrated borrowing of a book was from his neighbor Josiah Crawford. It was Weems's life of Washington, which the boy left in the rain, but promptly confessed the damage and pulled fodder to pay for it. Folklore has fondly embraced the incident as a parallel of the cherry-tree story in the volume itself. At crucial times Lincoln often thought of George Washington, invoking the God of Washington for guidance, in the new President's farewell words to his Springfield neighbors, and a few days later reminiscing about Weems's book before the New Jersey Senate. Upon the eve of the great storm, the thoughts of Lincoln in the North and of Lee in the South ran much upon the supreme patriot-hero of America. To the former, nourished upon Weems and Ramsay and Grimshaw, Washington stood forth as the champion of democratic liberty. To the latter, breathing the air of Arlington and living among the Custis clan, Washington was par excellence the soldier aristocrat of his beloved Virginia.

The deductions which these two men drew, therefore, were different.

Tradition has much more to say about the mental industry of young Lincoln than about his physical laziness. The sympathetic Dennis Hanks admitted that Lincoln "was lazy—a very lazy man. He was always reading, scribbling, ciphering, writing poetry." One John Romine, who hired the stalwart lad to work for him, testified: "He would laugh and talk—crack jokes and tell stories all the time; didn't love work but did dearly love his pay. . . . Lincoln said to me one day that his father taught him to work, but never learned him to love it." In a communal life of much toil and little bookishness, Lincoln's vagaries were probably exaggerated. But at any rate, his indolence of body, like his state of being chronically in debt (honorably enough, through the death of his shiftless store-partner Berry), has found no place in the inspirational legend.

But tales of his great strength were lovingly told, by old neighbors and later by popular biographers. Here he was the true frontier hero. He could lift "1000 pounds of shot by main strength," and carry heavy posts that required the sinew of four average men. He chopped sugar trees and sycamores like "three men at work," and could sink an axe into hard wood deeper than any other man in Indiana. He was the champion corn-husker, the best wrestler and jumper in New Salem, Illinois. There he out-wrestled a local strong man, Jack Armstrong, to become the idol of a good-natured gang of rowdies called the Clary Grove Boys. "They were hero-worshippers," Beveridge writes, "as untamed human beings generally are—the type of men that conquerors have used to fashion invincible armies and politicians to shape formidable gatherings." Henceforth he became their umpire and their ideal. They were the charter members of the Lincoln cult.

These wild boys, like the "Wide Awakes" of later political campaigns, played no small part in the forging of loyalties. They were among the volunteers for the Black Hawk War of 1831–32 who unanimously picked Lincoln as their captain. This was Lincoln's only exploit as a soldier. It was a foray of marching and discomfort which Lincoln made fun of, on the floor of Congress fifteen years later, in ridiculing General Cass's pretensions to the Presidency:

"By the way, Mr. Speaker, did you know I am a military hero? Yes, sir; in the days of the Black Hawk War I fought, bled, and came away. . . . If General Cass went in advance of me picking

huckleberries, I guess I surpassed him in charges upon the wild onions. If he saw any live, fighting Indians, it was more than I did; but I had a good many bloody struggles with the mosquitoes."

Lincoln's truthful humor kept him from laying claim to the honors of an Indian fighter. Yet biographers later tried to make him into a second Andrew Jackson, or on the other hand to illustrate his humanity with a story about how he saved an old redskin's life. Denton J. Snider in 1910 wrote a grandiose epic poem, "Lincoln in the Black Hawk War." If the public decides otherwise, it is futile for a man to deny his own heroship.

Back from this adventure, Lincoln entered politics as a candidate for the Illinois Legislature in 1832. "I am humble Abraham Lincoln," he is reported to have said in his first speech, while the Clary Grove Boys cheered him and got into a few fist-fights: ". . . If elected, I shall be thankful; if not, it will be all the same." His mingling of humility and detachment would often be the vexation, if not the despair, of his opponents in days to come. Just now he was defeated, but carried his own New Salem precinct by 277 votes out of 284. His power over men often varied inversely with his distance from them. Two years later he was successful, standing on a platform of opposition to Andrew Jackson and favor for the Federal Banks—a homespun candidate with a rich man's creed, a great democrat and a potential Republican. This paradox stemmed, in part, from his admiration for Henry Clay, the self-made "Mill Boy of the Slashes," and next to George Washington the idol of Lincoln's youth. Also, no doubt, Lincoln shared the feeling of many Western squatters that they had more in common with the industrial East than with the buckskin aristocracy of the Southwest which Jackson represented.

EXERCISES

1. In this selection Wecter emphasizes the *typical* rather than the *individual* aspects of Lincoln's character, or rather of the character ascribed to him by his admirers. What are those typical aspects? In what order does Wecter present them, and with what emphasis? What is the relation of the sentence, "He made possible the final romanticism of the log cabin," to the discourse that follows?

2. Is Wecter concerned with legends or with facts or with both facts and legends? Is he careful to distinguish between legend and fact?

3. How does Wecter deal with those traits of Lincoln's character which are *not* within the popular conception of the "backwoods hero"?

4. What use is made in this selection of illustration, example, anecdote, direct quotation?

5. How does Wecter's treatment of Lincoln compare with that given by Carl Sandburg in *Lincoln: the Prairie Years*?

Suggestions for Themes

1. Write a theme characterizing a person who, though he bears some of the distinguishing marks of his occupation or profession, nevertheless has developed interesting and revealing individual traits or concerns. For example:

The doctor who paints
The insurance salesman who hybridizes flowers
The steel worker who plays in the symphony orchestra
The lady secretary who runs a farm
The broker who writes poetry
The housewife who is a crack golfer

2. Write a sketch of an individual in which you emphasize some dominant trait of character.

3. Make a study of some historical character and then write a biographical sketch based on your study. For example, read Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* and compose a sketch based upon your interpretation of Franklin as revealed in his own account of himself. You may find it necessary to do additional reading in order to establish essential facts. But do not make your theme a "research paper." Let it be your own personal interpretation. The following is a list of a few notable people who have written autobiographies or other revealing personal documents:

Benvenuto Cellini	Lew Wallace
John Bunyan	Edward Bok
Samuel Pepys	Stark Young
James Boswell	William Byrd of Westover
Henry D. Thoreau	Walter Chrysler

4. Read any two of the "parallel lives" found in Plutarch's *Lives* and write an expository theme based upon your study.

5. Select as your subject some individual who you think has been misunderstood. Write a theme in which you clear away erroneous conceptions and establish the true man or woman.

6. Compose a theme in which you portray some type familiar in our contemporary life. For example:

The "disk jockey" radio entertainer	The boy who drives a "hot rod" automobile
The "calendar girl" beauty	The social welfare worker
The fellow who always knows the answers	The United Nations enthusiast
The "hill-billy" singer	The "Cadillac farmer"
The professional "joiner"	The habitual borrower
The gadget lover	The Hollywood "starlet"

7. Write a theme in which you depict some person as representative of a town, city, state, or region. For example:

The Bostonian	The Georgia "cracker"
The tidewater Virginian	The Down-easter
The man from Dallas, Texas	The typical business executive of Cleveland, Detroit, or other large city
The true Californian	
Floridian "by adoption"	The lady from Evanston
The Hoosier	

8. Write a theme depicting a representative of some special group of which you have firsthand knowledge. For example: the Amish of Ohio; the Portuguese of Massachusetts; the "Melungeons" of Tennessee; the "Gullah" Negroes of South Carolina; the "Cajuns" of Louisiana; any group or tribe of the North American Indians; the Pennsylvania "Dutch."

Suggestions for Reading

I. Individuals

Balch, Marston (ed.) *Modern Short Biographies.*

Beatty, Richmond Croom. *Bayard Taylor; Thomas Babington Macaulay.*

Benjamin, Robert Spiers (ed.). *I Am an American.*

Boswell's *Life of Dr. Johnson.*

Bourke, Vernon Joseph. *Augustine's Quest of Wisdom.*

Bradford, Gamaliel. *Damaged Souls; Portraits and Personalities; Lee the American.*

Brooks, Van Wyck. *The Flowering of New England.*

Bruce, Philip A. *The Virginia Plutarch.*
Clark, Barrett H. *Great Short Biographies of the World.*
De Mille, Agnes. *Dance to the Piper.*
De Quincey, Thomas. *Biographical and Historical Essays.*
Galsworthy, John. "A Portrait," in *Caravan.*
Gay, Robert M. "Noah's Wife." *Atlantic Monthly,* July, 1922.
Gilchrist, Anna. "More than a Secretary." *The New Yorker,* Feb. 16, 1946.
Green, John Richard. The sketches of Queen Elizabeth and Edward I in *A Short History of the English People.*
La Farge, Oliver, *Raw Material.*
Martineau, Harriet. *Biographical Sketches.*
Oliphant, Mary C. Simms, Odell, A. T., and Eaves, Duncan (eds.). *The Letters of William Gilmore Simms.*
Parks, Edd Winfield. "Sawney Webb, Tennessee's Schoolmaster," in *Segments of Southern Thought.*
Parrington, Vernon L. *Main Currents in American Thought.* See especially the sketches of Andrew Jackson, Crockett, Lincoln, Calhoun, Grant.
Plato, "The Death of Socrates," from the *Phædo* (Jowett's Translation). See also the *Apology.*
Plutarch's *Lives.*
Rourke, Constance. *American Humor.*
Russell, Phillips. *Harvesters.*
Sandburg, Carl. *Lincoln, the Prairie Years.*
Strachey, Lytton. *Elizabeth and Essex; Queen Victoria; Eminent Victorians.*
Sullivan, Mark: "Henry Ford Emerges, Suddenly," in *Our Times,* Volume IV.
Thackeray, William Makepeace. *English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century.*
Valléry-Radot, René. *The Life of Pasteur.*
Van Loon, Hendrick W. *Van Loon's Lives.*
Wade, John Donald. "Profits and Losses in the Life of Joel Chan dler Harris." *American Review,* April, 1933.
Young, Stark. "Duse," in *Glamour.*

2. TYPES

Adams, Andy. *Log of a Cowboy.*
Burton, Robert. *The Anatomy of Melancholy.*
Coffin, Robert P. Tristram. "Cap'n Dan," in *Lost Paradise.*

De Quincey, Thomas, "A Peripatetic Philosopher," in *Essays.*

Dickens, Charles. Sketches of a bashful young man, a domestic young gentleman, a poetical young gentleman, the noble savage. See *Sketches by Boz* and *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club.*

Dorrance, Ward. *Where the Rivers Meet,* pp. 31–32; 67–68.

Flint, Timothy. *Recollections of the Last Ten Years.*

Hudson, A. P. *Humor of the Old Deep South.*

Hudson, W. H. "People of the Pampas," in *The Purple Land.*

Hunt, Leigh. *Essays* such as "The Old Lady," "The Maid Servant," "The Old Gentleman."

Kephart, Horace. *Our Southern Highlanders.*

Kittredge, Henry C. "Josiah Richardson," in *Shipmasters of Cape Cod.*

Lamb, Charles. "The Old and the New Schoolmaster," in *Essays of Elia.*

Macaulay, Thomas Babington. Sketch of the Puritans and the Cavaliers in *Essay on Milton.*

Peattie, Donald Culross. "Plant Hunters." *Yale Review* (Winter, 1945).

Priestly, J. B. *Midnight on the Desert.*

Rourke, Constance. *American Humour.*

Santayana, George. "An Apology for Snobs," in *Soliloquies from England.*

Wilson, Charles Morrow. *Backwoods America.*

PROJECT 4. IDEAS

In explaining a process, mechanism, or organization or in portraying, through expository discussion, a typical or individual character, we enjoy the great advantage of having a tangible, concrete *object* before our eyes—or at least before the "mind's eye." Whatever we may think "about" the object, it is always actually there as the focus of our thinking, and any vaguesness of thought or feeling may be corrected by reference to the object itself.

If we take another step and begin to theorize or generalize about the object, we move into the more difficult realm of abstract ideas; yet, as long as we continue to refer closely to the object itself, or compare the particular object with others of the same kind, we should not find it difficult to write about it clearly, definitely, and systematically.

Thus, if Dixon Wecter, in his study of Lincoln as a backwoods hero, had chosen to go further and discuss the *value* of the pioneer tradition, he would have entered the realm of "abstract" ideas; but his abstraction would have had clarity and definiteness because his generalizations would link closely with the concrete example of Lincoln and of similar figures.

This, the method of proceeding from the particular to the general, from the concrete to the abstract, is far easier than its opposite. If we begin with an abstract idea—which may at first be somewhat nebulous and uncertain—and seek to express it, we are in an area of major difficulty. Expression will fail, or will remain incomplete and untrustworthy, unless we can find ways of giving the idea concrete form.

The problem of explaining an idea therefore becomes, first, a problem of discovering *what the idea really is.* Until it is clearly and accurately stated, it cannot be satisfactorily explored. Therefore *definition* is often the first step in a discussion of ideas, for the idea to be discussed must be disentangled from other ideas with which it might be confused, and the area of discussion must be limited accordingly. For further clarification *analysis* is important: the idea is divided into its essential parts, or its significant features are isolated for the purpose of definite discussion. But definition and analysis must be assisted by *illustration.*[1] An idea is never really explained until it is illustrated: that is, until a concrete instance or instances are offered to which the abstract conception can be logically and illuminatingly applied. In this way the "subjective" discussion of an idea (reversing the process earlier described) arrives at its "object."

Example and illustration therefore are supremely important in the discussion of ideas. The examples used may be *actual examples:* Thoreau's continual reference to the particulars of his life at Walden Pond; or, in a discussion of the value of the pioneer tradition, reference to Lincoln, Jackson, and other presidents who were "born in a log cabin." Or they may be *hypothetical examples:* that is, imagined instances, possible instances, which correspond closely enough to our common experience to be accepted as plausible and instructive.

In explaining "belief," the American philosopher and psychologist William James resorts to the following hypothetical example:

[1]See Chapter VIII for further discussion of definition and analysis.

Suppose, for example, that I am climbing the Alps and have had the ill-luck to work myself into a position from which the only escape is by a terrible leap. Being without a similar experience, I have no evidence of my ability to perform it successfully; but hope and confidence in myself make me sure I shall not miss my aim, and nerve my feet to execute what without those subjective emotions would perhaps have been impossible. But suppose that, on the contrary, the emotions of fear and mistrust preponderate; or suppose that, having just read the *Ethics of Belief*, I feel it would be sinful to act upon an assumption unverified by previous experience—why, then I shall hesitate so long that at last, exhausted and trembling, and launching myself in a moment of despair, I miss my foothold and roll into the abyss. In this case (and it is one of an immense class) the part of wisdom clearly is to believe what one desires; for the belief is one of the indispensable preliminary conditions of the realization of its object. *There are then cases where faith creates its own verification.* Believe, and you shall be right, for you shall save yourself; doubt, and you shall again be right, for you shall perish. The only difference is that to believe is greatly to your advantage.[1]

The realm of ideas is of course the high province of religious and philosophical thinkers, the greatest of whom, by their clear and successful exploration of ideas, have notably influenced human history. Ideas are also, in another sense, the province of psychologists, but so far the psychologists have been less notably successful than the religious and philosophical thinkers of the past. For the modern psychologist, committed to scientific method, is handicapped by the obvious fact that ideas do not submit readily to scientific examination. A biologist can look at a fish. He can cut it up with dissecting instruments and put parts of it under a microscope for a very special kind of look. But no psychologist can, in similar fashion, "look" at an idea. His elaborate arrangements for seeming to do so are rude makeshifts in comparison with the arrangements of the physical scientist.

To write about ideas, clearly and truthfully, is another way of "looking" at ideas which, if not quite "scientific" in the laboratory sense, can still be logical, honest, reliable, and, if well managed,

[1]From "The Sentiment of Rationality," in *The Will to Believe*, by William James. Reprinted by permission of Longmans, Green & Co., Inc., publishers.

effective. Ideas are inescapable. They must be dealt with. Let us not be daunted either by the sublime triumphs of the philosophers or by the special claims of the psychologists. What the student needs to do is to find ways of rendering purposeful and exact, in his writing, what he is inevitably doing all the time, less purposefully, less exactly, in his conversations and imaginings.

In the first two of the selections that follow, the student is offered two different strategies for the discussion of ideas that are so closely related as to be almost the same *basic* idea. Both Leopold (in "Thinking Like a Mountain") and Thoreau (in "On Solitude") accept the ways of nature as essentially right. Each believes that it is harmful and perilous to interfere rudely with nature. Leopold, in fact, specifically approves Thoreau's dictum, "In wildness is the salvation of the world." Each presents this "idea" in what seems to be an extreme form: Leopold, in his thesis that the cattle-raiser will best protect his interests if he does *not* kill the wolf that is held to be the traditional enemy of cattle and cattle-raisers; Thoreau, in his thesis that "solitude" (nearness to nature) is better for man than "company" (civilized society).

Leopold begins his explanation—which at first appears to be a narrative—with a dramatized description of the wolf-howl, which he at first interprets only through the cryptic statement: "Only the mountain has lived long enough to listen objectively to the howl of a wolf." His raw particulars—the concrete items of experience that support his idea—are thus interpreted *symbolically* before he emphasizes, by direct account, his own personal experiences. His personal experiences are followed by generalizations that interpret both symbol and fact and that bring the total idea into clear and definite focus. Leopold uses an *indirect* method of explanation which, though it is presented in terms of realistic personal experience, is closely akin to the method of the parables of Scripture and the fables of Æsop.

Thoreau uses a more *direct*, but not a completely direct method. He begins with a rather startling generalization. This he expands in a series of restatements, into many of which he weaves terse bits of illustrative material. Some dramatization develops as nature enters as a personified figure; at this point Thoreau's method becomes bantering, enigmatic, quite indirect. But the direct generalization of the first paragraph gets renewed emphasis in the series of paradoxes appearing in the paragraph: "I have a great deal of company . . .

when nobody calls." The paradoxes (seeming contradictions which veil the truth) disguise somewhat the apparent directness of the generalizations that he here asserts. The disguise is thrown off, and the contradictions are clearly resolved, in Thoreau's straightforward discussion of "the indescribable innocence and beneficence of nature."

The method of James Truslow Adams, in "The American Dream," is far more straightforward and much more direct than the method of Leopold or Thoreau. It is, in fact, the conventional direct approach that is commonly found in the writings of historians, journalists, and political scientists; but it recommends itself, naturally, because it is systematic, graphic, and easy.

Adams begins his discussion with the statement: "There has been also the American dream, *that dream of a land in which life should be better and fuller and richer for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement.*" The italicized part of this sentence is a definition, which constitutes the thesis of Adams' discussion. He then gives an illustration of what he means. He quotes a Frenchman as saying, when asked what most impressed him about life in the United States: "The way that every one of every sort looks you right in the eye, without a thought of inequality."

This illustration opens the way for an analysis of the central idea. The American dream, writes Adams, consists of (1) material opportunity; (2) liberty to find oneself on terms of fair competition; (3) social equality. These three significant features of the American dream are then contrasted with European tendencies. Adams' closing illustration is the Library of Congress, which comes "from the heart of democracy." "Founded and built by the people, it is for the people."

THINKING LIKE A MOUNTAIN[1]

BY ALDO LEOPOLD

A DEEP chesty bawl echoes from rimrock to rimrock, rolls down the mountain, and fades into the far blackness of the night. It is an outburst of wild defiant sorrow, and of contempt for all the adversities of the world.

Every living thing (and perhaps many a dead thing as well) pays

[1]From *A Sand County Almanac*, by Aldo Leopold. Copyright, 1949, by Oxford University Press, Inc. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

heed to that call. To the deer it is a reminder of the way of all flesh, to the pine a forecast of midnight scuffles and blood on the snow, to the coyote a promise of gleanings to come, to the cowman a threat of red ink at the bank, to the hunter a challenge of fang against bullet. Yet behind these obvious and immediate hopes and fears there lies a deeper meaning, known only to the mountain itself. Only the mountain has lived long enough to listen objectively to the howl of a wolf.

Those unable to decipher the hidden meaning know nevertheless that it is there, for it is felt in all wolf country, and distinguishes that country from all other land. It tingles in the spine of all who hear wolves by night, or who scan their tracks by day. Even without the sight or sound of wolf, it is implicit in a hundred small events: the midnight whinny of a pack horse, the rattle of rolling rocks, the bounds of a fleeing deer, the way shadows lie under the spruces. Only the ineducable tyro can fail to sense the presence or absence of wolves, or the fact that mountains have a secret opinion about them.

My own conviction on this score dates from the day I saw a wolf die. We were eating lunch on a high rimrock, at the foot of which a turbulent river elbowed its way. We saw what we thought was a doe fording the torrent, her breast awash in white water. When she climbed the bank toward us and shook out her tail, we realized our error: it was a wolf. A half-dozen others, evidently grown pups, sprang from the willows and all joined in a welcoming mêlée of wagging tails and playful maulings. What was literally a pile of wolves writhed and tumbled in the center of an open flat at the foot of our rimrock.

In those days we had never heard of passing up a chance to kill a wolf. In a second we were pumping lead into the pack, but with more excitement than accuracy: to aim a steep downhill shot is always confusing. When our rifles were empty, the old wolf was down, and a pup was dragging a leg into impassable slide-rocks.

We reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes. I realized then, and have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes—something known only to her and to the mountain. I was young then, and full of trigger-itch; I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, no wolves would mean hunters' paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view.

Since then I have lived to see state after state extirpate its wolves. I have watched the face of many a wolfless mountain, and seen the south-facing slopes wrinkle with a maze of new deer trails. I have

seen every edible bush and seedling browsed, first to anemic desuetude, and then to death. I have seen every edible tree defoliated to the height of a saddlehorn. Such a mountain looks as if someone had given God a new pruning shears, and forbidden Him all other exercise. In the end the starved bones of the hoped-for deer herd, dead of its own too-much, bleach with the bones of the dead sage, or molder under the high-lined junipers.

I now suspect that just as a deer herd lives in mortal fear of its wolves, so does a mountain live in mortal fear of its deer. And perhaps with better cause, for while a buck pulled down by wolves can be replaced in two or three years, a range pulled down by too many deer may fail of replacement in as many decades.

So also with cows. The cowman who cleans his range of wolves does not realize that he is taking over the wolf's job of trimming the herd to fit the range. He has not learned to think like a mountain. Hence we have dustbowls, and rivers washing the future into the sea.

We all strive for safety, prosperity, comfort, long life, and dullness. The deer strives with his supple legs, the cowman with trap and poison, the statesman with pen, the most of us with machines, votes, and dollars, but it all comes to the same thing: peace in our time. A measure of success in this is all well enough, and perhaps is a requisite to objective thinking, but too much safety seems to yield only danger in the long run. Perhaps this is behind Thoreau's dictum: In wildness is the salvation of the world. Perhaps this is the hidden meaning in the howl of the wolf, long known among mountains, but seldom perceived among men.

EXERCISES

Aldo Leopold was a distinguished American naturalist who, after a long experience, reached some important conclusions regarding forestry, conservation, and wild life—conclusions which in many respects are at variance with approved contemporary practices. Some of his experiences and the essence of his thinking are embodied in *A Sand County Almanac*, from which the preceding selection is taken. The selection at first sight may seem "descriptive" and therefore not properly placed under the general heading, "Ideas." Before you reach a conclusion on this point, consider the following questions:

1. What is the meaning of the title? Can a mountain "think"?

2. What generalization can be made in the light of the descriptive and narrative details presented?

3. Is this generalization explicitly stated anywhere in the selection?

4. How does Leopold's "indirect" method of presentation (i.e., approach to the theme by way of a "dramatization" of the idea in descriptive-narrative terms) compare with Thoreau's more "direct" discussion of "solitude"?

ON SOLITUDE[1]

By Henry David Thoreau

I find it wholesome to be alone the greater part of the time. To be in company, even with the best, is soon wearisome and dissipating. I love to be alone. I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude. We are for the most part more lonely when we go abroad among men than when we stay in our chambers. A man thinking or working is always alone, let him be where he will. Solitude is not measured by the miles of space that intervene between a man and his fellows. The really diligent student in one of the crowded hives of Cambridge College is as solitary as a dervis in the desert. The farmer can work alone in the field or the woods all day, hoeing or chopping, and not feel lonesome, because he is employed; but when he comes home at night he cannot sit down in a room alone, at the mercy of his thoughts, but must be where he can "see the folks," and recreate, and, as he thinks, remunerate himself for his day's solitude; and hence he wonders how the student can sit alone in the house all night and most of the day without ennui and "the blues"; but he does not realize that the student, though in the house, is still at work in *his* field, and chopping in *his* woods, as the farmer in his, and in turn seeks the same recreation and society that the latter does, though it may be a more condensed form of it.

Society is commonly too cheap. We meet at very short intervals, not having had time to acquire any new value for each other. We meet at meals three times a day, and give each other a new taste of that old musty cheese that we are. We have had to agree on a certain set of rules, called etiquette and politeness, to make this frequent meeting tolerable and that we need not come to open war. We meet at the post-office, and at the sociable, and about the fireside every night; we live thick and are in each other's way, and stumble over one another, and I think that we thus lose some respect for one another. Certainly less frequency would suffice for all important and hearty communications. Consider the girls in a factory,—never alone,

[1]From *Walden*.

hardly in their dreams. It would be better if there were but one inhabitant to a square mile, as where I live. The value of a man is not in his skin, that we should touch him.

I have heard of a man lost in the woods and dying of famine and exhaustion at the foot of a tree, whose loneliness was relieved by the grotesque visions with which, owing to bodily weakness, his diseased imagination surrounded him, and which he believed to be real. So also, owing to bodily and mental health and strength, we may be continually cheered by a like but more normal and natural society, and come to know that we are never alone.

I have a great deal of company in my house; especially in the morning, when nobody calls. Let me suggest a few comparisons, that some one may convey an idea of my situation. I am no more lonely than the loon in the pond that laughs so loud, or than Walden Pond itself. What company has that lonely lake, I pray? And yet it has not the blue devils, but the blue angels in it, in the azure tint of its waters. The sun is alone, except in thick weather, when there sometimes appear to be two, but one is a mock sun. God is alone,—but the devil, he is far from being alone; he sees a great deal of company; he is legion. I am no more lonely than a single mullein or dandelion in a pasture, or a bean leaf, or sorrel, or a horse-fly, or a bumblebee. I am no more lonely than the Mill Brook, or a weather-cock, or the north star, or the south wind, or an April shower, or a January thaw, or the first spider in a new house.

I have occasional visits in the long winter evenings, when the snow falls fast and the wind howls in the wood, from an old settler and original proprietor, who is reported to have dug Walden Pond, and stoned it, and fringed it with pine woods; who tells me stories of old time and of new eternity; and between us we manage to pass a cheerful evening with social mirth and pleasant views of things, even without apples or cider,—a most wise and humorous friend, whom I love much, who keeps himself more secret than ever did Goffe or Whalley; and though he is thought to be dead, none can show where he is buried. An elderly dame, too, dwells in my neighborhood, invisible to most persons, in whose odorous herb garden I love to stroll sometimes, gathering simples and listening to her fables; for she has a genius of unequalled fertility, and her memory runs back farther than mythology, and she can tell me the original of every fable, and on what fact every one is founded, for the incidents occurred when she was young. A ruddy and lusty old dame, who delights in all weathers and seasons, and is likely to outlive all her children yet.

The indescribable innocence and beneficence of Nature,—of sun and wind and rain, of summer and winter,—such health, such cheer, they afford forever! and such sympathy have they ever with our race, that all Nature would be affected and the sun's brightness fade, and the winds would sigh humanely, and the clouds rain tears, and the woods shed their leaves and put on mourning in midsummer, if any man should ever for a just cause grieve. Shall I not have intelligence with the earth? Am I not partly leaves and vegetable mould myself?

What is the pill which will keep us well, serene, contented? Not my or thy great-grandfather's, but our great-grandmother Nature's universal, vegetable, botanic medicines, by which she has kept herself young always, outlived so many old Parrs in her day, and fed her health with their decaying fatness. For my panacea, instead of one of those quack vials of a mixture dipped from Acheron and the Dead Sea, which come out of those long shallow black-schooner looking wagons which we sometimes see made to carry bottles, let me have a draught of undiluted morning air. Morning air! If men will not drink of this at the fountainhead of the day, why, then, we must even bottle up some and sell it in the shops, for the benefit of those who have lost their subscription ticket to morning time in this world. But remember, it will keep quite till noonday even in the coolest cellar, but drive out the stopples long ere that and follow westward the steps of Aurora. I am no worshipper of Hygeia, who was the daughter of that old herb-doctor Æsculapius, and who is represented on monuments holding a serpent in one hand, and in the other a cup out of which the serpent sometimes drinks; but rather of Hebe, cup-bearer to Jupiter, who was the daughter of Juno and wild lettuce, and who had the power of restoring gods and men to the vigor of youth. She was probably the only thoroughly sound-conditioned, healthy, and robust young lady that ever walked the globe, and wherever she came it was spring.

THE AMERICAN DREAM[1]

By James Truslow Adams

If, as I have said, the things already listed were all we had had to contribute, America would have made no distinctive and unique gift to mankind. But there has been also the *American dream*, that

[1]From *The Epic of America.* An Atlantic Monthly Press publication. Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown & Company, Boston.

dream of a land in which life should be better and fuller and richer for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of a social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position. I once had an intelligent young Frenchman as guest in New York, and after a few days I asked him what struck him most among his new impressions. Without hesitation he replied. "The way that every one of every sort looks you right in the eye, without a thought of inequality." Some time ago a foreigner who used to do some work for me, and who had picked up a very fair education, used occasionally to sit and chat with me in my study after he had finished his work. One day he said that such a relationship was the great difference between America and his homeland. There, he said, "I would do my work and might get a pleasant word, but I could never sit and talk like this. There is a difference there between social grades which cannot be got over. I would not talk to you there as man to man, but as my employer."

No, the American dream that has lured tens of millions of all nations to our shores in the past century has not been a dream of merely material plenty, though that has doubtless counted heavily. It has been much more than that. It has been a dream of being able to grow to fullest development as man and woman, unhampered by the barriers which had slowly been erected in older civilizations, unrepressed by social orders which had developed for the benefit of classes rather than for the simple human being of any and every class. And that dream has been realized more fully in actual life here than anywhere else, though very imperfectly even among ourselves.

It has been a great epic and a great dream. What, now, of the future?

. . . . . .

If the American dream is to come true and to abide with us, it will, at bottom, depend on the people themselves. If we are to achieve a richer and fuller life for all, they have got to know what such an achievement implies. In a modern industrial State, an economic base is essential for all. We point with pride to our "national

income," but the nation is only an aggregate of individual men and women, and when we turn from the single figure of total income to the incomes of individuals, we find a very marked injustice in its distribution. There is no reason why wealth, which is a social product, should not be more equitably controlled and distributed in the interests of society. But, unless we settle on the values of life, we are likely to attack in a wrong direction and burn the barn to find our penny in the hay.

Above and beyond the mere economic base, the need for a scale of values becomes yet greater. If we are entering on a period in which, not only in industry but in other departments of life, the mass is going to count for more and the individual less, and if each and all are to enjoy a richer and fuller life, the level of the mass has got to rise appreciably above what it is at present. It must either rise to a higher level of communal life or drag that life down to its own, in political leadership, and in the arts and letters. There is no use in accusing America of being a "Babbitt Warren." The top and bottom are spiritually and intellectually nearer together in America than in most countries, but there are plenty of Babbitts everywhere. "Main Street" is the longest in the world, for it encircles the globe. It is an American name, but not an American thoroughfare. One can suffocate in an English cathedral town or a French provincial city as well as in Zenith. That is not the point.

The point is that if we are to have a rich and full life in which all are to share and play their parts, if the American dream is to be a reality, our communal spiritual and intellectual life must be distinctly higher than elsewhere, where classes and groups have their separate interests, habits, markets, arts, and lives. If the dream is not to prove possible of fulfillment, we might as well become stark realists, become once more class-conscious, and struggle as individuals or classes against one another. If it is to come true, those on top, financially, intellectually, or otherwise, have got to devote themselves to the "Great Society," and those who are below in the scale have got to strive to rise, not merely economically, but culturally. We cannot become a great democracy by giving ourselves up as individuals to selfishness, physical comfort, and cheap amusements. The very foundation of the American dream of a better life for all is that all, in varying degrees, shall be capable of wanting to share in it. It can never be wrought into a reality by cheap people or by "keeping up with the Joneses." There is nothing whatever in a fortune merely in itself or in a man merely in himself. It all depends on what is made of each. Lincoln was not great because he was born in a log cabin, but because he got

out of it—that is, because he rose above the poverty, ignorance, lack of ambition, shiftlessness of character, contentment with mean things and low aims which kept so many thousands in the huts where they were born.

If we are to make the dream come true we must all work together, no longer to build bigger, but to build better. There is a time for quantity and a time for quality. There is a time when quantity may become a menace and the law of diminishing returns begins to operate, but not so with quality. By working together I do not mean another organization, of which the land is as full as was Kansas of grasshoppers. I mean a genuine individual search and striving for the abiding values of life. In a country as big as America it is as impossible to prophesy as it is to generalize, without being tripped up, but it seems to me that there is room for hope as well as mistrust. The epic loses all its glory without the dream. The statistics of size, population, and wealth would mean nothing to me unless I could still believe in the dream.

America is yet "The Land of Contrasts," as it was called in one of the best books written about us, years ago. One day a man in Oklahoma depresses us by yawping about it in such a way as to give the impression that there is nothing in that young State but oil wells and millionaires, and the next day one gets from the University there its excellent quarterly critical list of all the most recent books published in France, Spain, Germany, and Italy, with every indication of the beginning of an active intellectual life and an intelligent play of thought over the ideas of the other side of the world.

There is no better omen of hope than the sane and sober criticism of those tendencies in our civilization which call for rigorous examination. In that respect we are distinctly passing out of the frontier phase. Our life calls for such examination, as does that of every nation today, but because we are concerned with the evil symptoms it would be absurd to forget the good. It would be as uncritical to write the history of our past in terms of Morton of Merrymount, Benedict Arnold, "Billy the Kid," Thaddeus Stevens, Jay Gould, P. T. Barnum, Brigham Young, Tom Lawson, and others who could be gathered together to make an extraordinary jumble of an incomprehensible national story, as it would be to write the past wholly in terms of John Winthrop, Washington, John Quincy Adams, Jefferson, Lincoln, Emerson, Edison, General Gorgas, and others to afford an equally untrue picture.

The nation today is no more made up of Babbitts (though there are enough of them) than it is of young poets. There is a healthy

stirring of the deeps, particularly among the younger men and women, who are growing determined that they are not to function solely as consumers for the benefit of business, but intend to lead sane and civilized lives. When one thinks of the prostitution of the moving-picture industry, which might have developed a great art, one can turn from that to the movements everywhere through the country for the small theater and the creation of folk drama, the collecting of our folk poetry, which was almost unknown to exist a generation ago, and other hopeful signs of an awakening culture deriving straight and naturally from our own soil and past. How far the conflicting good can win against the evil is our problem. It is not a cheering thought to figure the number of people who are thrilled nightly by a close-up kiss on ten thousand screens compared with the number who see a play of O'Neill's. But, on the other hand, we need not forget that a country that produced last year 1,500,000 Fords, which after their short day will in considerable numbers add to the litter along our country lanes as abandoned chassis, could also produce perhaps the finest example of sculpture in the last half century. We can contrast the spirit manifested in the accumulation of the Rockefeller fortune with the spirit now displayed in its distribution.

Like the country roads, our whole national life is yet cluttered up with the disorderly remnants of our frontier experience, and all help should be given to those who are honestly trying to clean up either the one or the other. But the frontier also left us our American dream, which is being wrought out in many hearts and many institutions.

Among the latter I often think that the one which best exemplifies the dream is the greatest library in this land of libraries, the Library of Congress. I take, for the most part, but little interest in the great gifts and Foundations of men who have incomes they cannot possibly spend, and investments that roll like avalanches. They merely return, not seldom unwisely, a part of their wealth to that society without which they could not have made it, and which too often they have plundered in the making. That is chiefly evidence of maladjustment in our economic system. A system that steadily increases the gulf between the ordinary man and the super-rich, that permits the resources of society to be gathered into personal fortunes that afford their owners millions of income a year, with only the chance that here and there a few may be moved to confer some of their surplus upon the public in ways chosen wholly by themselves, is assuredly a wasteful and unjust system. It is, perhaps, as inimical

as anything could be to the American dream. I do not belittle the generosity or public spirit of certain men. It is the system that as yet is at fault. Nor is it likely to be voluntarily altered by those who benefit most by it. No ruling class has ever willingly abdicated. Democracy can never be saved, and would not be worth saving, unless it can save itself.

The Library of Congress, however, has come straight from the heart of democracy, as it has been taken to it, and I here use it as a symbol of what democracy can accomplish on its own behalf. Many have made gifts to it, but it was created by ourselves through Congress, which has steadily and increasingly shown itself generous and understanding toward it. Founded and built by the people, it is for the people. Any one who has used the great collections of Europe, with their restrictions and red tape and difficulty of access, praises God for American democracy when he enters the stacks of the Library of Congress.

But there is more to the Library of Congress for the American dream than merely the wise appropriation of public money. There is the public itself, in two of its aspects. The Library of Congress could not have become what it is today. with all the generous aid of Congress, without such a citizen as Dr. Herbert Putnam as the directing head of it. He and his staff have devoted their lives to making the four million and more of books and pamphlets serve the public to a degree that cannot be approached by any similar great institution in the Old World. Then there is the public that uses these facilities. As one looks down on the general reading room, which alone contains ten thousand volumes which may be read without even the asking, one sees the seats filled with silent readers, old and young, rich and poor, black and white, the executive and the laborer, the general and the private, the noted scholar and the schoolboy, all reading at their own library provided by their own democracy. It has always seemed to me to be a perfect working out in a concrete example of the American dream—the means provided by the accumulated resources of the people themselves, a public intelligent enough to use them, and men of high distinction, themselves a part of the great democracy, devoting themselves to the good of the whole, uncloistered.

It seems to me that it can be only in some such way, carried out in all departments of our national life, that the American dream can be wrought into an abiding reality. I have little trust in the wise paternalism of politicians or the infinite wisdom of business leaders. We can look neither to the government nor to the heads of the great

corporations to guide us into the paths of a satisfying and humane existence as a great nation unless we, as multitudinous individuals, develop some greatness in our own individual souls. Until countless men and women have decided in their own hearts, through experience and perhaps disillusion, what is a genuinely satisfying life, a "good life" in the old Greek sense, we need look to neither political nor business leaders. Under our political system it is useless, save by the rarest of happy accidents, to expect a politician to rise higher than the source of his power. So long also as we are ourselves content with a mere extension of the material basis of existence, with the multiplying of our material possessions, it is absurd to think that the men who can utilize that public attitude for the gaining of infinite wealth and power for themselves will abandon both to become spiritual leaders of a democracy that despises spiritual things. Just so long as wealth and power are our sole badges of success, so long will ambitious men strive to attain them.

EXERCISES

1. Why does James Truslow Adams use the phrase, "the American Dream," rather than one of the following phrases: the American plan; the American spirit; Americanism; the American way?

2. Is Adams' subject the American dream itself, or is it how the American dream may be realized, or defended, or continued?

3. Why does Adams' conception of the American dream lead him to emphasize quality rather than quantity, the values of life as life rather than mere economic prosperity? Point out the passages in which this emphasis appears with the greatest clearness and effectiveness.

4. To what extent is the discussion argumentative rather than expository? Is Adams' contrast between private foundations and the Library of Congress valid under present circumstances?

5. Why does Adams choose the Library of Congress as an illustration? What objection would there be to the use of any one of the following as his major illustration: the Mayo Clinic, the Huntington Library, Harvard University, the Panama Canal, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Great Smokies National Park, Rockefeller Center, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Hoover Dam, the Tennessee Valley Authority?

6. Make a list of all illustrations and examples used by Adams, the small illustrations as well as the large.

7. Make a study of the logical organization of the selection. For this purpose, draw up an analytical outline which will show the main divisions and the subordinate divisions of Adams' discussion in their proper relation to one another. A portion of such an outline is given below. Determine whether the plan of this outline, as given, properly represents Adams' scheme of composition. If you accept it as adequate, complete the outline. If you can improve the model outline, revise it and incorporate it in a complete outline of your own.

AN OUTLINE OF "THE AMERICAN DREAM"

I. The American dream is the dream of a better life for every man, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement.
   A. It represents an ideal difficult for Europeans of the upper class to understand.
      1. Nevertheless, a French visitor was impressed with the way "that every one looks you in the eye, without a thought of inequality."
      2. A foreign employee of the author reported a similar contrast between America and his homeland.
   B. It is not, as critical Europeans infer, a dream of merely material plenty.
      1. It is, instead, a conception of a social order unhampered by artificial barriers.
      2. Though still imperfectly attained, it is more nearly realized in America than elsewhere.

II. If the dream is to be more fully realized, its implications must be better understood by Americans themselves.
   A. Economic betterment is only part of the problem.
      1. It is granted that existing economic injustices can be remedied.
      2. But mere economic reform, not controlled by a sense of values, may be destructive.
         a. The masses will not benefit by a redistribution of wealth unaccompanied by cultural and spiritual gains.
            (1) They must either rise to a higher level of communal life, or
            (2) They will drag the higher life down to their own level.
         b. Criticism of America as a "Babbitt Warren" is beside the point.

B. Our problem is how to raise our spiritual and intellectual life to a level higher than elsewhere.
   1. If we cannot solve this problem, we might as well revert to the European model of a "class-conscious" society.
   2. The "Great Society" cannot be built on selfishness, physical comforts, and cheap amusements.
   3. Lincoln was not great because he was born in a log cabin, but because he got out of it.

C. Emphasis on "quality" rather than "quantity" is our greatest modern need.

Suggestions for Themes

1. Write a theme in which you discuss either Leopold's "Thinking Like a Mountain," Thoreau's "On Solitude," or Adams' "The American Dream" in terms of the contemporary situation. That is to say, you are to consider how valid such ideas may be in the present context of American life.

2. Explain some ideal or worthy purpose in terms of an institution, organization, agent or aspect of government, or individual who seems to represent the ideal or purpose in some definite and fruitful way. Possible subjects:

A liberal education—or some other type of education—as embodied in a school or college

An ideal family life—as illustrated in some particular family of past or present

The ideal of charity—as exhibited in some benevolent organization

True sportsmanship—as symbolized in the conduct of some athlete

Jefferson's ideal of education—as represented in the University of Virginia; or some other ideal of education sponsored and realized by a notable person

The American system of "checks and balances"—as symbolized in the Capitol at Washington, the White House, and the Supreme Court Building

3. Take as your subject a proverb or common saying (such as "Fine words butter no parsnips" or "Marry in haste, and repent at leisure"); or a pronouncement of some philosopher or statesman; or a passage from the Bible (such as "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches"). Develop the idea thus stated into a theme

in which you use example and illustration, either in the semi-narrative method of Leopold ("Thinking Like a Mountain") or in the paradoxical fashion of Thoreau.

4. Other topics:

   Is Voting a Right or a Privilege?
   Is "Good Citizenship" or "Wisdom" the Purpose of Education?
   Can the "Good Life" Be Achieved without Material Prosperity?
   What Is the Meaning of the Phrase, "The Pursuit of Happiness" (in the Declaration of Independence)?
   Is Uniformity of Culture Desirable in America?

Suggestions for Reading

Belloc, Hilaire, *The Servile State*
Bowers, Claude, *Jefferson and Hamilton*
Dawson, Christopher, *The Modern Dilemma*
Dixon, W. M., *An Apology for the Arts*
Eliot, T. S., *The Idea of a Christian Society*
Gilson, Etienne, "The Breakdown of Modern Philosophy" (in *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*)
Mill, John Stuart, *On Liberty*
Montaigne, Michel de, *Essays*
Mumford, Lewis, *Sticks and Stones*
Pascal, Blaise, *Pensées*
Sumner, William Graham, *What the Social Classes Owe to Each Other*
Twelve Southerners, *I'll Take My Stand: the South and the Agrarian Tradition*
Weaver, Richard M., *Ideas Have Consequences*
Whitehead, A. N., *Science and the Modern World*

PROJECT 5. THE REVIEW

> "Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider."—Sir Francis Bacon, *Of Studies.*

This advice of Francis Bacon is as good today as it was three centuries ago, when the onrush of the New Learning shocked some Englishmen, overwhelmed others with shallow enthusiasm,

or made still others strut like wordy peacocks. The serious student must be a critic in the meaning of Bacon's words: he must "weigh and consider" even while he is in the act of getting new knowledge. The true critic is neither prosecuting attorney nor counsel for the defense. He is a judge. The word *critic* comes from the Greek word *krinein*, which means *to judge*.

Many tasks of the college student call for the exercise of critical judgment. In the study of the humanities (language and literature) and the social sciences (history, sociology, economics, political science) his critical faculties must be awake at every moment. Merely to learn by rote—to memorize and repeat facts—is not enough. That is a shallow kind of education. To "weigh and consider" implies the exercise of free intelligence upon the facts. The student must see facts in relation to one another; he must connect them with what he knows already; he must distinguish between the more important and the less important; he must interpret and estimate. Whenever he is called upon to make a report, to answer a "discussion question" on examination, or to prepare a "term paper," his critical faculties should come into play and should be equal to the occasion. The judgment that he uses upon such occasions is no different in kind, though it may be different in form, from the judgment exercised when he discusses with his friends the latest movie or play, the strategy of the quarterback in a football game, the policies of the student council, or any of the common topics that provoke critical discussion.

The review, or short critical essay, is a composition in which judgment is the governing factor. The word *review* means "to look back" or "to look again." The critical review rules out first impressions, or loose impressions of any sort. It abhors "snap judgment." It implies a second look, or indeed a tenth look, if that is necessary. It calls for fairness and completeness of presentation, clearness of interpretation, balance in judging.

A good review should generally contain the following:

(1) **Approach to the subject.** This may be a brief introductory paragraph, indicating the general or special nature of the subject reviewed (a book, a play, a magazine article). This paragraph may refer to the timeliness of the book or article. It may refer to other books, articles, or plays, of similar or different nature, or to some

trend in current literary or dramatic fashions. Sometimes a striking quotation makes a good beginning, especially if it suggests the content of the review or establishes the tone of the discussion. All these approaches, however, may upon occasion be dispensed with. If the writer prefers, he may begin his review without preliminaries.

(2) **Presentation of subject matter.** Through a short summary, present the plot and characters of the novel or play, the leading ideas of the magazine article, the significant features of the work—be it poem, drama, essay, symphony, scientific experiment, or political device. Give whatever interpretation is necessary to make the summary clear.

(3) **Critical estimate.** Discuss the excellences and defects of the work under consideration. Express your own opinion judiciously and temperately. Be sure that your judgment rests upon specific facts and refer to those facts in making your points. Do not be content with vague approval or contemptuous dismissal. Give your reasons for making your statements. Remember that all critical estimates rest, in the end, upon the ability to answer, fairly and correctly, three questions: *What is the author trying to do? Does he succeed in doing it? Was it worth doing?*

Sometimes the critical estimate may be combined with the interpretative summary in such a way that the criticism is set forth while the nature of the work is being explained. Indeed, the interpretative summary may become a critical estimate.

There is no prescribed order in a critical review. The indication, given above, as to what the review must contain is not a prescription as to arrangement. The review is a composition; like any other composition, it must be unified; it should be a piece of writing that is interesting in itself, apart from its relation to the work which it summarizes and interprets. Remember, however, that the true critical review always contains two basic elements: information about the work and judgment of that work.

Mechanics of the Critical Review. Every review must contain certain exact information as to the author, title, and publication of the work reviewed. For book reviews it is customary to give such data in the form of a bibliographical note, which may appear as a headnote (between the title of the review and the beginning of

the review) or as a footnote (at the bottom of the first page). The following is the form prescribed for a bibliographical note:

> *The Ballad of Tradition.* By Gordon Hall Gerould. Oxford: The Clarendon Press. 1932.

Title, author, place of publication and publisher, and date of publication should be given. Book reviews in periodicals like the *Saturday Review of Literature* or the *New York Times Book Review* also give information as to the price of the book and the number of pages it contains.

If you are reviewing a magazine article, give the title of the article, the name of the author, and the title and date of issue of the magazine. This information may be given in a note, or it may be included in the text of the review, at some appropriate point near the beginning. If you make the identifying reference in the text, it may well read as follows: "Burges Johnson's article, 'Types of Hospitality,' in *Harper's Magazine* for January, 1935, goes to the point of a problem that has troubled many hosts—and many guests." If you make the reference in a footnote, it will follow the conventional form for a bibliographical entry: Burges Johnson, "Types of Hospitality," *Harper's Magazine,* January, 1935.

In summarizing or restating the content of the work discussed, be sure that your own remarks are distinguished from the matter summarized. The reader must know whose ideas are being put before him. Quotation marks will of course be a sufficient indication when you reproduce a passage *verbatim.* When you are paraphrasing, insert a directive expression ("according to Mr. Johnson," or "the author says") to make the identification plain.

Remember that the principle of proportion is of the highest importance in a review. A review that is all summary is not a critical review, though it may sometimes serve as a report. A review that is all criticism is not fair to the reader, for the reader deserves information about the subject criticized; and it is not fair to the subject, for the subject must be presented if the basis for the criticism is to be plain. Avoid a long and unwieldy summary, therefore, and avoid excessive quotation; also avoid the temptation to use the book, play, or article as the occasion for emptying your mind of your pet opinions.

THE "GOOD PAINS" OF AGNES DE MILLE

Dance to the Piper. By Agnes De Mille. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1952. Pp. 342. Illustrated. $3.50.[1]

"THIS IS the story of an American dancer, a spoiled egocentric, wealthy girl, who learned with difficulty to become a worker, to set and meet standards, to brace a Victorian sensibility to contemporary roughhousing, and who, with happy good fortune, participated by the side of great colleagues in a renaissance of the most ancient and magical of the arts."

The above sentence—which is the very first sentence in the book—is as good a brief summary of Agnes De Mille's *Dance to the Piper* as could be devised, if one wants only a matter-of-fact statement. But the author's modest matter-of-fact statement is really an understatement. Nearer to the true spirit of the book is the exclamation of Miss De Mille's first ballet teacher:

" 'What a good pain! What a profitable pain!' said Miss Fredova, as she stretched her insteps in her two strong hands. 'I have practiced for three hours. I am exhausted, and I feel wonderful.' "

In her lively autobiography Miss De Mille has told, in very truth, a tale of many "a good pain," many a "profitable pain," for this brilliant woman's career, so long and discouragingly punctuated by tears rather than by triumphs, has at last given us an artist who may justly be called the first American choreographer—the first, at any rate, to adapt successfully the ancient art of ballet to the Broadway theater, and so to assist notably in what may well be the first phase of a truly American opera.

It may come as a surprise that the creator of the ballet, *Rodeo,* the choreographer of *Oklahoma* and *Carousel,* ever had to undergo the "hard time" that is traditionally thought to be the penalty of high artistic ambition. For her father, William De Mille, was a successful playwright. Her uncle, Cecil De Mille, is a great name in the art and the business of moving pictures. From childhood, Agnes

[1]The passages quoted in this review from *Dance to the Piper* are reprinted by permission of Little, Brown & Co., and the Atlantic Monthly Press.

De Mille knew the great people of screen and stage. She had advantages open to few American girls. Why, then, all the pain and trouble? Why the picture of the struggling, all-but-defeated artist, triumphant finally only at great cost, through stubborn persistence, high courage, and—genius?

In the first decade of the twentieth century, when young Agnes began to dream of becoming a ballet dancer, no American ballet existed. The art of ballet was felt, in general, to be more than faintly disreputable. For an American girl to think of becoming a ballet dancer was—well, was it very much different from becoming a "chorus girl"? In 1910, Anna Pavlova's first American tour brought something of a change. But what if Pavlova and Mordkin and Kosloff *were* ballet artists? They were Russians, weren't they? Let the Russians and other foreigners do ballet then. *Not* our American girls! There were Isadora Duncan and Ruth St. Denis, of course. But the ban still held. Agnes' talented mother was determined for her to be a cultivated lady. "Pop" and Uncle Cecil were unsympathetic toward the ballet idea. It was only when it was discovered that Agnes' pretty sister, Margaret, had developed fallen arches and the orthopedist recommended ballet dancing as a remedy that Agnes got her chance to take lessons at the Theodore Kosloff School of Imperial Russian Ballet. Agnes was allowed—reluctantly—to go to ballet school with Margaret, because what one sister did, the other must.

That was the real beginning of the "good pains," the "profitable pains." During college years there was a lapse, when Agnes put up her hair, used a lipstick, and attended college at UCLA. For four years, as a scholar, she continued "in a happy, somnambulistic state, blousy, dishevelled, dropping hairpins, tennis balls, and notebooks . . . having dates or nearly dates with the two M's on either side of me," and rarely on time for class. The Great Decision came when a young actor named Douglass Montgomery saw Agnes put on a dance for an amateur affair. He said "what I had wanted all my life to hear: 'You're no amateur. . . . Get out of the university. You're a great dancer.'"

"Pop," Uncle Cecil, and Mother did not agree with "Dug." But, despite family opposition, Agnes went indomitably to work on her career. Mother De Mille, defeated, gallantly decided to join forces with her daughter, and for years afterwards sewed costumes, acted

as chaperon and sponsor, and fought devotedly for Agnes all the way from Hollywood to Paris.

Agnes soon discovered that Kosloff, her teacher, had spoken truth when he said she was not built right for ballet, and besides, in beginning at fourteen, had started training too late. But she was persistent and hopeful. Furthermore, she discovered in herself a gift for pantomime that could be turned to good account. The "Boys" of Broadway who turned thumbs up or down at auditions would have none of her at first. The "Boys" wanted Libby Holman and "cheesecake." On her European tours she was cheated and snubbed by the European equivalent of Broadway's "Boys," except in London, where she enjoyed a moderately successful reception. A turn for the better came at last in her association with Antony Tucker, Hugh Laing, and Marie Rambert at the Ballet Club (now the Ballet Rambert). In the congenial company of these geniuses of the modern ballet, she restudied her art.

Returning to the States, nearly thirty years old, Agnes felt "as stripped as at nineteen, except that I had my costumes and my repertoire." But on this "second start" there were still defeats to swallow, or at best only half-successes. Just as Agnes was about to forsake ballet and get a job at the ribbon counter of Macy's, a tip came that the Russian Ballet was at last interested in staging "an American ballet by an American and not by Massine." Agnes quickly improvised a scenario and went to see Sergei Ivanovitch Denham. She convinced him and was engaged as choreographer.

"'Be arrogant,' Martha Denham advised her. . . . 'They (the Russians) won't respect you unless you are rude.'" Agnes was arrogant. Agnes was rude, both to the impresario and the largely Russian ballet group. The men of the ballet had been trained to move, in classic ballet style, "like wind-blown petals." But Agnes, now engaged in creating *Rodeo,* told them to move like cowboys—"crotch-sprung, saddle-sore, with rolled-over high heels and sweat-stained leather, ill at ease and alien to the ground, unhorsed centaurs." They groaned—and obeyed. When the girl dancers had their turn, Agnes worked the ballet members "for four hours on a boy kissing a girl at a dance." Again they groaned—and obeyed. It was Agnes that was telling them.

The result, after many days and weeks of "good pains," was a smash hit:

"We bowed and bowed. At the eighth bow, I looked into the pit. The fiddlers were beating their bows on their instruments. The others were standing up yelling. I looked at Freddie [her dancing partner] in amazement. 'Freddie,' I said, 'this is not a claque. This is not Libidin's contriving?'

" 'Darling, darling,' said Freddie, kissing me, 'this is an ovation. This is the real thing. Take it.' He pushed me forward, and all the company backed away to the edge of the stage and stood there clapping.

"We had twenty-two curtain calls."

Such is the high moment for which ballet dancer, choreographer, and dramatic artist live. But if *Dance to the Piper* were only an account of a stage career, it might be no more than the charming and sprightly personal story that, among other things, it is.

It is much more than that. The emphasis, after all, is on the "good pains"—or on the integrity of a great art and the discipline that great art exacts. Beyond that, it opens a view, enlightening and inspiring, of how a traditional art once lazily conceded to be a European monopoly can be acclimated to American subjects, American conditions, American direction. Here the curtain rises, one may feel, not only on *Rodeo, Oklahoma,* and *Carousel,* but also on something like a new era in the American theater. One of the most interesting and valuable services that Agnes De Mille has performed in writing this book is that she has told us something of what is possible. We have heard much about the "commercialism" of Broadway and of the barriers set up, especially in the realm of opera and ballet, against native American art. *Dance to the Piper* shows, conclusively as such a book can, that the iron curtain can be pierced if we recognize, as Agnes De Mille did in ballet rehearsals, that there comes a time when "one wrings the ultimate out of one's marrow" and "the astonishing fact is that it is there to be wrung."

THE PAGEANT OF LITERARY AMERICA

The Confident Years: 1885–1915. By Van Wyck Brooks. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1952. 627 pp. $6.[1]

Reviewed by ROBERT E. SPILLER

WITH THIS study of his own times, Van Wyck Brooks announces the completion of what he now calls, "Makers and Finders: A History of the Writer in America, 1800–1915." It is now possible to apply to the lifework of one of the major literary figures of our time the classic questions of criticism: What has the writer proposed to himself to do? How far has he succeeded in carrying out his own plan? But this is a review; and only a few stammering remarks can be made.

As with the Leatherstocking Tales of an earlier American past, the recommended order of reading of these five books differs from that of the writing. "The World of Washington Irving" is first in chronological order; then follow "The Flowering of New England" (still the best of the series), "The Times of Melville and Whitman," "New England: Indian Summer," and finally the present volume. But anyone who has watched Mr. Brooks spin his web during the past ten and more years will still prefer to read the books as they were written, for, like the industrious spider, the chronicler of America's literary past has proceeded from the core of meaning outward with cunning accuracy and intricate pattern, and the creative reader will do likewise. Time and space sequences are incidental.

This last work coincides in time with the latter half of "New England: Indian Summer" and in space with the Melville-Whitman book. Opening with the New York of the Eighties, it uses the arrival of James Huneker in 1886 to strike its keynote in much the way Gilbert Stuart and Horace Greeley were used in earlier volumes. The first twenty-nine chapters maintain the now familiar calmness of temper and objectivity of the chronicler. This is the time and this is the world of Mr. Brooks himself; but nowhere is he mentioned. Even his closer intimates like John Hall Wheelock, Lewis Mumford, Waldo Frank, and James Oppenheim—the circle of *The Freeman* and *The Seven Arts*—are omitted or scarcely mentioned. The

[1]From *The Saturday Review*, Vol. XXXV (January 5, 1952), pp. 11–12. Reprinted by permission of *The Saturday Review*.

role he himself played in bringing the confident years to a close with the anti-Puritan and the Mark Twain (still the most seminal of his writings) and Henry James books is given to Randolph Bourne, only momentarily important and long since departed. For the rest, this is the world of Edith Wharton, of Theodore Dreiser, of Norris and Garland, of the early Lewis and O'Neill.

Those who have read the earlier books will not need to be told that the picture is both vivid and colorful, accurate in bold outlines and important details. Real people move through scenes like characters in an historical romance, and ideas have the firmness and roundness of well-drawn people. Nowhere is the author or reader confused by the confusions of mind and emotion of these changing times. This is a panorama, not a dissection, of the past, a pageant of literary America. Mr. Brooks works best when he knows and loves his material, and he knows and loves the Concord of Emerson and the New York of the recent past. Volumes II and IV are logical necessities in the over-all plan. This and the New England book are effortless and convincing.

There is criticism—usually tolerant, wise, and shrewd—but it is of authors as people in an environment rather than of the things they wrote. Writers as different as Gertrude Stein and Edith Wharton receive equally sympathetic treatment because they depicted honestly the life they knew and so contributed to the unfolding of the American past, while harsh comment on H. L. Mencken and Paul Elmer More is directed toward their own rejections of the creative spirit of their times. Happily but inconclusively, this chronicle of America's literary past concludes with Eugene O'Neill, "uncertain, tentative, puzzled, and groping."

At this point Mr. Brooks drops his role of impartial observer of the crystal ball and dons that of his own Oliver Allston, the man of opinions. The last two chapters of "The Confident Years" (by the way, a little reminiscent of Henry Canby's "The Age of Confidence") review hastily the literary climax of the Twenties and Thirties and close with a vigorous challenge to the leadership (Delmore Schwartz has called it "dictatorship") of T. S. Eliot over his generation. For Brooks himself was once a general, and old generals, it is said, never die. There is still great consistency and importance in the now unfashionable critical ideas of this battle-scarred veteran!

For the present let it be noted that the point of the quarrel is more fairly and cogently stated here than it was in the "Coterie" name-calling of the Allston book. Here the challenge is explicit: Eliot, the rediscoverer of the values of literary tradition, has rejected the American tradition, and American writers have accepted his dictum. Even Ezra Pound or Gertrude Stein or H. L. Mencken or Henry James committed no such crime as this; for each of them accepted as premise the vitality and diversity of the American genius as something worthy at least to fight with. On the other hand, Eliot, by his effort to "re-establish the ancient connection between literary tradition and the orthodoxy that America had abandoned," has almost succeeded in accomplishing what Jonathan Edwards and Paul Elmer More and other fundamentalists of varying creeds have from time to time unsuccessfully attempted, the denial of democracy. Brooks takes his stand with Jefferson, Emerson, Whitman, Wolfe, Frost, and now Faulkner in asserting that faith in human dignity and progress—the ethical core of the democratic tradition—cannot perish and must not be denied. In doing so, he has resolved his own former dichotomy, the "high-brow" idealism of "our poets" and the "low-brow" naturalism of the present century. In these last two chapters of his fifth and final volume he steps down from the historian's rostrum to make clear the critical purpose of the whole series.

"A people," this same critic wrote in 1915, "is like a ciphered parchment which has to be held up to the fire before its hidden significances come out . . . and certainly the man who can throw American life into relief will be a man out of ninety million."

SUGGESTIONS FOR THEMES

(1) A Review of a Magazine Article.

A review of a magazine article has certain advantages to the student who is learning how to write reviews. He can read, digest, and review a magazine article in less time than it would take him to read a book. He can practice the methods and form of the short critical review within narrow limits. He can discuss the ideas or facts set forth in the article, without having to deal with such elusive problems as arise in a review of a novel or a play. In one aspect, reviewing magazine articles is a training for writing reviews of books and dramas later on. In another aspect, it is an introduction

to the world of contemporary thought, as that thought expresses itself in periodical literature; and therefore the review of a magazine article is a natural preparation for writing essays and articles dealing with current topics.

The assignment has the further purpose of familiarizing the student with the best monthly and quarterly periodicals of the English-speaking world. He can meet the assignment by visiting a news-stand and buying the magazines he needs. But probably he will want to use the occasion to become acquainted with the periodicals in the college library.

The assignment is as follows:

a. Examine a selected group of periodicals—either those recommended by your instructor or such magazines as are suggested below. Note the details of physical make-up in each magazine examined and the range and variety of the subject matter. Identify the editor or editors, and note the name and location of the publisher. Form some notion of the kind of audience that the magazine seeks to reach. Does the magazine represent a particular group or interest, or cater to some group, interest, or class? Or is it designed for general appeal?

b. Read at least three articles or essays (*not* fiction) from three different magazines.

c. Write a review of *one* of the articles that you have read.

KINDS OF MAGAZINES

In most libraries magazines are arranged alphabetically on shelves or racks and are not classified according to kind. For substantial and mature articles by distinguished authors, on subjects of current interest, the student should go to the great monthly magazines (like *Harper's*, the *Atlantic*, *Fortune*, and others) and to the quarterlies. Particular attention should be paid to the quarterlies, since these may have been outside of the student's previous range of interest. The quarterlies can cultivate literary distinction and independent thinking to a far greater degree than magazines which are compelled, as profit-making businesses, to attempt to reach a very large audience. The quarterlies are non-profit-making periodicals. It is wise, also, for the student to form some acquaintance with important professional and scholarly journals, especially in those fields which interest him. The various arts—music, painting, drama—are well represented in periodical literature.

Do *not* choose an article from any of the news-weeklies, the "pic-

ture" magazines, the various "digests," the weeklies of opinion, or from the popular weeklies and monthlies. Such periodicals have their place, but your attention is here directed to another kind of periodical literature.

(2) A Review of a Book.

Review some book which you have read, or read a book with this assignment in mind and write a review of it. The lists of readings given in this textbook will guide you to some extent. Your instructor may make other suggestions.

Reviews of the latest books will be found in the *Saturday Review,* in the book review sections of the New York *Times,* the New York *Herald Tribune,* and in the book review departments of various weekly, monthly, and quarterly magazines. You may wish to examine some of these periodicals to see how experienced writers do book reviews. You will need to be discriminating in your examination. Seek out the reviews which seem judicious, nonpartisan, impersonal. Do not use, as your model, reviews that are merely summaries, or that seem opinionated and hasty.

Observe closely the mechanics of the book review as it appears in periodicals: how the reviewer refers to a book and its author; how much he quotes and in what connection; how he begins and ends his review; how much attention he gives to summary and interpretation and how much to criticism. Of the two book reviews offered as examples in the preceding pages, note that the reviewer of Agnes De Mille's *Dance to the Piper* gives a review that is more reportorial and interpretative than critical. (See pp. 134–137.) A favorable criticism is, however, clearly suggested, and the importance of the book, in relation to the rise of an American ballet, is definitely indicated. Robert E. Spiller, on the other hand, in his review of Van Wyck Brooks' *The Confident Years,* uses the occasion to advance a critical opinion, not only of the particular book under consideration, but of the series of which it is a part. The review estimates the total worth of Brooks' contribution to literary history and describes his essential position as critic and interpreter. (See pp. 138–140.)

(3) A Review of a Play, Moving Picture, Concert, or Television Program.

Dramatic and musical criticism do not differ, in essential method, from literary criticism; and a review of a play, moving picture, opera, symphony concert, or television or radio program will there-

fore resemble a book review in its general procedure. Certain difficulties arise, however, that are not present in book reviewing: (1) drama and music cannot be competently reviewed except by a person well acquainted with the art and technique involved both in the composition and the performance of dramatic and musical works; (2) some division of purpose inevitably occurs, since the review may have to discuss both the composition itself (the play, opera, or symphony) and the performance (by actors, singers, director, and orchestra). Since it is easier to review a performance than to comment on the dramatic or musical work itself, the tendency is, in dramatic and musical criticism, to take the art work for granted—particularly if it is already well-known—and to emphasize the degree of success or failure in the performance. But if a new work is being performed, both issues have to be faced. For models in this type of reviewing, prefer the mature and well-considered reviews of established critics to the necessarily hasty newspaper reviews that have to be composed between the end of a performance and the time set as a "dead line" for publication in a morning or evening newspaper.

(4) A Review of a Sports Event

In a review of a sports event, the emphasis will be, of course, almost entirely on the performance of the teams or the individual players. Such reviews are also partly reportorial in nature—they are "news stories." Although in the past sports writers have cultivated a slangy or highly informal kind of journalistic style—and even have developed individual "jargons" in some instances—note that the affectation of such a style is not what makes sports writing effective. It may, indeed it must, use the "cant" terms of the several sports: it may be, and often is, slangy and informal; but it must nevertheless be good writing. The best sports writers—Grantland Rice, Paul Gallico, and others—are good writers, not merely good sports writers.

Chapter IV

THE PARAGRAPH

PARAGRAPHS are modern conveniences. Ancient writers got along without paragraphing, as they also got along without much punctuation. For this reason it is difficult for us to read old manuscripts and books, but the lack of paragraph divisions and punctuation may not have bothered ancient writers and readers as it bothers us. In former times people thought of literature as recorded speech. They read aloud more than we do now. Pauses, changes of voice, and gestures served to mark stops and divisions.

Today we are silent readers. We need typographical devices to mark the divisions of thought for the rapidly glancing eye. For this reason we make an indention in the left-hand margin and call the unit of thought thus set off a paragraph. The use of punctuation marks, capital letters, and paragraph divisions has been systematized only since printed books became common. All such devices are aids to the eye. Even the paragraph itself may be considered a form of punctuation. Yet, although paragraphing is sometimes as mechanical as punctuation, the paragraph has undergone a modern development and requires study on its own terms.[1]

NATURE AND FUNCTION OF THE PARAGRAPH

In modern usage, paragraphs are devices for showing the minor divisions of thought within the whole composition. Paragraphs are units, but, except for certain special purposes, they have no separate

[1]The word *paragraph* comes from two Greek words, *para* ("by the side of") and *graphein* ("to write"). Writers formerly put a mark by the side of a passage to call attention to a division of thought or to indicate some point of reference. This mark was finally conventionalized in the symbol now used as a printer's correction: ℙ or ¶. The standard practice now is to indicate a paragraph by the use of an indention on the left-hand margin of the manuscript or printed work.

role as units. They are functional units, sentence-groups which form links in a chain of thought. The paragraph indention gives notice that one phase of thought-development is ending and another phase is beginning.

A paragraph may be defined as the rounded development of a single idea. The single idea is called the topic of the paragraph. It is a definite part, or sub-topic, of the general subject, and it undergoes a building-up somewhat like the building-up of the general idea within the whole composition. In that sense the treatment of the paragraph topic is a *rounded* development. The paragraph must give the reader a sense of completeness and adequacy. That is to say, the paragraph must have order, or organization, as the whole composition has order. At the same time, it must remain a *functional* unit. It contributes its part to the discussion of the subject. The paragraph must therefore satisfy two requirements: (1) It must deal effectively with its own topic; (2) it must present the topic in clear relation to the whole composition.

The paragraph printed below appears as the fourth paragraph of Chapter XXII in Mr. Van Wyck Brooks' *The Times of Melville and Whitman*. The title of this chapter is "Mark Twain in the East." It tells how Mark Twain, during his residence at Hartford, Connecticut, enjoyed international fame as "a symbol of the new America." The first phrase of the opening sentence, "In dozens of other respects as well," links the paragraph with the discussion that Mr. Brooks is developing. And the opening sentence in its entirety states the aspect of the general discussion that is to be developed in this particular paragraph: "In dozens of other respects as well, Mark Twain's personality was an all but unparalleled emblem of the country and the time, to such a degree that his name evoked in the minds of his contemporaries a picture of America itself in this post-war age." This sentence, then, is the topic sentence of the paragraph. The succeeding sentences associate Mark Twain's writings and personal characteristics with the "picture of America" that his name evoked.

In dozens of other respects as well, Mark Twain's personality was an all but unparalleled emblem of the country and the time, to such a degree that his name evoked in the minds of his contemporaries a picture of America itself in this post-war age. He was the natural

democrat who wrote the story of the prince and pauper to show that they were identical when one removed their clothes; and who was more interested than he in money-making, inventions, machines at a moment when the capitalist system was approaching its zenith? With the instinct of the born promoter or the gambler who had acquired his taste in the "flush times" of Nevada and the Sierra mines, he was driven to invest in a dozen schemes for making money quickly, a patent steam-generator, a new process of engraving, and what not. With all the buoyant hopefulness that was also a typically American note, he was drawn to these money-making schemes as a fly to a jam-pot, although he lost fortune after fortune, and he negotiated with another inventor, an Austrian with a new machine, when he had been struggling for a year to pay his debts. He hoped to control the carpet-weaving industries of the world. He was the first author ever to use a typewriter, and he had the first telephone ever used in a private house. This house was like Beecher's Boscobel, the spreading edifice with the broad verandahs, the cupolas and columns and acres of rare shrubs and trees—it was almost a rival of Barnum's Iranistan. For the rest, Mark Twain had become a national pet.—Van Wyck Brooks' *The Times of Melville and Whitman*.[1]

LENGTH OF THE PARAGRAPH

The length of the paragraph will ordinarily depend upon the degree of elaboration needed to bring out the topic clearly. The answer to the question, "How long must a paragraph be?" must be as unsatisfactory as the countryman's description of his lost cow: "She has a tail about as long as a piece of rope and a white spot on the side next the fence." The length of the paragraph is relative. A paragraph must be long enough to do its work properly, but not so long as to weary the reader.

Instruction on this point cannot, therefore, be specific. Some authorities suggest a minimum length of 100 to 150 words and a maximum length of 350 to 400 words. Others say that the reader, especially the American reader, expects at least one break on every page and will not endure long passages of unparagraphed material.

[1]From *The Times of Melville and Whitman*, by Van Wyck Brooks. Copyright, 1947, by Van Wyck Brooks. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, E. P. Dutton & Co.

It may help to keep such instructions in mind as a working standard, provided we remember that no absolute rule can be made. Much depends upon the nature of the subject and the skill of the writer. Thoreau, in his *Walden* and elsewhere, writes some paragraphs that are fully a page in length. Yet Thoreau's paragraphs are excellent, and his writing in general is a model of English prose. Scientific treatises often contain long paragraphs that seem cumbersome and laborious. On the other hand, our current journalism, over-conscious of typographical patterns, too often cultivates a childish brevity of paragraphs.

The paragraphs of the following selection, although they conform to the "short and snappy" pattern cultivated in newspapers and news-weeklies, are too uniformly "short and snappy" to serve as good paragraph models for compositions that are not strictly journalistic:

Back during the dusty, tire-patching era of the Pope-Hartford and the Apperson Jackrabbit, the average U. S. citizen seldom got behind an automobile wheel without secretly feeling a little like a man climbing aboard a racing camel or a Mallet locomotive. In the years since, he has gone right on believing that only his innate coolness, intelligence, and mechanical aptitude have enabled him to remain master of the gas buggy. But last week Northwestern University's Traffic Institute had news for him.

High-grade morons (with a mental age of between ten and twelve years), said the institute's Research Director James Stannard Baker, make the best automobile drivers. If the moron's eyesight is a little below par, all the better—keeps his mind on the job. "The operation of a motor car," Baker explained, "is too dumb a job to command the attention of those who are particularly bright." And people with sharp eyes are apt to be distracted by shop windows or pretty faces.

On the other hand, "Once the low-mentality motorist is taught to drive properly, he will not deviate from what he has learned," and neither will he be mooning about foreign relations or calculus. Baker was of the opinion that drivers with such "handicaps" as extraordinary vision or high I. Q.'s should be warned about them when being licensed.

It seemed at first glance like a cruel blow to the great American ego. But a quick look at the U. S. accident rate seemed certain to restore the national confidence; only a race of geniuses, if the Baker

theory was to be believed, could have brought it so high.—"The Good Driver," *Time*.[1]

The extremes to avoid are evidently under-development of the paragraph, which leads to choppy composition, and over-development, which makes the composition tedious. Choppy paragraphs sometimes result from failure to see the full implications of the topic; in this instance the remedy is further development. But perhaps in a sequence of seemingly undeveloped paragraphs (as above) some of the separate topics are actually one topic; such separate paragraphs should then be combined. Over-development may result from needless repetition. Then the remedy is to prune away non-essential matter. But over-development may also result from failure to perceive the real divisions of the subject. The writer of an over-developed paragraph may be trying to treat two or three ideas as one idea. Then the remedy is to divide the paragraph. In general, bad paragraphing results from careless thinking. Good organization in the whole composition tends to bring about good paragraphing, for in the end we determine paragraph length by seeing the paragraph as a functioning part of the entire scheme, doing its proportionate share, no more and no less.

THE TOPIC SENTENCE

The topic sentence states the central idea to be developed in the paragraph. It unifies the paragraph, as the guiding purpose unifies the whole composition. In most expository paragraphs, the topic sentence will appear at or near the beginning of the paragraph, but it may be placed at the end of the paragraph, to summarize what has been said. Or it may appear in the middle of the paragraph. Sometimes a paragraph may have a topic sentence at the beginning and a sentence at the end which repeats or restates the idea of the topic sentence, and thus serves to clinch the thought and to make the paragraph ending firm.

It is quite possible to write a good paragraph without a topic sentence. Such paragraphs are fairly common in the work of practiced writers. The topic may be implied rather than expressed, if

[1]From *Time* (Vol. LX), July 28, 1952. Reprinted by courtesy of *Time*. Copyright, Time, Inc., 1952.

the paragraph is actually a unit. The paragraph may lack a topic sentence, but it must not lack a topic or have two topics. The test of a good paragraph is: Can its central idea be stated in a single compact sentence?

PARAGRAPHS AS RELATED PARTS OF THE WHOLE COMPOSITION

The topics of the paragraphs, taken in order, mark the sequence of thought of the composition. In good expository writing it often happens that the topic sentences, with little change, will make a fairly good outline of the composition. The following are the topic sentences of successive paragraphs in a selection from Charles and Mary Beard's *The Rise of American Civilization:*

1. Having settled the question of secret sessions, the members of the convention came face to face with a fundamental issue: should they adhere to the letter of their instructions . . . or should they make a revolution in the whole political régime?
2. With good reason an agile mind could take either horn of the dilemma.
3. Having come to accomplish results rather than chop logic, the majority of the members accepted the liberal view of the matter.[1]

The three topic sentences make a logical sequence. The logical organization of the passage would be represented as follows in a topical outline:

I. The dilemma of the constitution-makers
  A. To adhere to instructions or
  B. To make a revolution
II. Divergent views
III. The nature of the final choice

Expanded, the passage appears as follows in the book itself (the topic sentences are italicized):

Having settled the question of secret sessions, *the members of the convention came face to face with a fundamental issue: should they adhere to the letter of their instructions by merely amending*

[1]From Charles A. and Mary Beard's *The Rise of American Civilization,* by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

the Articles of Confederation or should they make a revolution in the whole political régime by drafting a new constitution founded on entirely different principles? The point was a nice one. The Congress which had called them together and the states that had selected them had simply authorized them to propose amendments to the existing constitutional instrument. Nevertheless such amendments, according to the same instructions, were to make the existing Articles "adequate to the exigencies of government and the preservation of the union."

With good reason an agile mind could take either horn of the dilemma. Paterson of New Jersey, speaking for the small states in danger of losing their equal and swollen authority, argued that "if the confederacy is radically wrong, let us return to the states and obtain larger powers, not assume them ourselves." Randolph of Virginia retorted that he was not "scrupulous on the point of power." Hamilton agreed; to propose any plan not adequate to the exigencies of union because it was not clearly within their instructions, he thought, would be to sacrifice the end to the means.

Having come to accomplish results rather than to chop logic, the majority of the members accepted the liberal view of the matter and refused to be bound by the letter of the existing law. They did not amend the Articles of Confederation; they cast that instrument aside and drafted a fresh plan of government. Nor did they merely send the new document to the Congress and then to the state legislatures for approval; on the contrary they appealed over the heads of these authorities to the voters of the states for a ratification of their revolutionary work. Finally, declining to obey the clause of the Articles which required unanimous approval for every amendment, they frankly proposed that the new system of government should go into effect when sanctioned by nine of the thirteen states, leaving the others out in the cold under the wreck of the existing legal order, in case they refused to ratify.—Charles A. and Mary Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization*, Vol. I.[1]

METHODS OF DEVELOPING THOUGHT WITHIN THE PARAGRAPH

Since the paragraph is the *rounded development* of an idea, it cannot be simply a loose collection of sentences. The content of the paragraph is determined by its function as a part of the whole

[1]From Charles A. and Mary Beard's *The Rise of American Civilization*, by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

composition. Its *form* is determined by the kind of treatment which is used to give the paragraph topic a rounded development.

The organization of a paragraph will depend upon the nature of its topic and upon what the writer proposes to do with that topic at the particular stage of thought which it is intended to mark in the total scheme of the composition. In descriptive and narrative writing, and particularly in narrative writing, paragraph divisions may seem rather arbitrary. They may indicate the stages of the action, or may emphasize some phase of an incident or quality or aspect of an object, upon which a writer wishes to dwell, or which he prefers to indicate briefly. The descriptive or narrative paragraph cannot generally be held to strict rules; it raises special problems which need not be considered here. But the rounded development mentioned above is normal in the paragraphs of expository and argumentative writing. Such paragraphs, indeed, will commonly have logical organization, and the topic may be developed by any one of the various methods of logical organization, or by such combination of methods as need may suggest.

The method chosen, for any given paragraph, must be the one that will express the thought most clearly and adequately. A writer does not set out in cold blood to develop a paragraph by this or that method. It will do him no good to have at hand a check-list of methods of development, and use them mechanically, without regard to his subject and his purpose. Rather, he must determine what method his subject-matter demands, at any particular point. If he schools himself in thinking logically, if he has a proper respect for his subject and for his readers, he will soon learn to use apt and right methods.

There are several common methods of logical organization. They are not peculiar to the paragraph as a form. They are nothing less and nothing more than the methods by which expository writing, as well as most argumentative writing, generally proceeds. They are explained here separately, one by one, that the student may become aware of them and may consciously strive to master them. It would be perfectly proper to say that they represent studies in the possibilities of expository—or argumentative—techniques; but they may be practiced, with profit, within the small scale of the paragraph. Such methods are discussed more broadly in Chapter VIII.

There are at least seven methods of logical development.

(1) **Particulars and Details.** Expand the topic statement by giving the particulars that substantiate it or the details which are the components of the topic. This is one of the most convincing ways to amplify a general statement. Only through clear and lively detail can the writer convey to the reader the total impression of the topic that exists in his own mind. A general statement, when unsupported by specific detail, is vague and unconvincing.

In the paragraph that follows, Constance Rourke first makes a general statement about the bold, legendary Crockett. Next come the specific details.

Then Crockett reappeared in popular stories as though he had never died, assuming an even bolder legendary stature than before. The story of his life in one of the almanacs began by picturing him as a baby giant planted in a rock bed as soon as he was born and watered with wild buffalo's milk. Another declared that as a boy he tied together the tails of two buffaloes and carried home tiger cubs in his cap. In another he wrung the tail off a comet, and announced that he could "travel so all lightnin' fast that I've been known to strike fire against the wind." Lightning glanced through all the stories. By leaping astride the lightning Crockett escaped from a tornado on the Mississippi when houses came apart and trees walked out by their roots. He could make lightning by striking his own eye. He could make fire by rubbing a flint with his knuckles. On one of his adventures he was barred by an "Injun rock so 'tarnal high, so all flinty hard that it will turn off a common streak of lightnin' and make it point downward and look as flat as a cow's tail." Once he escaped up Niagara Falls on an alligator. "The alligator walked up the great hill of water as slick as a wild cat up a white oak."—Constance Rourke, *American Humor.*[1]

To set forth in this way the details that constitute the parts of a whole is actually *analysis.* Crockett's legendary career (his "bolder legendary stature") is analyzed, in the paragraph quoted, as follows: (1) tales of Crockett's mythical babyhood; (2) tales of his cosmic feats; (3) tales of his strength and daring. For a complete discussion of analysis, see Chapter VIII.

(2) **Illustration.** The purpose of illustration is to give concreteness to the discussion. To illustrate is, literally, to "illuminate."

[1]Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, publishers.

Examples, instances, and analogies illuminate the topic. They bring the discussion out of the realm of the abstract. If we speak of despotism, we may refer to Cæsar as a specific example of despotism. We may use the American Revolution as an actual instance of a successful patriotic uprising. We may illustrate the instinctive behavior of insects by referring to the wasp, which stores up grubs and spiders for progeny that it will never see.

The following paragraph illustrates by a particular instance the power of fetishism among African savages.

Highly efficient primitive social and religious rules are common. The African fetishist, for instance, has built into his religion and his life an almost perfect system of crime prevention. The fetishist believes that all objects, as well as all living things, have duality—an apparent substance and a living soul. There is an understanding between all souls. A man enjoys a kind of protection from his guardian spirit; so does a coconut. If the man steals the coconut the man's own guardian soul will view the procedure with displeasure, and the coconut's soul, for its part, will take measures of vengeance. The thief, shorn of protection, will almost certainly, he believes, blunder into some disaster. He will stumble down an embankment or be wounded when he hunts. No one need even know of the crime. The owner of the coconut may remain oblivious of his loss, but the coconut itself knows that it has been stolen. That suffices. . . . The result is that in uncivilized Africa thievery is practically unknown.—John W. Vandercook, "Men Without Wheels."[1]

In Vandercook's paragraph, the illustration brings out an *actual* example of fetishism.

Somewhat different is illustration which proceeds by *analogy:* that is, by stating a possible or imagined likeness between two things. Analogy is a resemblance that may be reasoned from, so that from the likeness in certain respects we may infer that other and deeper relations exist. A family may be thought of as a "state" in its unity, in its organization with a head and subordinate parts, and in its autonomy. From certain observed resemblances others are inferred; and so in every analogy. Although we may doubt the

[1]*Harper's Magazine*, February, 1938. Reprinted by permission of *Harper's Magazine*.

exactness of the parallel, by analogy we somehow accept many inferences from the known phenomena.

The object of analogy is to enable the reader to visualize, and through visualization to understand. Analogy explains the unknown in terms of the known, the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar, as in the example given below.

The troubles of America come chiefly from the fact that technology advances faster than social and legal adjustment. It is a race. In a race, as the Red Queen pointed out to Alice, you have to run as fast as you can to keep your place, and twice as fast to get ahead. Merely to make progress in the right direction will not keep us from falling further behind. In our political controversies it often happens that both parties agree, in what seems to be a commendable way, as to the principles of action that should be followed. But they often differ as to the extent of action to be taken. It should be recognized that the difference between enough and not enough is the difference between a successful policy and an ineffective gesture. "Purty near ain't quite half."—David Cushman Coyle, "The American Way."[1]

Thus an analogy explains an idea or a thing by saying what it is like. In the above paragraph a difficult idea, the rapid advance of technology, is said to be like a race; or, more particularly, like the fictional race run in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass,* by Alice and the Red Queen against time. Generally one of the terms of an analogy is imaginary. The advance of technology is not *in reality* a race against anything, but it is very like a race that we can picture in our minds. Such a likeness is in the nature of a figure of speech.

(3) **Comparison and Contrast.** Comparison and contrast are among the commonest methods of logical development. They are distinguished from analogy by the fact that the thinking is done always in terms of the real and actual. One of the terms is not imaginary, as in analogy, but both of the things compared or contrasted actually exist. Thus Macaulay, when he is explaining Francis Bacon's contribution to modern thought, compares the philosophy of Bacon, the modern, to the philosophy of Plato, the ancient Greek. When the automobile made its appearance, people called it a horse-

[1]*Harper's Magazine,* February, 1938. Reprinted by permission of *Harper's Magazine.*

less carriage; they were saying, in effect, that the automobile was like a carriage without a horse. The effort in such explanations is to bring the idea or thing discussed within the reader's own experience—to get him to see the new thing in terms of something that he already knows.

Comparison and contrast may be used in a single brief passage, in order to make a swift illustration, or they may occupy a pair or a group of paragraphs. The following paragraph is developed entirely by comparison and contrast.

In the American civil war, Grant stood for authority and Lee for liberty; neither were autocrats, but the servants of democratic governments. And of the two Lee's problem was more difficult, for in order to win the war it was essential that he should exert his authority if only to establish a workable policy, and this he never did. Grant, on the other hand, had to gain that freedom of control which would enable him to mould the policy of his government into strategical form; this, thanks to the good will of Lincoln, he was able to do. Lee could not impose his will upon Davis, and though Grant never attempted to impose his on Lincoln, his quiet unostentatious self-reliance and common sense imposed it for him. In Lee's place it is unlikely that he would have done much better than Lee; for neither he nor Lee was a true revolutionary general. Yet I much doubt whether in Grant's place Lee would have done half as well as Grant, for his outlook on war was narrow and restricted, and he possessed neither the character nor the personality of a General-in-Chief.—Major-General J. F. C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee.*

(4) **Repetition.** The value of repetition is that it strengthens the topic statement by repeating it in different forms. The thought is not so much developed as it is reinforced and clarified by being displayed in different lights. In argumentative writing, particularly, the repetition of an opinion or claim "drives home" the point. The repeated statements are so many hammer blows. The two paragraphs following, taken from classic American speeches by Lincoln and Calhoun, illustrate effectively the use of repetition.

If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do, and how to do it. We are now far into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to slavery agitation.

Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only not ceased, but has constantly augmented. In my opinion it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." I believe this government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall; but I do expect it will cease to be divided. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South.—Abraham Lincoln, The "House Divided" Speech. Springfield, Illinois, June 17, 1858.

It follows, from what has been stated, that it is a great and dangerous error to suppose that all people are equally entitled to liberty. It is a reward to be earned, not a blessing to be universally lavished on all alike;—a reward reserved for the intelligent, the patriotic, the virtuous and deserving;—and not a boon to be bestowed upon a people too ignorant, degraded and vicious, to be capable either of appreciating it or of enjoying it. Nor is it any disparagement to liberty, that such is, and ought to be the case. On the contrary, its greatest praise,—its proudest distinction is, that an all-wise providence has reserved it, as the noblest and highest reward for the development of our faculties, moral and intellectual. A reward more appropriate than liberty could not be conferred on the deserving; —nor a punishment inflicted on the undeserving more just, than to be subject to lawless and despotic rule. This dispensation seems to be the result of some fixed law;—and every effort made to disturb or defeat it, by attempting to elevate a people in the scale of liberty, above the point to which they are entitled to rise, must ever prove abortive, and end in disappointment.—John C. Calhoun, *A Disquisition on Government.*

(5) **Definition.** A paragraph may be developed by definition, that is, by explaining the meaning of the topic or of some term connected with the topic. Definition sets bounds to a discussion. It establishes the limits within which a topic or a term is valid. Definition may be either formal or informal. A formal definition is an expansion of a logical definition. In logical definition the term is first set forth as a member of a class (*genus*) of ideas or objects. Then are given the qualities which distinguish it from other members of

the class. These constitute the *differentia.*[1] Thus, in the definition of "zoning" given below, the term "zoning" is first put in a certain class ("division of a city"). The particulars which follow distinguish the zone divisions from other kinds of divisions, such as wards, voting precincts, fire districts, sanitary districts, residence and business blocks, and the like.

Most paragraphs of definition do not build up a strictly logical definition. They are likely to be informal in character; but they must still meet the test of logical definition.

Definition is particularly useful in expository and argumentative writing, where the progress of the discussion may often depend upon a correct understanding of some key word.

For a discussion of formal and informal definition see Chapter VIII.

The following paragraph illustrates the use of definition in ordinary expository writing.

Zoning, as its name implies, is the division of a city into zones, or districts, for the purpose of applying different regulations to the property within each district. It includes limitations on the height of buildings, the percentage of total lot area which they may occupy, and the uses to which they may be put. It is intended to insure a well-rounded municipal development by stabilizing the character of neighborhoods and preventing the multiplication of congested areas. It is, in fact, only a phase of city planning, but so important a phase as to merit separate consideration.—Austin F. MacDonald, *American City Government and Administration.*[2]

(6) **Logical Relationships: Cause and Effect; Proof.** A paragraph may be developed by showing logical relationships: by following out a chain of reasoning from one idea to another or from one thing to another. A chain of reasoning may go from cause to effect or from effect back to cause. Thus one might explain how the need for zoning cities arises out of the need of protecting residence values, real-estate investments, or merely out of civic pride. A paragraph on cosmetics might trace the use of rouge and lipstick to feminine vanity or to mere convention; or it might show the

[1]"That property or mark distinguishing a species from other species of the same genus."—*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary.*

[2]Reprinted by permission of the Thomas Y. Crowell Company, publishers.

results of the use of cosmetics—a notion of beauty as something to be artifically cultivated and a corresponding dislike of the natural and non-artificial.

Explanations made in terms of historical background and origins are likely to use cause and effect as a method of development. The feudal system, the English Reform Bill of 1832, or the disestablishment of the Anglican Church in Virginia might be discussed in terms of the social and political conditions that produced the changes.

Closely allied to this procedure is the method of giving reasons for belief in a certain view or the method of presenting evidence in proof of a certain statement. A geologist may report that a certain spot will not yield oil because the rock formations in that locality are not of the right type. A scholar may argue that one of Shakespeare's plays derives from Plutarch's *Lives*, and sustain his point by tracing similarities between the stories told in the play and in Plutarch.

In the following paragraphs Charles and Mary Beard trace out the effect of mass production upon American life.

The whole scheme of American life, as well as the structure of classes and the economy of the family, felt the impress of the changing machine process as mass production and the vivid selling operations which attended it scattered the same commodities and identical ideas over the entire country. Even distant lands were being transformed by an Americanization on the pattern which Matthew Arnold had so dreaded fifty years before, their more ancient arts and moralities corroding under the invasion of technology and standardized wares. Queens on thrones were soon endorsing American facial creams, for a price, and ex-premiers approving American cigarettes. With all his energies every great manufacturer in the United States strove to capture at least the national market. Makers of phrases also wrought for a continent. The slogans and catchwords of advertising sped from sea to sea on the morning of their publication—photographs and designs eventually flying as quickly as words on the wings of electricity.

Within a week of their announcement the modes of New York, Boston, and Chicago became the modes of Winesburg, Gopher Prairie, and Centerville and swept on without delay into remote mountain fastnesses. Thus the technology of interchangeable parts was reflected in the clothing, sports, amusements, literature, architecture, manners, and speech of the multitude. The curious stamp of uniformity which had arrested the attention of James Bryce at the

dawn of the machine age sank deeper and deeper into every phase of national life—material and spiritual. Even those who bent their energies to varieties of social reform, to the improvement of education, the management of drives for benevolence, the distribution of knowledge, and the advancement of public health brought the nation within their purview and utilized the advertising courage of the marketplace. And all these tendencies, springing naturally out of the whirl of business, were encouraged by the conscious struggle for efficiency in every domain, by the discovery and application of the most economical apparatus for the accomplishment of given ends.—Charles A. and Mary Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization*, Vol. II.[1]

(7) **Combined Methods.** A study of the paragraphs given above will show that even in those specimens which illustrate particular methods of paragraph development, there is some combining of methods. The paragraphs from *The Rise of American Civilization* use cause and effect along with details and specific instances. It is common to find definition followed by illustration; and repetition may make use of detail, comparison, analogy. Combining methods is not exceptional; rather it is a normal method. Probably the majority of paragraphs in any piece of good writing will use more than one method of thought development.

In practice, writers do not stop to ask themselves whether they are giving a neat example of this or that method of paragraph development. If they did so, writing would become as stiff and formal as the laws of the old-fashioned rhetoric. Everything would seem to be cut to fit a pattern.

There is only one rule: use the paragraph development that seems to fit the situation. Try different methods as the orderly development of the thought may suggest. Remember that the paragraph is a flexible unit, but its substance must always be firm, and the development of the thought must be a rounded development.

LINKING THE PARTS: TRANSITION WITHIN THE PARAGRAPH

In the paragraph as in the whole composition an orderly sequence of thought best guarantees that the thought will move smoothly from beginning to end. In many paragraphs, however, the sequence

[1]Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

needs occasional markings to suggest and to emphasize the relation between the parts of the paragraph. Many paragraphs can be divided into subordinate parts which, taken together, constitute the topic. In other words, a paragraph can often be outlined, much as a whole composition can be outlined.

For example, in the second paragraph by the Beards, on page 158, the topic statement, in paraphrase, is this: "The technology of interchangeable parts standardized American habits." The Beards then show that technology brought uniformity to country districts as well as to metropolitan areas; that this uniformity affected every phase of national life; that it affected even those who sought to change American life—the reformers; and that the whole process was a by-product of the struggle for efficiency. The outline of this paragraph would be as follows:

Topic statement: The technology of interchangeable parts standardized American habits.

1. Metropolitan modes swept into country districts.
2. There was uniformity in every phase of American life.
3. Even social reformers used the methods of business.
4. All of these tendencies were encouraged by the struggle for efficiency.

The directive expression *thus* joins the first two sentences. The phrase, *curious stamp of uniformity*, repeats the idea of standardization. The phrase, *every phase of national life*, is a further repetition, and because it is a repetition of an idea it is a linking phrase. The word *even* connects the third point with the two preceding points. The phrase, *and all these tendencies*, links the final point with all that has gone before; *all these* is not only a connecting but a summarizing phrase.

An examination of the paragraphs in good expository prose will disclose a variety of connectives, or transitional expressions, like those pointed out above. Ordinarily such expressions are used at the junction of the parts of the paragraph. They are not to be used where the junction is already evident. To overweight a paragraph with such words as *and, but, nevertheless, moreover*, is worse than to have no connectives at all. A spare style is better than a fat style. Transitional devices should be used where they actually help, and not otherwise.

The way to acquire a feeling for smooth transitions is to examine critically one's own writing and to study the practice of the best writers. The following list of transitional devices will be helpful:

1. *Simple connectives:* and, but, for.

   Use these sparingly. It has never been wrong to use them at the beginnings of sentences. Good writers, of all periods of our literature, have felt free to begin sentences, at times, with *and* or *but.* But it is wrong to use them often in this way.

2. *Pronouns and pronominal adjectives:*

   The personal pronouns: he, she, it, they

   Pronominal adjectives: this, that, these, those

   A pronoun connects because it refers to an antecedent. When the antecedent of a pronoun or pronominal adjective is in the sentence preceding, then the two sentences are joined economically and often quite effectively.

3. *Repetitions of significant words or phrases; or variant repetitions through synonyms.*

   In the paragraph from Calhoun, given above, note the repetition of the words *liberty* and *reward,* and the use of variant repetition in *blessing, boon, punishment.*

4. *Directive expressions:*

   a. Indicating addition to or continuance of the thought: furthermore, moreover, finally, for example, similarly, likewise, best of all, last and worst, etc.

   b. Indicating subtraction from or reversal of the thought: however, on the contrary, strange as it seems, none the less.

   c. Result: in consequence, accordingly, therefore, hence, as a result, thus.

SPECIAL USES OF THE PARAGRAPH

The typical paragraph has the rounded development described in the preceding pages, but in practice the paragraph is an adaptable and highly flexible instrument, changeable and various as the thought that produces it. In the hands of the best writers it assumes many shapes and has many degrees of complexity. No theoretical instruction in the principles of paragraph writing can set forth all the possible degrees of complexity, or all the varieties of form. A student's observation of what the best writers do, coupled with his own exercises

in paragraph writing, will achieve more than all the theoretical instruction that could be given him. Instruction is given him, in fact, by way of guidance rather than of prescription. Instruction opens his eyes to the available technical devices. It teaches him what to look for when he is analyzing paragraph structure. It encourages him to cultivate a sense of form in his own paragraphing.

Although the typical paragraph of expository and argumentative writing has a rounded development, there are certain other kinds of paragraphs which do not always have this typical rounded development. Such paragraphs serve special functions in the whole composition. The most important of these special kinds of paragraphs are: (1) Introductory paragraphs; (2) Concluding paragraphs; (3) Transitional paragraphs; (4) Short paragraphs used for emphasis; (5) Paragraphs in dialogue.

1. *INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPHS*

Introductory paragraphs may announce the guiding purpose or thesis of the whole composition, or, in outline, may forecast a plan of treatment, or may strike the keynote of the composition. An introductory paragraph should tend toward brevity rather than length. A labored and pompous introductory paragraph wearies the reader's attention and defeats rather than helps the writer's purpose. The introductory paragraph should be interesting. If it does not catch the reader's attention and tempt him to go on, it is worse than useless.

The following are examples of introductory paragraphs:

1. The year 1880 is a key-date in the history of ciphers. The experience of the Franco-Prussian and the Russo-Turkish Wars had now confirmed what the American Civil War had foreshadowed—that an age of mass armies had come, in which it would no longer be possible for the general to keep his battle under observation and to control its course by aides carrying word-of-mouth orders. He must work from the map, and map strategy demands communications fast as lightning, fast as the electric telegraph, and secret as the grave. Ciphers had been raised from the status of something a soldier could have with advantage to something he must have.—Fletcher Pratt, *Secret and Urgent: The Story of Codes and Ciphers.*[1]

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2. Most Americans would probably be surprised to discover that productivity in the United States is growing faster now than it was a century ago. They have uncritically gained the impression that our economy was more dynamic when it was young and that, as it has been getting older, it has been losing vigor. Many radicals have proclaimed that capitalism is decaying, and many conservatives gloomily assert that it is being ruined by bad public policies. Both the radicals and the conservatives are wrong.—Sumner H. Slichter, "Productivity: Still Going Up," *Atlantic Monthly.*[1]

3. Among the generality of people the number who prefer *Paradise Lost* to the current best seller is probably smaller than the number who prefer Bach to a "name band," and no one would expect either group to be very large. But among the musical, even those who have an imperfect sympathy with Bach would not dream of sniffing at the *B Minor Mass*, while many of the literary sniff freely at *Paradise Lost*—though such persons, who shy away from Milton's biblical story and learned seriousness, will embrace with enthusiasm the often ponderous erudition and philosophizing of Thomas Mann's novel of Joseph. However, we are not much concerned with the legendary terrors which, in many minds, envelop a poet identified with religious themes and sublimity of imagination and tone. We are concerned with the critical reaction against Milton, and *Paradise Lost* in particular, which has been a very audible phenomenon of the past twenty-five years or more. That reaction, to be sure, has made small headway among those who really know Milton, and it has involved only a few critics, but it has for the most part been carried on with the kind of arrogant self-confidence which these same critics regard as one of Milton's central defects, and in literary criticism, as in other forms of propaganda, confident assertion goes a long way. So far as the reaction has embodied genuinely critical ideas, it has of course been salutary. We do not want to admire Milton or any other writer by tradition and blind faith, and if antagonism of any sort compels us to re-examine his credentials and our own feelings and opinions, it is all to the good.—Douglas Bush, *Paradise Lost in Our Time—Some Comments.*[2]

4. To attack deep-rooted prejudices and oppose the current of opinion is a task of great difficulty and hazard. It commonly requires length of time and favorable circumstances to diffuse and establish

[1]From *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 190, July, 1952. Reprinted by permission of *The Atlantic Monthly*.

[2]Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Cornell University Press.

a sentiment among the body of the people, but when a sentiment has acquired a stamp of time and the authority of general custom, it is too firm to be shaken by the efforts of an individual: Even error becomes too sacred to be violated by the assaults of innovation.—Noah Webster, *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language*, 1783.

2. *CONCLUDING PARAGRAPHS*

A concluding paragraph rounds off discussion of the subject. It aims to give the reader a sense of completeness and finality. It should not be a formal résumé, but it may sum up the discussion pithily, perhaps by some brief restatement which is likely to be an emphatic generalization or some forceful comment on the significance of what has been said. In composing his final paragraph the writer strives to make the best possible impression on his reader, for last impressions are often decisive and enduring. At the same time, one must remember that every paragraph, the last no less than the first, is to be judged in the light of what it does within the composition as a whole. *It is not necessary to make up a special concluding paragraph if the composition brings itself naturally to an end at a certain paragraph.* The concluding paragraph must not seem to be added as an afterthought or as an ornamental peroration.

The following paragraph taken from James Truslow Adams's "The American Dream," is a good example:

It seems to me that it can be only in some such way, carried out in all departments of our national life, that the American dream can be wrought into an abiding reality. I have little trust in the wise paternalism of politicians or the infinite wisdom of business leaders. We can look neither to the government nor to the heads of the great corporations to guide us into the paths of a satisfying and humane existence as a great nation unless we, as multitudinous individuals, develop some greatness in our own individual souls. Until countless men and women have decided in their own hearts, through experience and perhaps disillusion, what is a genuinely satisfying life, a "good life" in the old Greek sense, we need look to neither political nor business leaders. Under our political system it is useless, save by the rarest of happy accidents, to expect a politician to rise higher than the source of his power. So long also as we are ourselves content with a mere extension of the material basis of existence, with the multiply-

ing of our material possessions, it is absurd to think that the men who can utilize that power for themselves will abandon both to become spiritual leaders of a democracy that despises spiritual things. Just so long as wealth and power are our sole badges of success, so long will ambitious men strive to attain them.—James Truslow Adams, *The Epic of America.*[1]

3. *TRANSITIONAL PARAGRAPHS*

A transitional paragraph marks a division between groups of paragraphs (sections) of a composition or at times between paragraphs that in themselves develop aspects of the discussion which need a clearly accented transition from one aspect to the next. In either instance, a transitional paragraph is a device for making the junction of parts evident and smooth. It may be a *summarizing* paragraph, in which the preceding discussion is briefly restated and the direction of the ensuing thought-development is foreshadowed. Occasionally it may be a *one-sentence* paragraph of a purely conjunctive type. In any case it is functional in nature; it both divides and links; and its content is generally slight. (See pages 40–41.)

The following are examples of transitional paragraphs:

It is impossible to answer the question categorically because the items are intangible. But we find ourselves reasoning about it as well as we can—which is as follows.—John Crowe Ransom, "Poets Without Laurels."

If now we are not resigned to the teaching of sophistry or of etiquette, there remains only the severe and lofty discipline of *vere loqui.* This means teaching people to speak the truth, which can be done only by teaching them the right names of things. We approach here a critical point in the argument, which will determine the possibility of defining what is correct in expression; we come in fact to the relation of sign and thing signified.—Richard M. Weaver, "To Write the Truth."[2]

So far we have been able to trace with some precision the ways in which Ben Newton stimulated the growth of Emily Dickinson's

[1]Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Little, Brown & Company, Boston.

[2]From *College English,* Vol. 10, October, 1948. Reprinted by permission of the author and of *College English.*

mind. But she was a woman as well as a poet. What of her womanly feelings? Can we affirm with assurance that Newton never assumed the role of young lover that legend, with whatever wild exaggerations, pictures? Did he not leave Amherst because Edward Dickinson refused to countenance him as a son-in-law? The evidence is inconclusive. Newton was poor and consumptive and held advanced views —one could understand why Emily's father might consider him no suitable match for her. On the other hand, Newton's marriage little more than a year after his leaving Amherst does not seem to indicate that his heart was deeply engaged there. From all we can learn, his was not a shallow nature.—George Frisbie Whicher, *This Was a Poet.*

4. *SHORT PARAGRAPHS FOR EMPHASIS*

In many magazines and newspapers, the practice is to "break" the solidity of the printed column or page by making paragraph divisions arbitrarily, with no particular regard for actual paragraph structure. This practice carries to an extreme the principle of eye-convenience suggested at the beginning of this chapter. Such paragraphing is a cheap means of securing emphasis. It is not to be commended as a standard practice.

In rare instances, nevertheless, a good writer may paragraph a single sentence, merely for emphasis, as this sentence is paragraphed.

5. *PARAGRAPHS IN DIALOGUE*

The quoted speeches of persons engaging in dialogue are always paragraphed separately. Quoted matter of any sort may be set off in an independent paragraph, especially when the quotation is lengthy.

The following brief selection illustrates the paragraphing of dialogue.

"Why, foolish!" said he, "all things converge as they lie further away from your eye. That's perspective."

"But then parallel lines do meet far, far away."

"No. But they seem to."

"But how can they seem to, if they really don't?"

"Well, er—" the bright boy hesitated painfully. "It's all in your eye."

"My eyes don't converge——"

"I don't mean that. When you look at things far off, you see them as smaller than when they are close. Lines that are four feet apart close up seem only an inch or two apart a mile off."

The bright boy gave up. But I worried him.

—Walter B. Pitkin, *On My Own.*

SPECIMEN PARAGRAPHS FOR ANALYSIS

Analyze the paragraphs given below. Point out the topic sentence of each paragraph; note where it is placed; note any instances of paragraphs without topic sentences. Study the methods of development and the transitional devices.

1. Many other kinds of wild life depend on tree diseases. My pileated woodpeckers chisel living pines to extract fat grubs from the diseased heartwood. My barred owls find surcease from crows and jays in the hollow heart of an old basswood; but for this diseased tree their sundown serenade would probably be silenced. My wood ducks nest in hollow trees; every June brings its brood of downy ducklings to my woodland slough. All squirrels depend, for permanent dens, on a delicately balanced equilibrium between a rotting cavity and the scar tissue with which the tree attempts to close the wound. The squirrels referee the contest by gnawing out the scar tissue when it begins unduly to shrink the amplitude of their front door.—Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac.*[1]

2. Some anglers, if they could, would have trout feed around the clock to fit snugly into their own itinerary. Fortunately for the sport, Nature has better ideas on the subject and takes suggestions from no one. "When grub's on, trout feed, and when it ain't, they just loaf" would be the guide's laconic comment on sol-lunar tables and die-hard anglers. For he has learned, as do most of us in time, that trout have an irritating way of upsetting too finely drawn theories as to the hour and manner of their feeding.—Henry R. Newitt, "Trout of the Battenkill."[2]

3. The men of the lake fleet have a robust scorn for the attitude of condescension on the part of their salt-water brethren. They return the compliment with a certain arrogance of their own. They assert that ocean sailors are grossly ignorant of the dangers and responsibil-

[1]From *A Sand County Almanac,* by Aldo Leopold. Copyright, 1949, by Oxford University Press, Inc. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

[2]From *Vermont Life Magazine,* Vol. VI, Summer, 1952. Reprinted by permission of the author and of *Vermont Life Magazine.*

ities of sailing on the lakes. It is really a sore point with them; and they mention it often. They remind you that their ships carry each season a tonnage which makes the transoceanic fleets look like a small coastal trade by comparison; and that their captains put a 640-footer, loaded with 18,000 tons of ore, through narrow channels, into small rivers, and lay her alongside a wharf without the aid of special pilots or tugs, and do it as a matter of course, all in the day's work. Taking an oceangoing ship out of New York Harbor, across the wide-open ship roads of the north Atlantic, and dropping anchor at Plymouth is easy, monotonous routine in comparison with the skill required to bring a freighter across the lakes and through all the intricate channels from Duluth to Buffalo in the rain, the fog, and the sleet of early November. The ocean liner has a margin for error and a big sea to play about in, but a miscalculation of only a few inches along more than a hundred miles of the lake channels, crowded with ships like trucks on a highway, would bring disaster.—Harlan Hatcher, *Lake Erie*.[1]

4. Nor may the genuine gold, the gems, when brought to light at last, be probably ushered forth from any of the quarters currently counted on. Today, doubtless, the infant genius of American poetic expression (eluding those highly-refined imported and gilt-edged themes, and sentimental and butterfly flights, pleasant to orthodox publishers—causing tender spasms of the coteries, and warranted not to chafe the sensitive cuticle of the most exquisitely gossamer delicacy), lies sleeping far away, happily unrecognized and uninjured by the coteries, the art-writers, the talkers and critics of the saloons, or the lecturers in the colleges—lies sleeping, aside, unrecking itself, in some western idiom, or native Michigan or Tennessee repartee, or stump-speech—or in Kentucky or Georgia, or the Carolinas—or in some slang or local song or allusion of the Manhattan, Boston, Philadelphia, or Baltimore mechanic—or up in the Maine woods—or off in the hut of the California miner, or crossing the Rocky mountains, or along the Pacific railroad—or on the breasts of the young farmers of the northwest, or Canada, or boatmen of the lakes. Rude and coarse nursing-beds, these; but only from such beginnings and stocks, indigenous here, may haply arrive, be grafted, and sprout, in time, flowers of genuine American aroma, and fruits truly and fully our own.—Walt Whitman, *Democratic Vistas*, 1871.

[1]From *Lake Erie*, by Harlan Hatcher. Copyright, 1945, by The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., and used by special permission of the publisher, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc.

5. We have an English proverb that says: "He that would thrive, must ask his wife." It was lucky for me that I had one as much disposed to industry and frugality as myself. She assisted me cheerfully in my business, folding and stitching pamphlets, tending shop, purchasing old linen rags for the paper-makers, etc., etc. We kept no idle servants, our table was plain and simple, our furniture of the cheapest. For instance, my breakfast was a long time bread and milk (no tea), and I ate it out of a twopenny earthen porringer, with a pewter spoon. But mark how luxury will enter families, and make a progress, in spite of principle: being called one morning to breakfast, I found it in a China bowl, with a spoon of silver! They had been bought for me without my knowledge by my wife, and had cost her the enormous sum of three-and-twenty shillings, for which she had no other excuse or apology to make, but that she thought *her* husband deserved a silver spoon and a China bowl as well as any of his neighbors. This was the first appearance of plate and China in our house, which afterward, in a course of years, as our wealth increased, augmented gradually to several hundred pounds in value.—Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin.*

6. One step brought us into the family sitting-room, without any introductory lobby or passage: they call it here "the house" preeminently. It includes kitchen and parlor, generally; but I believe at Wuthering Heights the kitchen is forced to retreat altogether into another quarter; at least I distinguished a chatter of tongues, and a clatter of culinary utensils, deep within; and I observed no signs of roasting, boiling, or baking, about the huge fireplace; nor any glitter of copper saucepans and tin cullenders on the walls. One end, indeed, reflected splendidly both light and heat from ranks of immense pewter dishes, interspersed with silver jugs and tankards, towering row after row, on a vast oak dresser, to the very roof. The latter had never been underdrawn: its entire anatomy lay bare to an enquiring eye, except where a frame of wood laden with oatcakes and clusters of legs of beef, mutton, and ham, concealed it. Above the chimney were sundry villainous old guns and a couple of horsepistols; and, by way of ornament, three gaudily painted canisters disposed along its ledge. The floor was of smooth white stone; the chairs, high-backed, primitive structures, painted green: one or two heavy black ones lurking in the shade. In an arch under the dresser reposed a huge, liver-colored bitch pointer, surrounded by a swarm of squealing puppies; and other dogs haunted other recesses.—Emily Bronte, *Wuthering Heights.*

7. Let's overlook its convenient forgetfulness of such sources of demand as style changes, personal size changes, and the desire for a varied wardrobe, and grant that the picture's [*The Man in the White Suit*] central assumption that the invention of a stainless and "wear-out-less" fabric would permanently reduce the demand for clothing to, say, one-tenth of its present level. Then consumers would spend on clothing only one tenth as much, say, as they do at present. This means that they would have the remaining nine-tenths left over to spend on other things—more and better food, housing, furniture, roads, parks, gardens, entertainment, travel. The workers dropped from the textile industry would be absorbed in other industries to produce the added commodities demanded from those industries. As mankind could meet its needs with less effort, the working week might be still further reduced.—Henry Hazlitt, "The Myth in the White Suit."[1]

8. But to Eliot such experience and such contemplation are inadequate. Natural law is meaningless, unless complemented and completed by spiritual law, and these two creative 'spheres' become united in the symbol of Incarnation. Capitalized, it is the ultimate symbol of revelation, illumination, transfiguration. But it is also the process at work in all man's true experiences of self-fulfillment. On earth, in religious experience, it has its highest reflection in the symbol of the saint, which Eliot has used in one of his plays. In the secular world its revelation is the presence of art, and that is the symbol which he chose as the title of *Four Quartets*. On the musical side perhaps we can expand and extend its overtones to include 'the music of the spheres!' But Eliot is a poet, and his own creative sphere is that of poetry. The relation of poetry to the central symbol is of a very precise kind. The ultimate revelation is the image of communication by *speech*: the Word. Hence in the world of human communication by speech, poetry is its most perfect counterpart; the revelation and illumination and transfiguration of life through the word.

—Elizabeth Drew, *T. S. Eliot: The Design of His Poetry*.

9. I ought first of all to explain that when I use the term *history* I mean knowledge of history. No doubt throughout all past time there actually occurred a series of events which, whether we know what it was or not, constitutes history in some ultimate sense. Nevertheless, much the greater part of these events we can know nothing about,

[1]From *Newsweek*, Vol. XXXIX, June 30, 1952. Reprinted by permission of the Editors of *Newsweek*.

not even that they occurred; many of them we can know only imperfectly; and even the few events that we think we know for sure we can never be absolutely certain of, since we can never revive them, never observe or test them directly. The event itself once occurred, but as an actual event it has disappeared; so that in dealing with it the only objective reality we can observe or test is some material trace which the event has left—usually a written document. With these traces of vanished events, these documents, we must be content since they are all we have; from them we infer what the event was, we affirm that it is a fact that the event was so and so. We do not say "Lincoln is assassinated"; we say "It is a fact that Lincoln was assassinated." The event *was*, but it is no longer; it is only the affirmed fact about the event that *is*, that persists, and will persist until we discover that our affirmation is wrong or inadequate. Let us then admit that there are two histories: the actual series of events that once occurred; and the ideal series that we affirm and hold in memory. The first is absolute and unchanged—it was what it was whatever we do or say about it; the second is relative, always changing in response to the increase or refinement of knowledge. The two series correspond more or less, it is our aim to make the correspondence as exact as possible; but the actual series of events exists for us only in terms of the ideal series which we affirm and hold in memory. This is why I am forced to identify history with knowledge of history. For all practical purposes history is, for us and for the time being, what we know it to be.—Carl Becker, *Everyman His Own Historian*.[1]

10. One of Fields' cardinal rules for success was to disregard advice. He had established early that jugglers can out-juggle non-jugglers. He generalized this curious view and clung to it, with one or two lapses, throughout his life. It was his belief, for example, that university economists are not necessarily statesmen, that writers can out-write editors, and that most critics, to be taken seriously, should be able to create as well as criticize. He had become aware, when very young, that for every artist there are several hundred persons with a profounder, and louder, understanding of his artistry than any mere artist could possibly have. He had read of the keen critical rejection of failures such as Wagner's operas, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, Walt Whitman's poems, and Christ's Sermon on the Mount, and he was sensibly impressed. Late in life Fields divided critics

[1]Reprinted by permission of F. S. Crofts and Co., publishers. Copyright, 1935.

broadly into two groups: those who were ignorant but pretentious and trustful, in the interest of making a living, and those whose pronouncements were distorted by prejudice or jealousy, such as Nicholas Rubinstein, whose blistering report on Tschaikovsky's piano concerto, though he himself was a perceptive musician, damned the work as "worthless, impossible to play, clumsy, awkward, poorly composed, and shot through with obvious and shocking thefts." Rubinstein, a critic suffering from jealousy, would no doubt have been horribly chagrined to know that the concerto was later to be recognized by a famous band leader named Freddie Martin, bolstered up by a lyric dealing with Love, and sung in some of the best dance halls in the world.—Robert Lewis Taylor, *W. C. Fields, His Follies and Fortunes.*[1]

11. Altogether, then, the path that the airplane takes over the ground is always compounded of two separate types of motion: its motion *through* the air and its motion *with* the air. The two are entirely dissimilar. Motion *through* the air produces lift, drag, stability, and control. Motion *with* the air is the free-balloon sort of motion—it has no further effects on the airplane other than to move it. The two are dissimilar; yet to the eye they are indistinguishable. The eye, which cannot see the air but can judge only by reference to the ground, simply records the compound of the two—the resulting motion of the airplane relative to the ground.—Wolfgang Langewiesche, *Stick and Rudder.*[2]

12. A woodsboy grew up doing work that required strength, health, and ingenuity. He helped his father draw the hay, draw wood, draw logs to the sawmill, hew barn beams, break up greensward and harrow it in oats, build horsesheds and smokehouses, make hives for swarming bees. In early spring he went to the river bank to cut alder buds for horses to eat, went to the woods to cut hooks to hang harness, got beams from a swamp and poles for a hen roost, laid up fences, and chinked a new log stable. He hitched up a team to pull out a wagon that had "got sot" in a mudhole, broke colts, dug out watering troughs from logs, and wormed tobacco plants. He hoed cornfields along the staggering rail fences, facing the perils of chiggers, poison ivy, bumble bees, and yellow-jacket nests. In the

[1]Copyright, 1949, by Robert Lewis Taylor. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Doubleday & Company, Inc.

[2]McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc. Copyright, 1944, by Wolfgang Langewiesche.

dog days of August he sprouted new ground and brush-scythed the fence corners of the pasture. He hunted game for meat and skins, and trapped a little. To the north he made fences of glacial stones. To the south he made fences of slim limestone slabs. He was kept busy killing mosquitoes, those "vexatious, glory-minded, musical winged, bold denizens of the shady forest." On humid evenings, when they swirled in bunches down the chimney and through doors and windows, he built a smudge in the room or outside the door.—Richard G. Lillard, *The Great Forest.*[1]

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Chapter V

THE SENTENCE

THE SENTENCE is the basic unit of expression by which the rounded development of the whole composition is achieved. We think in sentences whenever we think in a really systematic way; and we must write in sentences if the writing is to make sense and not be like a tale told by an idiot. A sentence may be defined as the form that a thought takes when it is composed as a separate unit. Thus far we have considered ways of treating groups of thoughts rather than ways of shaping single thoughts. But no matter how well organized may be the groups of thoughts, the composition fails unless the single thoughts, or sentences, are well written. If the writing is to be good writing, the sentences must be good sentences.

What is a good sentence? It is impossible to answer the question briefly. The good sentence is forever changing its shape. Like the Greek god Proteus, it has a slippery and amazing variety of forms. In Joseph Conrad's story, "Heart of Darkness," this sentence is spoken at a critical moment: "Mistah Kurtz—he dead!" It is barely grammatical and not elegant, but beyond question, in this particular story of Africa, it does a work just as effective for its purpose as Matthew Arnold's famous sentence does for his essay, "The Study of Poetry": "The future of poetry is immense, because in poetry, where it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay."

There are, indeed, all kinds of good sentences. There are the plain workmanlike sentences of scientific prose, the snappy sentences of our lively journalists, the long, rolling, elaborate sentences of writers like John Ruskin, the somber, musical sentences of Edgar Allan Poe, the wise sentences of philosophers, and the witty sentences of humorists. This chapter proposes to answer the question, "What is

a good sentence?" by considering the sentence as a threefold pattern of grammar, logic, and rhetoric. For the good sentence, whatever its word-content, length, and organization, must satisfy three requirements: (1) it must have correct form; (2) it must make sense; and (3) it must be effective for its intended purpose. And it must do all of these things at once, in the same act. The good sentence is a successful interweaving of three patterns, grammatical, logical, rhetorical. For purposes of study and exercise, we must momentarily separate these three patterns.

1. *GRAMMATICAL PATTERN*

A good sentence is first a grammatical sentence; that is, a sentence which meets the requirements of grammar and syntax. These requirements are stated at some length in the Concise Handbook. They should be familiar to the student of composition, but they may need some review here, as a basis for the explanations and practice work contained in this chapter.

If a sentence does not have grammatical form, it is not, properly speaking, a sentence at all, but some mangled and incoherent approximation of a sentence.

The common grammatical definition of a sentence is this: *A sentence is a group of words expressing a single complete thought.* This definition is about as close as a grammarian can come to a statement that will be both brief and precise. But the grammarian must at once qualify his definition. For instance, he hastily explains, *thought* must be taken to include *feeling;* the word *sentence* comes from the Latin word *sentire,* which means "to think" and "to feel." The expression of the single thought, furthermore, must be a self-sufficient unity—an independent grammatical construction, not used as a functional part (*clause*) of some construction of which it is a subordinate member. Also it is perfectly clear that the phrase, "a *single* complete thought," must not be understood as excluding sentences which are unified structures of multiple thought: for example, sentences which contain combinations of a main thought with one or more subordinate thoughts.

But although it is not easy to give an absolutely satisfying definition of a sentence, it is certain that all sentences have the following characteristics:

(1) Every sentence must have a *subject:* that is, a noun, pronoun, or substantive expression (a word, phrase, or clause used as a noun). The subject is that about which something is said—or "predicated" —in the sentence. In each of the following sentences the *simple subject* (the subject without its modifiers) is italicized.

a. The cold *sleet* struck my face.
b. Smiling, *he* took off his hat.
c. *To think* clearly is the first requirement.
d. *What you think* will make little difference.
e. The lecture being over, *George* closed his notebook.
f. *Riding* was his chief hobby.

(2) Every sentence must have a *predicate.* The predicate is that which is said about the subject. The essential part of the predicate is a *finite verb.* Without a finite verb, no predication can be made; nothing can be "said about" the subject. A finite verb is a verb form capable of person and number—a *limited* form of the verb, not an infinitive, a participle, or a gerund, which are the "infinite" or "unlimited" forms of the verb. The finite verb of the predicate, without its modifiers or complements, is the *simple predicate* of the sentence. In the following sentences the finite verbs—which are also the simple predicates—are italicized.

a. The cold sleet *struck* my face.
b. Smiling, he *took* off his hat.
c. To think clearly *is* the first requirement.
d. What you think *will make* little difference.
e. The lecture being over, George *closed* his notebook.
f. Riding *was* his chief hobby.

In the sentences given above, note that *smiling* (a participle), *to think* (an infinitive), and *riding* (a gerund) are non-finite verb-forms. The participle *being* forms a part of the "absolute" construction, *the lecture being over.* None of these "verbals" constitutes a predication. The predications are built upon the simple finite verbs, *struck, took, is, closed, was,* and the compound verb-form *will make.* Note also that *riding,* which is a verbal (gerund), is used in the function of a noun and is the subject of the last sentence.

The completeness of a sentence depends upon its having *both a subject and a predicate.* Both subject and predicate may have modifiers; and verbs, according to their nature as verbs, may have

direct objects or predicate complements. ***Without both subject and predicate there can be no sentence.*** A subject alone does not make a sentence, no matter how many modifiers are added. A predicate alone does not make a sentence, no matter how many modifiers it may have. Every sentence must contain at least one subject-verb combination capable of making complete sense alone and not introduced by a subordinating conjunction, relative pronoun, or relative adverb. The following groups of words satisfy this requirement and are sentences. (Simple subjects and principal verbs are italicized. Complete subjects are separated from complete predicates by a vertical line.)

a. *Floods* | *came.*
b. Emerging from the thicket, quite heedless of our presence, the *doe* | *began* to crop the long grass of the meadow.
c. Bareheaded, calm, negligently dressed, *Philip* | *strode* briskly down the walk on that fine morning, as if he had not a care in the world.

The following groups of words do not satisfy the requirements and are not sentences:

a. Sirens wailing, bells clanging, whistles screeching, people shouting and screaming as if sudden calamity had descended.
b. The rudder of an airplane, wrongly thought to function like a ship's rudder, to which it has a superficial resemblance.
c. To order a dinner at this particular restaurant, on the assumption that it is like other restaurants you have heard praised and may have visited.
d. Five ducks swimming, plain to see.

The Fragmentary Sentence. None of the above word-groups is grammatically complete. Group *a* contains a series of nouns (*sirens . . . bells . . . whistles . . . people*) that might be used as a compound subject. But this possible subject lacks a predicate The finite verb, *had descended*, which stands in the subordinate clause introduced by *as if*, has its own subject, and thus does not furnish a predication for the noun series. In Group *b* the noun *rudder* lacks a predication; the verb-form *thought*, which is associated with it, is a participle modifying *rudder*, not a finite verb. *To order*, in Group *c*,

is an infinitive, not a finite verb. The verb-form *swimming,* in Group *d*, is a participle modifying *ducks*, not a finite verb; and *to see*, in the same sentence, is an infinitive, not a finite verb.

The word groups are therefore "fragmentary" sentences, not complete sentences. They are meaningless as they stand, or at best are but fragments of a meaning not yet stated. But if finite verbs are used, as indicated below, the word groups become complete sentences.

a. Sirens wailed, bells clanged, whistles screeched, people shouted and screamed as if sudden calamity had descended.
b. The rudder of an airplane is wrongly thought to function like a ship's rudder, to which it has a superficial resemblance.
c. To order a dinner at this particular restaurant, on the assumption that it is like other restaurants you have heard praised and may have visited, may result in an embarrassing social situation.
d. Look at those five ducks swimming, plain to see.

The error of the fragmentary sentence is discussed in the Concise Handbook (Section 31 C). Sometimes the sentence fragments may be parts of a complete sentence which has been split by terminal punctuation on the mistaken assumption that to begin a word-group with a capital letter and close it with a period is enough to establish that word-group as a sentence. The error, when it occurs in this form, is often treated as an error of punctuation and is called "the period fault." But it arises, of course, from failure to comprehend grammatical and syntactical relationships—from lack of understanding of what a sentence really is.

Wrong: He is a most inconsiderate and tactless kind of person. Who is eternally dropping in just as the cook is setting the table for dinner.

Right: He is a most inconsiderate and tactless kind of person, who is eternally dropping in just as the cook is setting the table for dinner.

Wrong: At the end of this long, shady street, we found a good hotel. Overlooking the lake, yet conveniently near a shopping center.

Right: At the end of this long, shady street we found a good hotel, overlooking the lake, yet conveniently near a shopping center.

Deliberate Fragmentations: (1) The Broken Sentence.

Occasionally a writer may deliberately isolate fragments of a sentence (or of sentences) in order to obtain a special effect. Such use of sentence fragments is quite different from a careless failure to complete a sentence. The type of deliberate fragmentation here called "The Broken Sentence" may appear in a descriptive passage where a writer is building up a series of impressions:

It was a sweet view—sweet to the eye and to the mind. English verdure, English culture, English comfort, seen under a sun bright, without being oppressive.—Jane Austen, *Emma.*

The mountains are clothed smokily with pine, *ocote*, and, like a woman in a gauze *rebozo*, they rear in a rich blue fume that is almost cornflower-blue in the clefts. It is their characteristic that they are darkest-blue at the top. Like some splendid lizard with a wavering, royal-blue crest down the ridge of his back, and pale belly and soft, pinky-fawn claws, on the plain. Between the pallor of the claws, a dark spot of trees, and white clots of a church with twin towers. Further away, along the foothills, a few scattered trees, white dot and stroke of a hacienda, and a green, green square of sugar cane.—D. H. Lawrence, *Mornings in Mexico.*[1]

Deliberate fragmentations of the "broken sentence" type have only a special and limited use, and are not recommended for normal prose composition. Generally, in passages like those quoted above, the fragmentations really constitute a single sentence, the parts of which are broken and separated by terminal punctuation, in order to give emphasis to vivid details presented in series. When such fragmentation occurs, it must be clearly a deliberate and not an ignorant violation of the principle of completeness.

Deliberate Fragmentations: (2) The Elliptical Sentence.

An elliptical sentence may be defined as a legitimate abbreviation of a complete sentence. Only a part of the complete sentence is written or spoken; the remainder of the sentence, although omitted, is clearly implied. An elliptical sentence may consist of a principal clause from which either subject or predicate has been omitted; a dependent clause which implies an unstated principal clause; a phrase; or even a single word.

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Jottings made in a diary or in similarly abbreviated records are often elliptical in form. For example:

December 26, 1662.—Up, my wife to the making of Christmas pies all day, being now pretty well again, and I abroad to several places about some businesses; among others bought a bake-pan in Newgate Market, and sent it home; it cost me 16*s.*—Samuel Pepys's *Diary.*

A snowstorm in the morning, and continuing most of the day. But I took a walk of over two hours, amid the falling flakes. No wind, yet the musical low murmur through the pines, quite pronounced, curious, like waterfalls, now still, now pouring again. All the senses, sight, sound, smell, delicately gratified.—Walt Whitman, *Specimen Days and Collect.*

Sentences in actual conversation or in written dialogue are likely to contain elliptical constructions:

"Late as usual, John!"
"Sorry, my dear!"
"The idea of your being late on this day of all days!"
"Please, Alice—!"
"Another committee meeting, I suppose?"
"No. Car trouble."

Various kinds of customary exclamations, public notices, signs, labels, and the like are elliptical in construction and may be classified as elliptical sentences: *Fire! No parking; Price, 25 cents; continued on page 112.*

The answer to a question or even the question itself may be elliptical:

"Did you see the prowler?" "No." (*Meaning:* "I did not see him.")
"I have one true friend." "Who?" (*Meaning:* "Who is your friend?")
"Will you come?" "If I am ready in time." (*Meaning:* "I will come if I am ready in time.")

Proverbial expressions are often elliptical: *the sooner, the better. Least said, soonest mended.*

The caution against the error of the fragmentary sentence should not be taken as a mere prohibition. The negative statement, *Do not mistake fragments for sentences,* is but a way of illustrating the posi-

tive principle of completeness. The subject and the predicate are the essential elements of completeness. They are the grammatical foundations of the sentence, and within the small scale of the sentence they parallel the topic and the discussion of a large-scale composition. Observe that the length of a sentence has nothing to do with its completeness. The shortest sentence in the Bible, "Jesus wept," is a complete sentence; but the conglomeration, "Weeping, groaning, tearing their hair, beating their breasts, and rending their garments," is only a series of phrases and not a complete sentence. Nor does complexity of structure have anything to do with completeness. We shall presently consider the nature of the structural complications that may be introduced in a sentence. But first it is advisable to issue another caution against another typical error—the error of the *fused sentence.*

Fusion of Sentences: The Comma Fault (or Comma Splice). Improper fusion of sentences occurs when a writer fails to perceive that each single and complete thought is also a *separate* thought and must be kept apart from a single and complete thought that follows it. Terminal punctuation is the remedy for such errors, if the sentences thus fused (or "run together") are obviously separate sentences. But if the sentences can be treated as independent clauses of a compound sentence, then the semicolon may be used.

Wrong: Hotels and tourist courts will be crowded, you must make a reservation if you expect to stay overnight.
Right: Hotels and tourist courts will be crowded. You must make a reservation if you expect to stay overnight.

Wrong: I cannot imagine why he asks $10,000 for the place, that is too high a price.
Right: I cannot imagine why he asks $10,000 for the place. That is too high a price.

Wrong: Councilman Brookhart has been faithful to his pledge, therefore he should be re-elected.
Right: Councilman Brookhart has been faithful to his pledge; therefore he should be re-elected.

The error of improper fusion is sometimes classified as an error of punctuation and is called the "comma fault" or the "comma splice." (See the Concise Handbook, Section 32.) If no punctuation

at all appears in the "fused sentence," it is sometimes called the "run-on" sentence.

But the error of the fragmentary sentence and the error of the fused sentence are errors of unity. They violate the principle explained above: that the sentence must be a single, complete unit of thought.

TYPES OF SENTENCE ORGANIZATION

But the principle of unity (singleness and completeness of thought) applies in sentence situations far more varied than might be inferred from the explanations given thus far. A sentence may consist of few parts or many parts. We may now extend the discussion of sentence unity by pointing out that unity of thought implies unity of organization. Sentences may be classified according to the way in which their parts are organized. The parts of a sentence are not only the subject and predicate, but also the modifiers of subject and predicate; and these modifiers may be single words or phrases or clauses. The grammarian rigidly classifies sentences as *simple, compound, complex, compound-complex;* but the writer must understand that each of the types is capable of much variation within the limits of its strict grammatical pattern.

1. *THE SIMPLE SENTENCE*

A. Simple sentence without modifiers:

Subject	*Verb*	*Object*
Water	quenches	thirst

B. Simple sentence with adjective and adverb modifiers:

(1) This cool water completely quenches my thirst.
(2) The cool water of this spring completely quenches a traveler's thirst.
(3) This spring water, cool and pleasant, completely quenched my thirst, long aggravated by a hot and dusty walk.

C. Simple sentence with compound subject:
Good water and fresh air are among the first requirements.

D. Simple sentence with compound predicate:
The water quenched my thirst and revived my drooping spirits.

A simple sentence is a sentence consisting of one independent clause. (See Concise Handbook, Sections 10, 17.) Or, negatively, it is a sentence that does *not* have two or more independent clauses and that does *not* contain a dependent clause.

Observe that modifiers do not change the *organization* of the simple sentence, so long as they are single words (adjectives and adverbs) or phrases (a phrase is a group of words not having a subject and predicate and used as a part of speech). Observe also that a compound subject or a compound predicate (or both) does not prevent the sentence from being still a simple sentence.

2. *THE COMPOUND SENTENCE*

A. Compound sentence without modifiers:

Dogs barked, and chickens squawked.

B. Compound sentence with modifiers:

Aroused by the sudden noise, the dogs barked furiously, and the chickens, hearing the commotion, began to squawk.

C. Compound sentence of three members, with modifiers:

Jim was impressed by the man's courage, and I was moved by his evident sincerity, but neither of us could quite approve his methods.

A compound sentence is a sentence consisting of two or more independent clauses. (See Concise Handbook, Section 18 A.) Sentence *A* is not at all complicated, but since it has two independent clauses, it is compound. In sentences *B* and *C* the complication has greatly increased, but it is built up around coördinate clauses. The characteristic of the compound sentence is that it observes the principle of coördination. It combines clauses of equal rank (always independent clauses) and generally clauses that express closely parallel or complementary thoughts.

3. *THE COMPLEX SENTENCE*

A. Principal clause, with adverbial clause following:

We will go whenever you are ready.

B. Principal clause, with relative clause beginning with *who:*

Probably the canteen was left in this gully by some soldier, who paused here for a moment, seventy-five years ago, to take refuge from the enemy's fire and to wet his blackened lips.

C. Adverbial clause, followed by principal clause:
If you are ready, we will go now.

D. Adverbial clause, principal clause, and noun clause:
Although you may think poorly of his conclusions, you must admit that the speaker has shown great originality.

A complex sentence consists of an independent clause (principal clause) and at least one dependent clause. The dependent clause may be used as an adjective or adverbial modifier. In sentence *A,* above, the clause *whenever you are ready* is an adverbial clause modifying the verb *go.* In sentence *B,* the relative clause *who . . . lips* is used as an adjective and modifies the noun *soldier.* Dependent clauses may also function as nouns. In sentence *C,* the clause *that . . . originality* is a noun clause, and is the direct object of the verb *admit.* A noun clause may also be used as the subject of a verb: "*Whoever wins the match* will be champion." (For classification and discussion of dependent clauses, see the Concise Handbook, Section 19.)

Observe that complexity has nothing to do with length. The essential feature of the organization of a complex sentence is that it contains the principal clause + dependent clause relationship. The dependent clause, of course, contains its own subject and predicate, but the statement that it makes is not independent. The dependent clause functions as a part of speech, as can be seen if one substitutes an adverb like *soon, now, presently,* for the adverbial clause, *whenever you are ready,* in sentence *A,* above. If the wrong clause is subordinated, then the sentence does not possess unity. The unity of the complex sentence comes from the fact that the dependent thought is put in right relation to the main thought.

4. *THE COMPOUND-COMPLEX SENTENCE*

A. If you are ready, we will go; but do not expect me to carry all your packages.

B. When all the packages had been assembled, and when all the baggage had been carried out to the car, it seemed at last that they were ready to go; but from past experience they knew how little to count on a quick start, and so were not surprised when Susanna began to think of more things to do.

A compound-complex sentence consists of two or more principal clauses and at least one dependent clause in one of its members. It represents the highest degree of complication obtainable in a sentence. Sometimes a compound-complex sentence may seem to be a group of sentences rather than one clearly unified sentence. If it is really a group of sentences, then it ought to be broken up into separate sentences. The true compound-complex sentence is a real unit, a single sentence. Sentence *A,* above, consists of two independent clauses so closely related as to be two aspects of a single idea: *We will go . . . but do not expect me . . .* Each of these clauses has its own modifiers. In sentence *B,* we have two independent clauses, *It seemed at last . . .* and *but they knew . . . and so were . . . ,* which unify around the central idea of seeming-but-knowing. Each of these clauses has a group of its own modifiers.

SENTENCE ANALYSIS

A good working knowledge of grammar and syntax is essential to a mastery of the sentence. The student of composition should realize that what he formerly learned by rote—and perhaps thought dull and foolish—can now be put to really practical use. It is impossible to study sentence structure without knowing the terms and principles of grammar and syntax. In no other way is it possible to understand what happens in a sentence. And unless one understands what happens in a sentence, he will write blindly. He will work like a craftsman who does not know the names of his tools, or the qualities of his materials, or the physical laws of the structure that he is attempting to create.

Sentence analysis is a means of studying what happens in a sentence. For those who have learned to read in the modern manner —by taking in "eyefuls" and "getting the general drift"—practice in sentence analysis may well be a prerequisite for exercises in sentence writing. For such readers may not have learned to pay close attention to the parts of a sentence and to the relationship of part to part. Sentence analysis is simply a device for cultivating such close attention. It is, indeed, a highly specialized kind of reading which may become very useful to blind readers (people who do not see what they are reading) or rapid readers. But any reader and

any writer will profit by close attention to the elements of the sentence and their function in the sentence.

If you already have a good working knowledge of grammar and syntax, practice the analysis of sentences as they stand before you on the page—your own sentences or the sentences of writers that you admire. Distinguish subject, predicate, phrases, clauses; know the function of every word and every group of words; be able to name and classify sentences, clauses, modifiers, parts of speech. When you have done such analysis, read the sentences aloud and bring out by the shadings and emphasis of your voice the grammatical pattern of the sentence.

If your knowledge of grammar and syntax is faulty, improve it by studying the Review of Grammar (see Handbook). It may even be advisable to practice making sentence diagrams. Sentence diagrams are simply devices for analyzing a sentence by making a diagram or plan of the sentence. They enforce close attention to grammar and syntax, and are a means of visualizing the grammatical pattern of the sentence.

But diagrams, though helpful for practice, are not a substitute for instant recognition of the parts of the sentence and the functions of the parts *as they stand before the eyes in the written or printed sentence.* Until you can do this you do not really know what is happening in a sentence.

EXERCISES[1]

A. *Unity of Sentence Structure.* Correct the errors in the following sentences. Distinguish any sentences that may legitimately be classified as deliberate fragmentations or permissible fusions.

1. Idealistic, if you want to insist on the term. Fond of travel, yet strangely retiring and modest, the last man in the world, I should say, to make such a reckless commitment.

2. The boy, doctors said, was not really hurt, he did not even whimper.

3. It is best to go to a bank if you have a good reason for seeking a loan. Based upon plans you can carry out and repayments scaled to your resources.

4. Something strange and beautiful burned in their souls and lit their faces. Nothing hard and arrogant any more. Nothing of the

[1]For additional exercises, see Handbook, 31 C, 32.

dry and skeptical that had parched the preceding generation. Rather, instead, a new flame of the spirit, a manifest upsurge of vitality as new and as old as the first miracle of green upon boughs long dormant but never dead.

5. How could he ever forget a friend like Richard? Faithful, he realized, in adversity as well as in good fortune.

6. Any such course should be clearly desirable in the light of the student's personal interests and his total scholastic program, otherwise he should not elect it.

7. Man is free, I do not hesitate to assert. Able to rise above physical and economic conditions, duty bound, in fact, not only to master his environment, but also to change it according to just principles and a standard of good, only such an effort can be truly satisfying.

8. I am wont to think that men are not so much the keepers of herds as herds are the keepers of men, the former are so much the freer. Men and oxen exchange work; but if we consider necessary work only, the oxen will be seen to have greatly the advantage, their farm is so much the larger.—Henry D. Thoreau, *Walden.*

9. This perceiving, the great lords of the council, bearing a secret grudge against the Cardinal, because that they could not rule in the scene well for him as they would, who kept them low, and ruled them as well as other mean subjects, whereat they caught an occasion to invent a means to bring him out of the King's high favor, and them into more authority of rule and civil governance. —George Cavendish, *The Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey.*

10. He had a number of anxious mannerisms, among them a way of suddenly glancing aside as if looking for something that was never there, he always seemed relieved that it wasn't there.

11. In his stories and novels Conrad always manages to focus upon moments of decision. Moments when a point of honor may be involved and a man must make a difficult choice. For which reason he has been called "a historian of fine consciences."

12. He ate very little. Sampling this and that dish, merely picking over his food and leaving most of it on his plate.

13. He blamed himself for flinching at the explosion, that was the reason why he missed his aim.

14. Then that haunted room—in which old Mrs. Battle died—whereinto I have crept, but always in the day-time, with a passion of fear; and a sneaking curiosity, terror-tainted, to hold communication with the past. How shall they build it up again?—Charles Lamb, "Blakesmoor in Hertfordshire."

15. The leaves like deathless tides stirred overhead as I sat on the bench, a dog barked somewhere, the lines of smoke rose from a clearing field. In youth these can be strong things; the evening is our home, the evening star our teacher and mother, and, as in Dante's lines, the hour penetrates the heart, as did the sound of bells for those who sail the seas on that first day from home, and seems to mourn the dying day.—Stark Young, *The Pavilion.*

B. *Classification and analysis.* Classify the following sentences (as simple, compound, complex, compound-complex). Make a grammatical analysis or diagram of at least five of the sentences.

1. Wrestling with this difficulty, John walked home in complete silence.

2. Hunters and fishers will find out the place soon enough, no matter how difficult the road.

3. Let us not underestimate either the difficulty or the danger of the course I recommend.

4. I will call you at six o'clock, and please don't keep me waiting.

5. If you plan to go with me, you must be ready at six o'clock, and you must not keep me waiting.

6. But only from such beginnings and stocks, indigenous here, may haply arrive, be grafted, and sprout, in time, flowers of genuine American aroma, and fruits truly and fully our own.—Walt Whitman, *Democratic Vistas.*

7. The man who worships in the temple of knowledge must carry his arms with him as our Puritan fathers had to do when they gathered in their first rude meeting houses.—Oliver Wendell Holmes, *The Poet At the Breakfast Table.*

8. Taking an ocean-going ship out of New York Harbor, across the wide-open ship roads of the north Atlantic, and dropping anchor at Plymouth is easy, monotonous routine in comparison with the skill required to bring a freighter across the lakes and through all the intricate channels from Duluth to Buffalo in the rain, the fog, and the sleet of early November.—Harlan Hatcher, *Lake Erie.*[1]

9. I liked all the dishes that were served, but could not distinguish them by the taste because they were very highly flavored.

10. Love of flattery, in most men, proceeds from the mean opinion they have of themselves; in women, from the contrary.—Jonathan Swift.

[1]From *Lake Erie,* by Harlan Hatcher. Copyright, 1945, by The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., and used by special permission of the publisher, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc.

11. The body of the community, whenever it can come to act, can meet with no effectual resistance; but till power and right are the same, the whole body of them has no right inconsistent with virtue, and the first of all virtues, prudence.—Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France.*

12. What we term a long poem is, in fact, merely a succession of brief ones—that is to say, of brief poetical effects.—Edgar Allan Poe, *The Philosophy of Composition.*

2. *LOGICAL PATTERN*

Grammar is the servant of logic. The conventions of grammar represent the ways in which the race has agreed to use the meanings, forms, and arrangements of words. Words have a meaning first of all in their content. They are symbols that stand for things, persons, ideas, qualities, relationships—as the word *man,* for all that speak English, calls up the image of *homo sapiens.* Second, words have meaning according to their changes of form, or inflections. We change the form of *man,* singular, to form a plural, *men,* by which we mean more than one man. Third, words have meaning according to their syntax, or their relationship to one another in the sentence in which they are used. The sentence, *John knows the man,* has quite a different meaning from the sentence, *The man knows John.*

WORD ORDER AND SYNTAX

For better or worse, the English language has lost the greater part of the inflections that it once possessed. In the English sentence, therefore, the syntax of words and groups of words is indicated far more often by their arrangement in the sentence than by their changes of form. If the meaning of a sentence is to be clear and unmistakable, the sentence must be so arranged that the relationship between words is clear and unmistakable.

We may illustrate the difference between a highly inflected language and a relatively uninflected language by comparing a Latin and an English sentence. The Latin sentence, *Brutus Cæsarem interfecit,* means, in English, *Brutus killed Cæsar.* No matter how we may rearrange the order of the words in the Latin sentence,

the logical meaning does not change, because the inflectional endings (case endings, tense forms, etc.) still show the logical meaning precisely. The only change brought about by such a rearrangement is a slight change in rhetorical emphasis. For example:

(1) Brutus Cæsarem interfecit.
(2) Cæsarem Brutus interfecit.
(3) Interfecit Cæsarem Brutus.

All three sentences mean, *Brutus killed Cæsar.* To give, in English, the emphasis conveyed in the different Latin sentences, we should have to translate the sentences as follows: Sentence 2: [*It was*] *Cæsar* [*that*] *Brutus killed.* Sentence 3: [*He*] *killed Cæsar, Brutus* [*did*].

If we change the position of the words in the original English sentence, we get a complete change of meaning—or perhaps no intelligible meaning:

(1) Cæsar killed Brutus.
(2) Brutus killed Cæsar.
(3) Killed Cæsar Brutus.
(4) Cæsar Brutus killed.

If we examine a line from Vergil which describes the threshing of grain—

Surgentem ad zephyrum paleæ jactantur inanes
(III *Georgic,* 134)

we should see at once from the inflectional ending of the participle *surgentem* that it modifies the noun *zephyrum.* But in English we cannot without confusion approximate the Latin word order. "Rising on the west wind the chaff is tossed empty" is a mistranslation, because in the English sentence the participle *rising* would be taken to modify the subject, *chaff.* A correct translation would read: "The empty chaff is tossed upon the rising west wind" or (in a somewhat stilted word order): "Upon the rising west wind the empty chaff is tossed."

In English, through centuries of usage, we have become accustomed to a type of sentence arrangement which may be called *normal word order:* that is, the familiar sequence, *subject—verb—object* (or *predicate complement*). So thoroughly habituated are we to this normal order that in common discourse we need no specific

grammatical instruction to place a noun (or other substantive) in the position of the subject, and a verb adjacent to it, with another noun or substantive expression after the verb where the object belongs, or an adjective if a predicate complement is called for. We know by the *position* of the words what their inter-relationship is and what, therefore, the meaning of the sentence is.

In the two sentences given below the situation is perfectly clear. There can be no confusion.

(1) *John loves Julia.*
(2) *Julia loves John.*

If we happen to be using words that undergo inflectional changes (personal pronouns, for example), we can juggle the word order, though perhaps with some risk of seeming "rhetorical." *I love Julia and no other* is in normal word order, and the meaning is both clear and emphatic. *Her I love, and no other,* a sentence in partially inverted order, is still clear, but may seem "artificial." *Her he loves, and no other,* is a grammatically correct but a most unlikely construction. *Her loves he, and no other* begins to look absurd. The word order invites us to think that some illiterate person is speaking, who is careless about inflectional endings and probably meant to say: *She loves him and no other.* Such is the compulsive force of position in the English sentence.

The importance of position can be further illustrated by the construction of sentences in which the same word *functions* in different parts of speech without a change of form—the function, and with it the meaning, being determined from position alone. Thus, in the sentence, *Brave men deserve fair women,* "brave" and "fair" function as adjectives. From their position they are naturally and correctly taken to modify the nouns following them. But in the famous line from Dryden's poem, "Alexander's Feast," "Only the *brave* deserve the *fair," brave* and *fair* function as nouns; from their position we know that they are, respectively, subject and object. The meaning changes if the words change position and the sentence reads, "Only the fair deserve the brave." From the position of the words alone we know, too, that "a fair American" is something different from "an American fair." In the sentence, "You must *brave* the danger," we know that *brave* is functioning as a verb because of its position between subject and object.

There are further refinements in the system—which is more a matter of custom and use than a logical system—of English word order. In general, a modifier must stand next to, or close to, the word that it modifies. An adjective normally (though not invariably) *precedes* its substantive: *a red house, a fine day.* But an adjective phrase normally *follows* its substantive. We must say: *A man of the people,* not *An of the people man.* A present participle, if placed at the beginning of a sentence, is taken to modify the subject of the sentence. Therefore, if we write, "I saw him *coming,*" the participle *coming* modifies *him.* But if the sentence reads, "*Coming,* I saw him," the participle modifies *I.*

Inversions and other changes of order made for rhetorical purposes are not only allowable but necessary for the sake of variety and emphasis, as will be explained later in the study of rhetorical patterns. But such deviations from normal order cannot be allowed if they upset syntactical relationships and, with them, the logic of the sentence.

Logic and grammar (or syntax) are so closely bound that any failure to observe their close relationship will produce either slovenly writing or outright nonsense.

It follows that you should be careful to use the grammatical constructions and syntactical arrangements which really express your meaning. If you are not thus careful, grammar may betray you instead of serving you. Without accurate knowledge of grammar and syntax, you will not only be liable to gross errors of sentence structure, which will distort or muddle your intended logical meaning, but you will also be ill-prepared for a study of the rhetoric of the sentence.

The typical errors to be avoided fall into two classes: (1) errors of form; (2) errors of structure.

TYPICAL ERRORS OF FORM

A. Errors of case:

Wrong: Between you and *I* there is much to be said.
Right: Between you and *me* there is much to be said.

Wrong: I don't know *who* I can hire for this work.
Right: I don't know *whom* I can hire for this work.

Wrong: The teacher was pleased with *John* playing.
Right: The teacher was pleased with *John's* playing.

B. Confusion of adjective and adverb:

Wrong: You will promise *faithful,* I hope.
Right: You will promise *faithfully,* I hope.

C. Errors of agreement:

Wrong: I like *those* kind of apples.
Right: I like *that* (or *this*) kind of apples.

Wrong: This variety of apples *are* resistant to disease.
Right: This variety of apples *is* resistant to disease.

Wrong: The professor told everybody to close *their* book.
Right: The professor told everybody to close *his* book.

Such errors of form—to which the term *solecism* is often applied—are bad enough, but they are of relatively minor importance in comparison with other errors. The really gross errors are errors of logic—or, rather, of failure to make grammar conform to logic. Failure to keep logic in control of grammar may result in grievous accidents, such as embarrass the absent-minded persons who put out the clock and wind up the cat. For grammar goes on functioning relentlessly, whether we pay attention to it or not. In the following sentence, for example, grammar is functioning:

> Chewing with all six legs, the well-feathered oyster deceptively squared off a parallax.

There are no "solecisms," no "illiteracies"; the sentence is grammatically "correct." But it is nonsense all the same. There is no logical meaning for the correct grammatical pattern to bring out. The lesson of the nonsensical sentence might be: *Do not write nonsense, even in a grammatical form.* But it is better to state this particular lesson otherwise: *If grammatical pattern and logical meaning do not correspond, the result will be nonsense.* Or, in other words: *Logical meaning determines grammatical pattern.* Or if, in view of the preceding discussion as a whole, we wish to make a full statement of the principle involved, the lesson is this: *The good sentence is not only a sentence that is grammatically unified and complete; it is a sentence*

in which the forms and conventions of grammar bring out the intended logical meaning clearly and accurately.

TYPICAL ERRORS OF SENTENCE STRUCTURE

It would be interesting to speculate why human thought, as expressed in language patterns, behaves as it does behave. Such a discussion, however, would require some title like that given to a certain book, *The Meaning of Meaning,* and would involve us in needless perplexities. It is more practical to issue certain cautions which illustrate negatively the general principle that grammar must conform to logic. The following typical errors of sentence structure are really errors of logic, in so far as the writers of such sentences have not taken the trouble to make grammar conform to logic.

A. Dangling Modifiers.

Entering the room, a large Virginia ham, flanked by a custard pie, a chocolate cake, and a bowl of syllabub, greeted us on the sideboard.

It is customary to say (see Concise Handbook, Section 14 D) that the participle *entering* is a "dangling participle" because it has no substantive to modify. But the reader of the sentence follows his well-established grammatical inclination to attribute the participle *entering* to the subject of the sentence, *Virginia ham;* and thus a logical absurdity is created, quite as gross as in the nonsensical sentence given above. The writer of the sentence *meant* one thing but *said* another thing. What he meant was: "When we entered the room, a large Virginia ham, flanked by a custard pie, etc., . . . greeted us." Or, "Entering the room, we saw on the sideboard a large Virginia ham, etc." The first correction changes the participle to an adverbial clause; the second correction inserts a subject, *we,* which the participle can modify grammatically and logically.

Participles, gerund phrases, and elliptical clauses are peculiarly subject to the difficulty indicated above and should therefore be handled carefully. But in general the logic of the sentence requires that all modifiers clearly modify the substantives to which they logically belong.

B. Misplaced Modifiers.

(1) The agent showed them an apartment with large open fireplaces and oak panelling around the chimney *facing the park.*
(2) He always ate a light breakfast before taking a bath, *consisting of coffee and toast.*
(3) Before questioning the witness *at three o'clock* the attorney asked for a recess.

In these sentences the italicized modifiers are not placed so that they will modify the words to which they logically belong; or else, as in sentence 3, there is confusion as to what word is modified. The sentences must be rearranged to make logical order and grammatical order correspond.

(1) The agent showed them an apartment facing the park. It had large open fireplaces and oak panelling around the chimney.
(2) Before taking a bath he always ate a light breakfast consisting of coffee and toast.
(3) At three o'clock, before questioning the witness, the attorney asked for a recess.
(See Concise Handbook, Sections 14 E and 14 D, inclusive.)

C. False Coördination.

(1) I have heard a story with a moral that interests me and which I wish to tell you.
(2) He is a man of some force of character, and who is certain to make an impression here.
(3) The ballad tells about Lord Randal, and he has been dining with his true love, but she has poisoned him, and he is sick at heart.

The principle of coördination requires that only elements of equal grammatical rank be joined by the simple conjunctions *and, but, or.* Logic requires that the elements thus joined have a natural affinity for each other—that is, logically belong together.

Sentence 1, by its grammatical form, misleads the reader into thinking, momentarily, that the two relative clauses *that interests me* and *which I wish to tell you* are to be grouped in thought as

modifiers of *moral*. But the *that*-clause refers to *moral*, the *which*-clause to *story*. The clauses are wrongly coördinated. The remedy is to recast the sentence:

I have heard a story which I wish to tell you. It has a moral that interests me.

In sentence 2, the clause *who is certain to make an impression here* is a dependent clause modifying *man*. A principal clause and a dependent clause cannot be joined by a simple conjunction, *and*. The sentence may also be criticized as violating the principle of parallelism. (See Concise Handbook, Sections 30 and 33.) The first modifier of *man* is the phrase *of some force of character*; the reader expects the next modifier to have the same grammatical pattern and is confused to find the construction changed into a clause. The sentence can be recast in different ways, as follows:

He is a man who has some force of character and who is certain to make an impression here.

He has some force of character and is certain to make an impression here.

In sentence 3 the error consists in failing to subordinate the sentence elements that ought really to be of subordinate character. The writer of such a sentence has failed to distinguish between principal clause and subordinate elements. He has coördinated elements which are not logically coördinate. The sentence should contain at least one dependent clause. It might well be reorganized and divided, as follows:

The ballad tells about Lord Randal, who has been dining with his true love. She has poisoned him, and he is sick at heart.

D. Upside-down Subordination.

(1) I was walking down Tenth Street, when suddenly a gangster sprang out of an alley.
(2) He was in his first term as legislator when he became interested in the cause of the farmer.

Each of these sentences turns logical relationships upside down. The writer has made a principal clause of what ought to be, in each

instance, the subordinate element. The sentences should be recast, as follows:

(1) When I was walking down Tenth Street, a gangster suddenly sprang out of an alley.
(2) When he was in his first term as legislator, he became interested in the cause of the farmer.

Or: In his first term as legislator he became interested in the cause of the farmer.

(See Concise Handbook, Section 34.)

The simple illustrations given above suggest only a few of the typical errors—"sentence accidents," they might be called—that occur because of failure to make the grammatical pattern of the sentence conform to its logical meaning. It would be impossible to give examples of all the errors of this kind. It is more important to observe and apply the positive principles to which these errors do violence. Those principles may now be restated, as follows:

(1) Use grammatical constructions that express the precise meaning intended in the sentence. Logic must govern grammar. If logic is not in control at every point, confusion may arise.

(2) Remember that order and position are of first importance in the organization of the English sentence. Modifiers must be so placed as to adhere closely and unmistakably to the words that they modify; and modifiers must always have words to modify.

(3) In writing sentences that contain two or more clauses, be sure that the clauses are so handled as to express exactly the right degree of subordination, when subordination is logically demanded. Show by the organization of the sentence which idea is the main idea. Make that idea the principal clause. Place the other ideas in dependent clauses or convert them into phrases.

(4) Be similarly careful in treating ideas that are coördinate. Only ideas of logically equal value should be put in coördinate constructions.

EXERCISES

Rewrite the following sentences. Be able to explain whatever changes you make.

1. Strolling about this old-fashioned garden, on a summer eve-

ning, the pungent odor of boxwood brought me a throng of childhood memories.

2. I always thought of Balzac as a hard-hearted realist, and then one day I picked up *Cousin Pons*, which ought to convince anybody that the French novelist had a tender spot in his makeup for some kinds of people, but then, of course, I know some people will not see the tenderness exhibited in Balzac's portrait of Pons and his old German friend, because they will look only at the cruel treatment inflicted by Pons' aristocratic relatives or, for that matter, by the grasping and mercenary concierge and her murderous accomplices, and so will think it just another piece of sordid muckraking.

3. I was at this moment despite all my precautions in an extremely dangerous position.

4. While you were philosophizing in your comfortable study, the burglar may have, in the darkness of the empty hallway, been tiptoeing up the stairs.

5. One of them pointed to a couple of the animals wandering about fifty yards from the thicket, and which were now feeding on the grassy hillside.

6. While sitting on the porch, with her embroidery in her lap, to her surprise the Captain opened the front gate.

7. We were driving along Tenth Street, across which the flood suddenly poured and overwhelmed our car.

8. Before he accepted his present Federal position and previous to undertaking the survey of housing conditions, he served as a member of the city council.

9. The system of selection has three cardinal features: first, a careful screening of candidates in order to determine mental fitness; second, physical qualifications; and, third, they give every man a personal interview.

10. Driving past the airport, an unusual amount of activity seemed to be going on.

11. It is shocking to realize that such movements grew while we were idling our time away on non-essentials, organized by our obvious enemies.

12. We needed a fourth hand at bridge, and though a careless player, we had to call Robert.

13. The forest ranger, with a last desperate effort, turned back toward the stream, when he saw that the fire had leaped between him and that refuge.

14. Whenever he reads aloud, his manner is so affected and his gestures so pompous, that he becomes a little ridiculous, causing smiles and suppressed titters among his audience.

15. Go straight ahead until you see a large two-story house, painted white, with lofty columns across the entire front, and which is reached by a curving driveway bordered with cedars.

3. *RHETORICAL PATTERN*

In the preceding sections of this chapter emphasis has been put upon what grammar has to say about the structure of the sentence. A knowledge of grammar is indispensable to good writing, but experience shows that, though indispensable, it is not enough. A sentence may be formally correct and perfectly logical without being a really good sentence. A good sentence is no scattering of words which have first been flung haphazardly on a written page and then brushed up to conform to the rules of grammar, logic, and punctuation. The good sentence must be grammatical and logical and *effective*. It must do well the work that it is intended to do.

To write a good sentence, therefore, you must not only have knowledge of grammar and syntax; you must also acquire skill in using grammar and syntax as tools of expression. Grammar and syntax will help you to understand the nature of the word-stuff that goes into the sentence; but only through another kind of study, which emphasizes the rhetorical pattern of the sentence, can you learn how to control this word-stuff so as to obtain in individual sentences the *kind* of expression that will best serve your purpose.

For the word-stuff of a sentence is plastic. Like the building material of a house, it can be shaped, moved about, thinned, or thickened to carry out the builder's design. Perhaps grammar is to language what chemistry and physics are to building material; and rhetoric, as the giver of laws of design, corresponds to architecture. Through a study of the rhetoric of the sentence you may learn to exert a higher kind of control than can ever be obtained from the study of grammar alone. Grammar is the law of the language, considered as language; rhetoric is the art of language, considered as thought. Grammar tells what is correct: rhetoric tells what is effective and pleasing—and often

what is logical. From grammar you learn within what limits you must stay; from rhetoric you learn how to use limitations or even at times to transcend them. Grammar leads to good form; rhetoric, well practiced, leads to style.

GRAMMATICAL FORM AND RHETORICAL FORM

Although we distinguish here between grammar and rhetoric, the relationship between them is very close. It is impossible to discuss the form of the sentence without speaking of its grammatical constructions; but these grammatical constructions also have certain *qualities*, aside from their correctness or incorrectness, that mere grammatical analysis will not reveal. In order to see what happens in a sentence, we must add rhetorical analysis to grammatical analysis.

The following sentence, often quoted, is taken from Emerson's *Self-Reliance:*

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines.

Let us first make a grammatical analysis. The sentence is a simple sentence. The simple subject, *consistency*, is modified by the article *a* and the adjective *foolish*. *A foolish consistency* is the complete subject. The simple predicate, *is the hobgoblin*, consists of a copulative verb, *is*, and its complement, *the hobgoblin*. *Hobgoblin* is modified by the prepositional phrase, *of little minds*, and the participial phrase, *adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines*. The part of the sentence from *is* to *divines* constitutes the complete predicate.

Such a grammatical analysis does not tell us *why* Emerson wrote the sentence as given above. Why was he not content to say, "Consistency is a hobgoblin," and stop at that? Evidently he wished to make his statement more logically exact and complete, and therefore he said "a *foolish* consistency." But he added further that consistency is a hobgoblin only to *little minds*, which we find belong to certain adorers of consistency, *little statesmen and philosophers and*

divines. Emerson would have satisfied the requirements of grammar in four words, "Consistency is a hobgoblin." To present his full logical meaning he rounded out the simple statement with several modifiers.

But rhetorical analysis must go further still. Examining the sentence in order to see what makes it effective, we perceive that it is organized around two powerful word-groups: (1) *a foolish consistency*; (2) *the hobgoblin of little minds*. Each of these word-groups may be considered a rhetorical unit. Each contains a strong word: *foolish*, in word-group 1; *hobgoblin* in word-group 2. These two strong words attract more attention than the grammatical subject and the verb. Furthermore, the word *little* is emphasized by repetition. Emerson has established his meaning *effectively* by the use of adjective modifiers grouped around subject and predicate—a single adjective for the subject, a prepositional and a participial phrase for the predicate complement. There is a possible fault in his use of the word *divines*, because it gives us the teasing effect of a near-rhyme with *minds*; and rhymes are objectionable in prose. His repeated use of *and* is also slightly open to criticism. But these blemishes, if they are blemishes, are negligible. The sentence is powerful and memorable. It is powerful and memorable because of what Emerson says, of course; but much of the effectiveness of the saying is due to Emerson's fine sense of structure. Emerson has put important words in important places. He has used just enough repetition and just enough variation to make the sentence both emphatic and pleasant. His sentence is clean and economical; he makes a few words do a great deal of work.

The effect of the sentence would have been altogether different if Emerson had written:

Sometimes consistency, especially if it is foolish, is hardly anything but a hobgoblin, and it is adored by little-minded statesmen, philosophers, and divines.

Here, instead of one adjective, *foolish*, we have a dependent clause in which the adjective gets lost. *Little minds* has become a weak compound adjective and has lost touch with *hobgoblin*. The point and strength of the original sentence are gone. It has become muddled, weak, disconnected.

*

The following sentence is no better:

Little statesmen, philosophers, and divines make consistency into a hobgoblin, which they adore. That kind of consistency is foolish.

The one strong sentence has been turned into two sentences, without any resulting improvement. The subject has been shifted, and the whole emphasis has been changed, but for the worse. The weaker sentences are still grammatical, but they are neither commendable nor effective.

The sentence from Emerson has been presented here not as a model of what a good sentence must be, for any and every purpose, on any and every occasion. You are not being urged to write like Emerson—it may well be that Emerson, great writer though he was, is not precisely the model that you should be urged to follow. Nevertheless, if you would write good sentences, you should be prepared to study good sentences of all kinds as closely as the sentence from Emerson has just been studied, and you must be willing to follow the implications of such a study.

The student of composition wishes to master an instrument of expression: the sentence. In order to master it, he must have control over the instrument and know how to exert his control. What then must he know? What does he need to watch in the sentences that he studies and the sentences that he writes?

First, he must know the grammar of the sentence so well that his use of grammar becomes almost instinctive. He must know the forms and the qualities of words; the kinds and qualities of sentences, clauses, phrases; the idiom of the language.

Second, he must know the *effect* within the sentence of the constructions that he uses. He must be able to revise his constructions at need—to discard one and choose another; to substitute a word for a phrase, or a phrase for a word, or a clause for a phrase; to expand and contract as the sentence situation may require; to compound ideas or to separate ideas; to introduce complexity or to simplify, according to need; and last, by proper order and proper punctuation, to make both meaning and effect easily perceptible to the reader.

Two disciplines will help him to gain this skill: the discipline that comes from careful analysis of sentence structure, and the discipline that comes from conscious attempt to follow definite patterns in his own sentences.

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF SENTENCE PATTERNS

Rhetorical analysis of sentences is less precise than grammatical analysis but far more interesting because it deals with the effects of combinations of words rather than with purely formal relationships. Grammatical analysis deals with the anatomy of the sentence, as a scientist would deal with the anatomy of a horse. Rhetorical analysis is concerned with the "points" of a sentence in much the same way as a lover of horses is concerned with the "points" of a fine horse.

Rhetorical analysis is a study of the "points" of a sentence. For such analysis no scheme can be devised as methodical as the various schemes for making grammatical diagrams of sentence structure. We can look carefully at a sentence, see how it is put together, identify its notable features, and then try to decide how these features are brought into prominence.

Often the notable features will be found to consist of striking words or phrases, which "make" the sentence so far as its rhetorical force is concerned. These are sometimes called "pivot" words or expressions. From the study of grammar we might expect that such "pivot" words would invariably be the subject and the verb. But this is by no means always true. Subject and verb are of supreme *functional* importance, but they may be characterless words, which carry no rhetorical force. (In Emerson's sentence the subject, *consistency,* and the verb, *is,* have little to do with the emphasis of the sentence.) The rhetorical pattern of the sentence may not coincide with the grammatical and logical patterns. A large part of rhetorical analysis consists in seeing how the rhetorical pattern interweaves with the grammatical pattern.

Rhetorical analysis includes also the study of the nature of the various word-groups. In determining what they contribute to the sentence it is important to study their *position* with reference to other words and their place in the *order* of the sentence. Since the emphatic spots in a sentence are the beginning and the end, it is necessary to give particular attention to all beginnings and endings.

Special effects of any kind should be noted. For example, repetition of single words and phrases may be used for a special effect; or there may also be the kind of repetition called parallelism—which is a

repeating of patterns or constructions. Variation is no less important than repetition. The best sentences are often skillful blendings of repetition and variation.

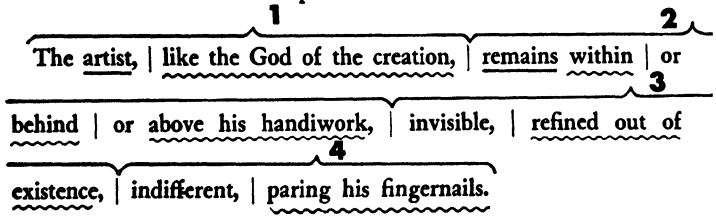
The diction of a sentence has much to do with its effectiveness and should be considered in any study of sentence structure. It is not discussed at length in this chapter, but is treated in detail in Chapter VI, "Words."

Last, sentences may be grouped in rhetorical classifications according to whether their structure is loose, periodic, or balanced, whether they tend to "segregate" or "aggregate" details, whether they employ a plain or an elaborate style. These and other matters are discussed in the latter part of this chapter.

EXAMPLES OF RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

The rhetorical analyses which follow deal with simple, complex, compound, and compound-complex sentences. In order to show the basic grammatical structure, the simple subject and main verb are underlined in each sentence. Pivot words or phrases are marked with a wavy line. Important rhetorical groups are marked with horizontal braces, numbered for reference. The vertical lines mark divisions between minor phrasal units. After studying the analysis carefully, the student should read the sentence aloud and try to indicate by slight pauses and by shadings of his voice the rhetorical pattern of the sentence.[1]

Simple Sentences



James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man.*[2]

[1]See Robert M. Gay's *Reading and Writing* (Houghton Mifflin Company) for many interesting and practical suggestions as to rhetorical analysis, the study of phrasal units, and the imitation of sentence patterns. In certain particulars, this chapter follows—though with modifications—the approach suggested by Professor Gay.

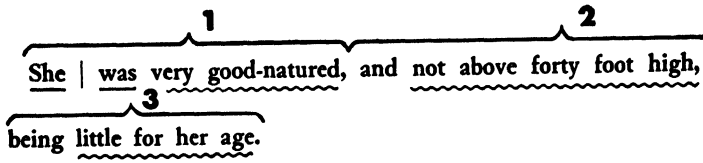
[2]Reprinted by permission of The Viking Press, Inc.

Grammatically, this is a simple sentence, of which *artist* is the simple subject. *Remains*, the verb, is followed by a series of word-groups which must be considered as predicate complements, adjectival in function, rather than as adverbial modifiers of *remains*. These are: (a) "within . . . handiwork," a long prepositional phrase; (b) "invisible," a single adjective; (c) "refined out of existence," a participial phrase; (d) "indifferent," a single adjective; (e) "paring his fingernails," another participial phrase. The five predicate complements give the sentence a complicated rhetorical twist. Nevertheless, grammatically considered, it is not a complex sentence but a simple sentence.

Rhetorically considered, it is a sentence of subtle elaborateness and complexity. The subject, *artist*, and the verb, *remains*, are matter-of-fact, colorless, noncommittal. The force of the sentence comes, first, from the bold modifying phrase, "like the God of the creation." This phrase overshadows the noun, *artist*, which it modifies. And, second, this force is intensified by the powerful accumulation of predicate complements that follow the verb. A remarkable amount of emphasis falls upon the four prepositions, "within," "behind," "beyond," "above"—words that ordinarily have a purely functional character. In Group 3, the phrase "refined out of existence" seems to give an explanation of "invisible," although it does not modify "invisible" and is in fact grammatically coördinate with it. In the same way the strongly ironic closing phrase, "paring his fingernails," seems to qualify "indifferent," although it does not modify "indifferent." Groups 3 and 4 thus have symmetrical structure with respect to each other, but are asymmetrical (unbalanced) in internal structure.

Thus, by the cross-pattern of rhetorical emphasis, the "strong" element of the sentence lies in its adjectival, or grammatically "weak" elements. In total effect, the sentence exhibits a peculiar kind of rhetorical syncopation; it emphasizes elements that, like the prominent elements of a musically syncopated pattern, receive an accent on the "offbeat." If we removed the syncopation and made a somewhat more "regular" statement, the sentence might read: "The God of the creation remains within his handiwork, invisible and indifferent; the artist thus resembles God." This interesting rhetorical effect might be graphically illustrated if we should write the minor ("offbeat") elements in capitals, as follows: "The artist, like THE GOD OF CREATION, REMAINS WITHIN (or behind, or beyond, or

above) HIS HANDIWORK, INVISIBLE, refined out of existence, indifferent, PARING HIS FINGERNAILS."

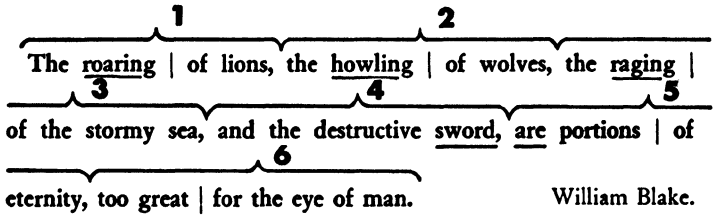


Jonathan Swift, "A Voyage to Brobdingnag," *Gulliver's Travels.*

This sentence refers to "Glumdalclitch," the "little nurse"—in fact a young giantess—who in Swift's account of the Brobdingnagians was assigned to the care of Lemuel Gulliver. Much of the effect of the sentence, as of the entire "voyage," derives from Swift's relentlessly ironic application of "perspective" to his story. Gulliver, the English sailor, is made to describe the monstrous world of the giants in the level commonplace terms that he would use in everyday life. Since the "scale" of measurement has been almost unimaginably enlarged, we get, through a telescopic magnification of human nature, an extraordinary "point of view."

But the sentence illustrates, as well as any sentence could, how a rhetorical pattern may serve to produce explosive effects, even though the language itself is simple to the point of plainness. Again, as in the sentence from Joyce, the force of the sentence lies in the adjectival constructions, not in the subject and verb. Grammatically considered, the adjectival constructions, "very good-natured" and "not above forty foot high," form a pair which constitute the predicate complement, while the participial phrase, "being little for her age," modifies the subject, "she." Rhetorically considered, the sentence divides into three word-groups, which are rhetorically but not grammatically coördinate—in effect a rhetorical series. Instead of proceeding in climactic order, the series develops a jolting and ludicrous anti-climax as it moves from the commonplace "very good-natured" to the vast surprise of "not above forty foot high" and then drops to "being little for her age"—which comes like a casual afterthought. Although parallel construction might be expected, Swift very carefully twists his sentence away from a too precise parallelism. He does not say, as he might have said: "She was very good-natured, approximately forty foot high, and little for her age" or "She was

approximately forty foot high, little for her age, and very good-natured." Instead, he weaves the grammatical and rhetorical arrangements into a skillful cross-pattern that gives the sentence exactly the kind of poker-faced irony he wishes to attain.



William Blake.

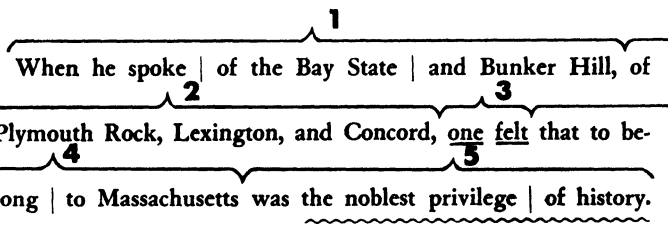
The sentence divides naturally into six rhetorical word-groups, which are of about equal importance. Since interest is about equally distributed among these groups, there are no pivot words or phrases to mark.

The effectiveness of the sentence comes from the accumulation of the powerful phrases which make up the compound subject (Groups 1, 2, 3, 4). In this sentence there is a clear division between the complete subject and the predicate, and this division coincides with the rhetorical division. There is an unbalanced structure in the sentence as a whole—four rhetorical groups in the subject and two in the predicate. The breaking of the sentence just before the simple predicate, *are*, gives some central emphasis to Group 5.

Groups 1, 2, 3, and 4 are in parallel construction. The first three consist of nouns modified by prepositional phrases, but in Group 4, in which we still have a strong noun, *sword,* we do not have a prepositional phrase following the noun. This very slight variation is not enough to seem a gross inconsistency of structure, but it is simply a pleasant variation which relieves the series of the threat of monotony and adds emphasis. (See page 225 for a discussion of parallelism.)

Complex Sentences. In the simple sentence the modifiers are always words and phrases. The sentence design is shaped up by minor accretions placed at strategic points—that is, if modifiers are used. In the complex sentence there are major structural complications. The distinguishing feature of the complex sentence is that it uses clauses as modifiers. This feature makes a great difference in the

rhetorical pattern of the sentence. In the simple sentence the structural details are likely to assume a coördinate relationship. We often have a series of adjectives, phrases, adverbs, or, when subject or predicate is compounded, a series of nouns or verbs. The simple sentence thus moves, as it were, always on the same level. In the complex sentence the organization (to continue the figure of speech) is both horizontal, as in the simple sentence, and vertical. That is, the complex sentence has both coördinate and subordinate units, and its subordinate units are clauses. It is very important to understand that the dependent clauses of the complex sentence are structural *units* and are to be viewed as groups, and that each dependent clause has its own internal organization, elaborate or simple in nature.



Van Wyck Brooks, *The Flowering of New England.*[1]

Group 3 is the subject-verb group. It is of minor rhetorical importance. The greatest rhetorical emphasis is on Groups 4 and 5, which together make up a noun clause, the object of *felt*. We should be justified in saying that the "rhetorical subject" of the sentence (if there could be such a thing) is in this subordinate clause and is the phrase, *to belong to Massachusetts*; and the "rhetorical predicate" would then be the rest of this clause—Group 5. The sentence really leads up to the phrase, *noblest privilege of history*, which is therefore marked as a pivot expression.

The preparation for this strong final effect (which probably is intended to imitate the rolling majesty of Webster's speeches) is in the clause with which the sentence begins. The effectiveness of this clause is in the concrete power of the series of proper names. Note the rhetorical grouping of these proper names. The first pair are grouped with *when he spoke* (Group 1); the next three, although they also are the grammatical and logical objects of *spoke*, form a

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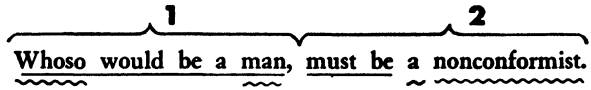
rhetorical group of their own, echoing the pattern of the first group, while they amplify and extend the meaning.

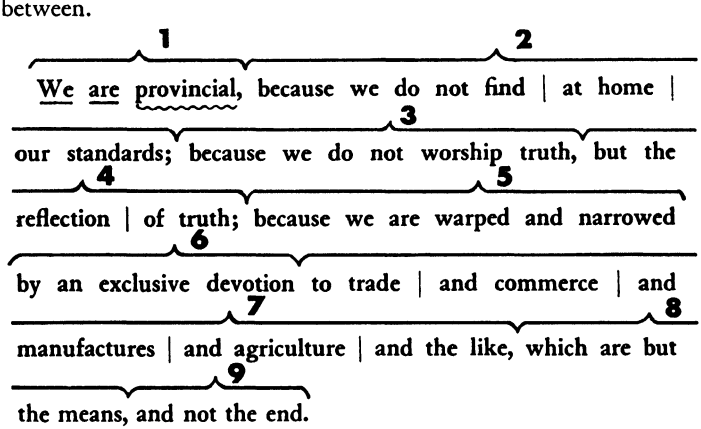


Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self-Reliance.*

The emphasis is about equally distributed on three pivot expressions: *whoso, man, nonconformist.*

The strength of the sentence is in its pithiness and brevity. It is a very plain sentence. A poorer writer would have weakened the sentence by elaboration and explanation. The sentence has no important modifiers. There is a slight complexity in the use of a noun clause as subject (Group 1). In this sentence, too, the patterns of grammar, logic, and rhetoric seem to coincide perfectly.

It is a balanced sentence (see page 231)—if the term *balanced* be not interpreted too strictly. If we supply a subject, *he*, for *must be*, we have two clauses of equal rhetorical importance, with a division between.



Henry D. Thoreau, *Life Without Principle.*

The sharply worded, blunt principal clause (Group 1) stands at the beginning of the sentence, and is followed by a series of adverbial clauses. This is "loose" sentence structure (see page 230). *Provincial* is a pivot word, the single most important word in the whole sentence, since everything that follows is an explanation of *provincial.*

The sentence makes a notable use of the principle of parallelism. The three adverbial clauses (*because . . . standards, because . . . of truth, because . . . end*) all begin with the same connective, *because*. Two of these clauses begin with the words *we do not*. But after this repetition, the third clause introduces a considerable variation within the established pattern. It begins with the words *we are warped and narrowed* and contains a long list of nouns followed immediately by an adjective clause as modifier. So elaborate a sentence could not be well organized except by such a use of parallel structure.

Observe that the lines of grammatical structure are crossed by the lines of rhetorical grouping. The first adverbial clause (Group 2) has only minor phrasal divisions. The second adverbial clause contains an antithesis and therefore falls into two rhetorical groups (Groups 3 and 4). The third adverbial clause is very long and very elaborate. It has five rhetorical groups (Groups 5, 6, 7, 8, 9). These groups are made up of a pair of verbs (*warped* and *narrowed*), two prepositional phrases, the second of which is a series of coördinates, and an adjective clause which contains an antithesis and therefore falls into two rhetorical groups (Groups 8 and 9).

Compound Sentences. In grammar, a compound sentence consists of two or more independent clauses. In rhetoric, we must qualify this definition by saying, *not any two or more* independent clauses, but only those independent clauses which will make an effective as well as a logical and grammatical combination. In the good compound sentence, the "two or more" independent clauses must be facets of one idea—statements that really supplement each other and can stand side by side as coördinates. Consider the following three ways of handling a matter-of-fact statement:

(1) There were seven rooms in the house. Only two of them were of public note. (Two sentences.)

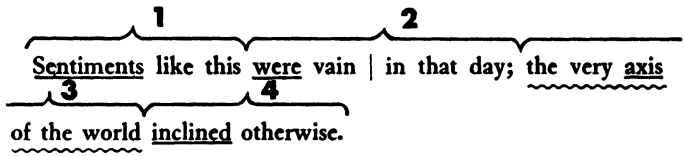
(2) There were seven rooms in the house, but only two of them were of public note. (Compound sentence.)

(3) Only two of the seven rooms of the house were of public note. (Simple sentence.)

Probably there is little to choose among these three ways of stating a simple fact. The *effect* of the compound sentence, however, is to establish a contrast between the seven rooms and the two rooms;

but the two clauses are of equal importance and combine readily in one sentence because they really express but one basic idea—the idea contained in sentence 3.

The pattern of the compound sentence is naturally relaxed and easy. Its structure is that of the simple sentence repeated and prolonged. It is without the tension of the complex sentence. It develops as if by addition, subtraction, alternation. The coördinating conjunctions, *and, but, or* may be compared to mathematical symbols. *And* is equivalent to the sign + ; *but* to the sign — ; *or,* perhaps, to the sign ± . Compound sentences are useful for setting forth ideas that involve comparison, contrast, or balance.

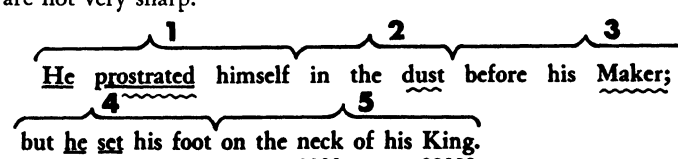


John Donald Wade, "Profits and Losses in the Life of Joel Chandler Harris."

This is a common type of compound sentence. It uses few modifiers. The weight of the sentence is carried by the nouns and verbs, and the "rhetorical subjects" and "rhetorical predicates" of the two clauses coincide rather closely with the grammatical subjects and predicates.

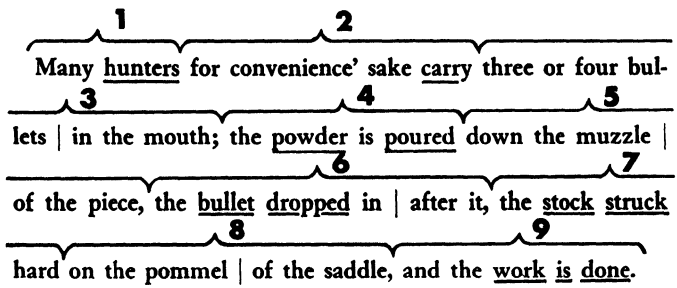
There is some contrast between the two clauses. The first clause is plain and abstract in its form of statement. The second clause is powerfully metaphorical and concrete. If the first clause understates the idea (perhaps ironically), the second clause overstates. (See Hyperbole and Litotes, Chapter VI.)

The rhetorical groups divide each of the coördinate clauses into two phrasal units of about equal importance, but these divisions are not very sharp.



Macaulay's *Essay on Milton.*

In this sentence of Macaulay's, the contrast is much sharper than in the sentence of John Wade's. The two clauses, furthermore, are not only put in contrast, but are carefully balanced, almost word for word, one with the other. Note that the pivot words of the second clause follow the order of the pivot words of the first clause. The sentence illustrates parallelism, balance, and antithesis. It is much more artificial and much less natural than Wade's sentence, which has much the same structure. Macaulay's art is so apparent as to make his sentence seem like a piece of verbal gymnastics. The art of Wade's sentence is subtly hidden but works none the less powerfully.



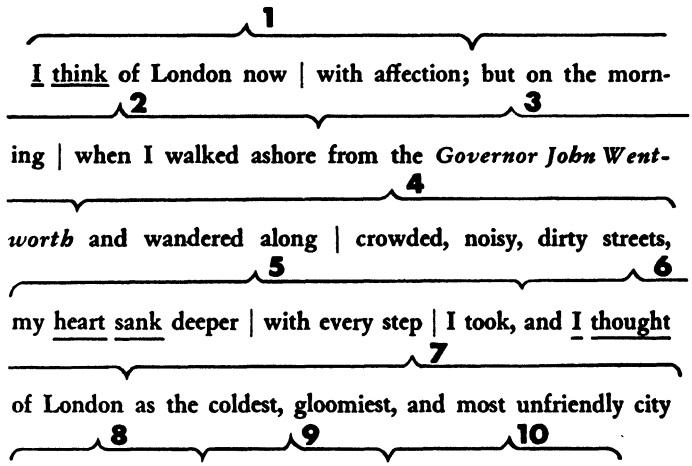
Francis Parkman, *Buffalo Hunting.*

This sentence is very loose in structure. It contains five independent clauses (if we count Groups 6 and 7, where the verb *is* is understood, as clauses). Ordinarily, so loose a structure would not be justified, but analysis shows that Parkman had a good reason for putting all these clauses in one sentence. The first clause (Groups 1 and 2) stands alone, as a kind of introductory statement. The other four clauses form a group of closely related statements in series, together describing the rapid reloading of the rifle by the buffalo hunter. In short, though there are five clauses, there is but one general action.

Some other notable features are: the formation of the sentence by a series of rapid accretions; the terse emphatic close; the simplicity of the language; the straightforward normal order, befitting a description of action.

The Compound-Complex Sentence. The compound-complex sentence is a mixed type. It combines a compound structure with a

complex structure. Remember that the mixed construction of the compound-complex sentence is a matter of structure, not of length. The following sentence from Thoreau contains only fifteen words, and yet is compound-complex: "This was manly as the world goes; and yet it was idle, if not desperate." The difficulties of analyzing the compound-complex sentence are greater when the sentence is rather long as well as involved in structure.



Kenneth Roberts, *Northwest Passage.*

The theme of this very elaborate sentence is a very simple one: the contrast between a man's thoughts about London at the time when he first saw it and at some later time. The complexity and elaborateness of the sentence arise from the writer's wish to show this man's feelings in detail.

The contrast is managed in the following way: The first independent clause of the sentence contains a very general statement —the rhetorical unit, Group 1. All that follows is the detailed contrast between what the man thinks *now* and what he thought *on the morning when I walked ashore.* Group 1 is very simple in structure; but the rhetorical groups that follow (Groups 2–10) are necessarily crowded with detail. The compound-complex structure is the only good means for organizing so much detail.

The contrast is emphasized by the repetition in the statements, *I think of London now* (Group 1) and *I thought of London* (Group 6).

Groups 4 and 7 contain a series of adjectives—*crowded, noisy, dirty* and *coldest, gloomiest, and most unfriendly.* It is doubtful whether this accumulation of adjective modifiers really helps the effect very much. Fewer adjectives might do the work just as well.

IMITATION OF SENTENCE PATTERNS

Imitation of sentence patterns is a useful means of getting experience in writing sentences that have an effective design. It has exactly the same purpose that the copying of a master's work may have for an art student. From doing, or trying to do, what the master does, the student learns what good work is. Imitation is a means of acquiring skill; it is the way in which we naturally learn a great many things, from infancy on into later life. There are limits to the value of imitation, of course; a mere copyist never attains real excellence. But imitation is useful in acquiring skill in so many fields of attainment that there is no reason to neglect it in writing. It is the kind of exercise that ought to establish good habits of writing.

The exercise is not to be done blindly. It must be preceded by a careful study of the model which is to be imitated. With a good sentence before you, examine its structure closely, as has been done in the rhetorical analyses of the preceding section. When you have determined what the pattern of the sentence is, then reproduce the pattern of the model in a sentence of your own which has an entirely different content. You may find it necessary to retain some of the words of the model, especially the purely functional words; but change the words wherever you can. The result should be a new sentence constructed upon the pattern of the old one.

The sentence from Thomas Hardy given below may be imitated in the ways suggested:

Model

The sky was clear—remarkably clear—and the twinkling of all the stars seemed to be but throbs of one body timed by a common pulse.

Imitation 1

The field was green—extraordinarily green—and the luster of all its furrows appeared to be but flashings of one surface, blended in the slanting light.

Imitation 2

Her smiles are secretive—queerly secretive—and the quietness of all her ways seems to disclose only rumors of her mystery, guarded by her quivering mouth.

EXERCISES

1. Write imitations of the sentences analyzed in the preceding section (pages 204–213).

2. Make rhetorical analyses of sentences given below, as your instructor may direct. Then write imitations of the sentences that you have analyzed.

a. The contradiction is explained simply enough; the earth is so huge, and the altitudes we can attain in airplanes are by comparison so tiny, that even a high-flying airplane is really hardly "up" at all. —Wolfgang Langewiesche, *Stick and Rudder.*[1]

b. The position of the queer old door and the odd presence of the leering mask suggested one thing above all others as appertaining to the mansion's past history—intrigue.—Thomas Hardy, *The Mayor of Casterbridge.*

c. She was thinking of the water that ran beneath their feet, deep underground, water on whose waves no sun ever glinted, no human eye ever rested, and yet it flowed ceaselessly from one cavern to another, until the very earth over which they moved was borne upward on its dark flood.—Caroline Gordon, *The Strange Children.*

d. I saw the Indian woman with eyes the color of blackstrap molasses looking at me over a pile of pottery decorated with the tribal symbols of life and fertility and eminently designed for the five-and-ten-cent store trade.—Robert Penn Warren, *All the King's Men.*[2]

e. Then the man turned, speaking not even back over his shoulder, already walking, not even waiting to see if they heard, let alone

[1]From *Stick and Rudder.* McGraw-Hill Co. Copyright, 1944, by Wolfgang Langewiesche.

[2]From *All the King's Men* by Robert Penn Warren. Copyright, 1946, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

were going to obey: "Come to my house."—William Faulkner, *Intruder in the Dust.*[1]

f. Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.—John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty.*

g. That every articulately-speaking human being has in him stuff for *one* novel in three volumes duodecimo has long been with me a cherished belief.—Oliver Wendell Holmes, *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.*

h. Muir pictured the fire he would build in the woods, the beautiful fragrant sequoia flame and the great trees transfigured in the purple light, while the stars looked down between the mighty domes, but Emerson, already old, was a child in the hands of his friends, and their indoor philosophy held him to the hotels and trails.—Van Wyck Brooks, *The Times of Melville and Whitman.*[2]

i. I have always been led by a sense that the natural world is our tutor and redeemer, and that genius, even, is only an intelligence that works like nature.—Stark Young, *The Pavilion.*

j. She had a peculiar gift of being able to divide her concentration, which permitted her to drive and at the same time balance the household budget or quarrel artistically or give intelligent answers to the children's questions about God and the life hereafter.—John P. Marquand, *Point of No Return.*[3]

k. We have all grown familiar with the type of person who is in his own conceit a lofty "idealist", but when put to the test has turned out to be only a disastrous dreamer.—Irving Babbitt, *Democracy and Leadership.*[4]

l. What song the Sirens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, though puzzling questions, are not beyond all conjecture.—Sir Thomas Browne, "Urn Burial."

THE RIGHT PHRASE

A feeling for the right phrase is as important as a feeling for the right word. In order to cultivate such a feeling it is important

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to understand that a phrase in rhetoric is not always the same thing as a phrase in grammar. The rhetorical groups marked in the preceding analyses may be considered rhetorical phrases. It was frequently observed in those analyses that such rhetorical phrases represent combinations not classified as phrases in grammar. In grammar a phrase is a group of words not containing a subject and predicate and used as a part of speech. In rhetoric a phrase is any group of words that makes an effective combination rather than a merely grammatical combination. There is some analogy here, perhaps, between rhetorical phrasing and musical phrasing. Groups of notes in a musical composition have a certain time value, established by a regular beat; but they are also grouped in "phrases" to form melodic patterns.

A sentence from Bacon's essay, "Of Truth," may be used to illustrate the two kinds of phrases:

The first creature of God, in the works of the days, was the light of the sense; the last was the light of reason; and his sabbath work, ever since, is the illumination of his Spirit.

Grammar says that *of God* is a prepositional phrase modifying *creature.* Rhetoric views *the first creature of God* as a phrasal unit which includes the prepositional phrase *of God,* the noun that it modifies, and the adjective and definite article that modify the noun. *The light of the sense, the light of reason, his sabbath work, the illumination of his Spirit* are similar phrasal units.

In grammar we commonly have the following kinds of phrases: verb phrase (*have bought, will go, having been scattered*); prepositional phrase (*in my house, by his order*). In rhetoric we are likely to have phrases consisting of some important word and its modifiers or of words paired or grouped in series: a noun and its modifiers (*a large, unwieldy, shapeless mass; a doubtful bundle of rags*); a verb and its associated words (*cut corners, titter emptily, flashed like a bullet*); two or three nouns, verbs, or adjectives or adverbs (*beg and beseech; a gentleman and a scholar; groaning, hissing, and booing*). A subject and a predicate may constitute a rhetorical phrase (*Remember now thy Creator; we cannot dedicate*).

Recognition of phrasal units is an important factor in effective reading as well as in effective writing. Very likely many people do not write well because they have never learned to read well. When

studying the following exercises, read the sentences aloud. Try to indicate by slight pauses and by changes in your voice the natural groupings of the words in rhetorical phrases. Note that such groupings are often (not always) indicated by the punctuation of the sentence. After reading the sentence aloud, draw vertical lines to indicate the division of the sentence into phrasal units. Then study carefully the composition of the phrasal units—that is, the character of the word-elements used to make up the groups.

EXERCISES

1. The heavens declare | the glory of God; | and the firmament showeth | His handiwork. | Day unto day | uttereth speech, | and night unto night | showeth knowledge.—*Psalm 19.*

2. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.—Sir Francis Bacon, *Of Studies.*

3. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor; suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature; for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first, and now, was, and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.—William Shakespeare, *Hamlet,* III, 2.

4. He was a pretty little creature, full of wire-drawn ingenuities, bankrupt enthusiasms, bankrupt pride, with the finest silver-toned low voice, and most elaborate gently-winding courtesies and ingenuities in conversation.—Thomas Carlyle, *Reminiscences.*

5. As in the hurricane that sweeps the plain, men fly the neighborhood of some lone, gigantic elm, whose very height and strength but render it so much more the unsafe, because so much the more a mark for thunderbolts; so at those last words of Ahab's many of the mariners did run from him in a terror of dismay.—Herman Melville, *Moby Dick.*

6. When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of envy dies out within me; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with the grief of parents upon a tombstone, my heart melts with compassion; when I see the tomb of the parents themselves, I consider the vanity of grieving for those whom we must quickly follow; when I see kings lying by those who deposed them, when I consider rival wits placed side by side, or the holy men that divided the world with their

contests and disputes, I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions, and debates of mankind.—Joseph Addison, *Westminster Abbey.*

7. A world of disorderly notions, picked out of his books, crowded into his imagination; and now his head was full of nothing but enchantments, quarrels, battles, challenges, wounds, complaints, amours, and abundance of stuff and impossibilities; insomuch that all the fables and fantastic tales which he read, seemed to him now as true as the most authentic histories.—Miguel De Cervantes, *Don Quixote.*

8. To delight in war is a merit in the soldier, a dangerous quality in the captain, and a positive crime in the statesman.—George Santayana, *Little Essays.*

9. Here, too, perhaps, must we who have no more than what we have, who know no more than what we know, who are no more than what we are, find our America.—Thomas Wolfe, *The Story of a Novel.*

10. The young blade of Albemarle of 1770, sitting over a punch-bowl in the tavern after a day of Cicero with the learned Parson Douglas, was not, at the moment, an exemplar of Cicero's morals, but I suspect that his conversation, even after the bottom of the bowl began to be visible, retained a few qualities of the Ciceronian style.—Allen Tate, "What Is a Traditional Society?"

11. California is the quick pulse of San Francisco, the quieter rhythm of Santa Barbara, the solid, matter-of-fact beat of the smaller valley towns; it is also the vigorous sprawling measure of Los Angeles and the nervous, accelerated systole and diastole of Hollywood.—Joseph Henry Jackson, Introduction, *Continent's End.*[1]

12. The youth is an intellectual merely, a believer in ideas, who thinks that ideas can overcome the world. The mature man passes beyond intellectuality: he believes in ideas, too, but life has taught him to be content to see them embodied, which is to see them under a sort of limitation. In other words, he has found that substance is a part of life, a part which is ineluctable.—Richard M. Weaver, *Ideas Have Consequences.*[2]

13. Improvement makes straight roads, but the crooked roads without improvement are the roads of genius.—William Blake.

14. For keenest enjoyment, I visit the flowers when the dew is on them, or in cloudy weather, or when the rain is falling; and I must

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be alone or with some one who cares for them as I do.—David Fairchild, *The World Was My Garden.*

CONVENTIONAL PHRASES

Certain kinds of phrases may be called conventional. These are the word-combinations that through long use have become standard and relatively unchanging features of the language. Whenever they are used, they must be used in their conventional form because any attempt to change them would probably result in misunderstanding.

Transitional phrases are for the most part of a very conventional type. Their function has already been explained in preceding chapters (see pages 40–42). They link sentences, parts of paragraphs, or paragraphs. They also have a connective function within the sentence, especially within the compound or the compound-complex sentence. In long and complicated sentences, like the one which follows, transitional phrases serve as guides to remind the reader of what has gone before and what is to come after.

The method of "approaching," being practised on foot, has many advantages over that of "running"; *in the former,* one neither breaks down his horse nor endangers his own life; he must be cool, collected, and watchful; must understand the buffalo, observe the features of the country and the course of the wind, and be well skilled in using the rifle.—Francis Parkman.

The paragraph given below contains a number of transitional phrases of the conventional type. Observe that some of the expressions underlined are clauses. In view of their function, however, and of our natural tendency to think of them as units, they, too, may be classified, from the rhetorical standpoint, as phrases or phrasal units.

A book *of this kind* does not differ very much, *it will be observed,* from a collection made in Maine or North Carolina or Texas. *Indeed,* songs *of this sort* are much more widespread than earlier collectors believed. Francis J. Child noted the universal diffusion of the ballad in Europe; but apparently he could not get it into his head that the diffusion might be equally universal in his own country. The great Harvard scholar, George Lyman Kittredge, continued

the error, at least in his own edition of Child's collection; he could not, *I suppose,* bring himself to believe that anything existed if it had not been brought to his attention in a manuscript, and *therefore* wrote, in 1904: "Ballad-making, so far as the English-speaking nations are concerned, is a lost art; and the same may be said of ballad-singing." This book not only *proves the contrary;* it proves that ballads are still made and sung, *surprisingly enough,* in the city itself.

The common transitional phrases are well known and do not need to be listed here (a list is given on page 42). They are such expressions as *in the first place, to sum up, to go back, of course, I suppose, you know, if I may differ.* Some of the single words used for transitional purposes are really two-word or three-word combinations that have been fused: *indeed* (for *in* + *deed*); *nevertheless* (*never* + *the* + *less*); *however* (*how* + *ever*).

Idiomatic Phrases. By far the greater number of conventional phrases are idioms. That is, they are word-combinations peculiar to the language, not always susceptible of easy grammatical explanation, and not always capable of ready translation into another language.

Although some idiomatic phrases have become not only conventional but trite, many of them are inescapable because we have become accustomed to saying certain things in an American-English way and in no other way. Idiomatic phrases make up a very considerable part of our conversation. Most of us would be rather helpless if by some miracle they were suddenly eliminated. In writing we need to be more careful; we should not use, as in conversation, the first expression that comes to mind, which is often not only a conventional but a trite phrase. Yet it is also praise of writing to say that it is idiomatic. An idiomatic style is one that makes use of the peculiar native excellences of the language. Idiomatic expressions have a wiriness, homeliness, raciness for which there is often no adequate substitute. Familiarity with idioms is a first necessity to any one who wishes to write genuine American-English. And unfamiliarity with idioms may often lead to grotesque mistakes, as we all know when we hear a foreigner struggling with the language.

Remember that idioms, like the rules of etiquette, are often ar-

bitrary and inexplainable. There could be no greater evidence of the strength of tradition than in the compulsions set up by the idiomatic phrases of our language. Why is it that we say *brother and sister* and rarely, if ever, *sister and brother*? Why is it that we can say *none the less* and *not the least,* but never *nothing the less* or *none the least*? There is no answer; those phrases are idioms; our tongues would be twisted and our minds troubled if we attempted to say anything else.

The following are examples of idiomatic phrases. In going through the list, note that the phrases come in large part from the Anglo-Saxon part of the English vocabulary and perhaps reflect, more vividly than any other expressions, our ancient experience as a people.[1]

Verb Phrases:	make up to; get on with; get it over with; pitch and toss; roll and tumble; watch and wait; turn down (meaning *refuse*); take up (meaning *accept*); bow and scrape.
Adjective Phrases:	high and dry; black and blue; through thick and thin; dark and deep; slow but sure.
Adverb Phrases:	now or never; ups and downs.
Comparisons:	Cool as a cucumber; old as the hills; sharp as a razor; dead as a doornail; quick as a flash; fat as a pig.
Figurative Phrases:	peter out; show the white feather; an axe to grind; the end of his rope; to make sheep's eyes at; split the difference; saw wood and say nothing; to laugh up one's sleeve; to be two-faced.
Technical and Cant Phrases:	rank and file; put one's oar in; strike while the iron is hot; hew to the mark; rock the boat.
Phrases Dealing with Animals:	lead a dog's life; kill the fatted calf; a horse laugh; a pig in a poke; blind as a bat; wise as an owl.
Somatic Phrases (Dealing with the Body):	make the mouth water; hip and thigh; lick one's chaps.

[1]For long and interesting lists of idioms, see Logan Pearsall Smith's *Words and Idioms* and Fowler's *Dictionary of Modern English Usage.*

EXERCISES

1. The following idiomatic phrases were collected during a brief examination of current issues of magazines. Classify these phrases according to the scheme indicated for the list of idioms given above (page 222). Of these idioms, which are so trite as to be no longer effective? Which should be classified as slang?

live to tell the tale
a homey touch
a sly dig
serve a hitch
jot down a note
track it down
build up a reputation
work out the problem
flick a switch
experience a thrill
pull a proof
crane his neck
give a picture of the situation
trust to luck
get into the act
get the upper hand
pull his freight
a bunch of men
under contract to
pay attention to
fired with an ambition
throw his weight around
from head to tail
brief the officer
put the skids under
won't stand for it
the consensus of opinion
clean up the room
clean out the desk
lay down the law
get over an illness
acquire a technique
check the addition
pull over to the curb
chalk it up to experience
it all boils down to
a grip on reality
mean a lot to
pursue a method
head off

2. Examine a popular magazine and make a list of your own (at least twenty or thirty phrases) similar to the above list. Examine a more literary magazine (*Sewanee Review, Kenyon Review, Harper's, The American Scholar, etc.*) to see whether you find the same type of idiomatic phrases.

3. Note that custom—rather than textbook rules—ordains certain verb-preposition combinations. For example, we "call *up*" a friend by telephone, "call *down*" a rude or impudent person, "call *out*" someone who is to be questioned or challenged, and "call *in, on,* or *over*" in other particular situations. Make similar lists for the following verbs: *pick, set, gather, beat, drive, cut, dress, work, play, talk.*

4. Make a list of the idiomatic phrases that are suggested to you by the following words: *frying-pan, teapot, bushel, hay, oats, boat, brakes, landing, clock, card.*

5. Give some idiomatic phrases that express:

a. Resentment
b. Fear
c. Satisfaction
d. Satiety
e. Amazement
f. Disappointment
g. Respect
h. Intense admiration

6. The following story points out some of the difficulties that the American idiom causes a foreigner. Construct a similar story illustrating how slang or colloquialism causes similar difficulties to one unfamiliar with Americanisms.

As I write in my language, I realize how difficult English is for me. I have studied it intensively for a dozen years, still I have not acquired a complete mastery of its idioms and slang expressions. My first encounter with American idiom was memorable. I had been in the United States only nine months when in 1939 a University of Illinois sociologist invited me and a Chinese student to a Thanksgiving dinner. . . .

At three o'clock, the Chinese and I arrived at the professor's door. Forgetting to ring the doorbell, I knocked at the door as though I were at home in Nigeria. For three minutes no one came to the door, and I had just begun to wonder whether we had the correct address when the Chinese reminded me to ring the doorbell.

The host, hearing the bell, opened the door.

"How do you do?" he said.

To this, we each replied, "I do well."

We were then introduced to the hostess who too wanted to know how we did. Of course, we "did well," at least until the doorbell incident occurred. . . .

At eight, I thanked the professor's wife for the hospitality which we very much enjoyed. As I looked around for our coats and hats, the host asked. "You want your wraps, don't you?"

"No," I said, "we brought no wraps with us."

"He means your coats and hats," his wife instructed.

"Oh, I see! Yes," I quickly picked up, "we want our wraps." I blushed and laughed faintly.

Quickly we were escorted to the door. As the host opened the door, his wife made this little but wonderful speech:

"Oh, boys, we've very much enjoyed your company. Come back again." . . . As she completed the word "again," we had both cleared the threshold and her husband had slammed the door.

Not realizing that we were not supposed to "come again" *now,* I asked the Chinese what we should do. He said, "When I was in China, I met an American missionary who advised me that whenever in doubt what the Americans mean, I should go and ask them."

Gr-r-r-r! Gr-r-r-r! went the doorbell again.

The hostess opened the door, and, being surprised to see us again, she asked, "What's wrong, boys, have you forgotten something?"

"No, madam," I said. "You asked us to come back again, and —here we are." . . .

"Sorry, boys! That's the American way of saying good-by," she courteously apologized.

"In my country," said I, "when we want to say good-by to our guest, we say, 'May you go home in peace.' The idea is to make sure that your guest goes home; why say, 'Come back again'?"

They obliged me with applause and said, "May you go home in peace."

Thanking them again for both the dinner and the phrases, we hastened home, quite mentally dwarfed by the intricacies of the American idiom.—Mbonu Ojike, *My Africa.*[1]

PARALLELISM IN THE SENTENCE

The principle of parallelism might be stated in the form of an axiom: *Like ideas require like expression.* Grammar looks at this principle rather negatively; it rejects, as ungrammatical, an attempt to join in coördinate relationship any expressions that are not actually of equal rank. In the sentence, *The society chooses its members by secret ballot, and which must be unanimous,* the error is an error of false coördination. An independent clause and a dependent clause are wrongly joined by the conjunction *and.* The grammatical error can be remedied in either of two ways: (1) We may strike out the conjunction and make the sentence read, *The society chooses its members by a secret ballot, which must be unanimous;* but the sentence is not yet quite correct, since the word *ballot* is really

[1]Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The John Day Company, Inc.

being used in two senses. (2) We may make the two clauses parallel in structure:

The society chooses its members by secret ballot, and the election must be unanimous. (Two independent clauses.)
The members of the society are chosen by secret ballot and by unanimous vote. (Two phrases.)

The illustrations indicate that parallelism, as a rhetorical device, rests upon grammatical coördination, but that it involves something more: the notion of consistency of form as well as of equality of rank. By repeating a structural pattern, we emphasize the similarity between two ideas or in a series of ideas. Or, once committed to a certain train of ideas, we keep a consistent point of view and emphasize that point of view by maintaining a close similarity of expression. Parallelism is therefore, first, a grammatical necessity for parts of a sentence that are actually in a certain kind of coördinate relationship; it means that elements of the same grammatical rank must have the same structure. But, second, parallelism is a rhetorical device used for organizing parts of sentences or even groups of sentences so as to emphasize the similarity of the thoughts.

EXERCISE

In the sentences given below, study carefully the elements which have parallel structure. Give the grammatical construction of those elements. Note particularly any instances where the parallelism is not perfectly carried out, and be able to say why such variations are used.

1. Of the contemporary newspaper reports, it must suffice to say that along with some excellent reporting, there was no end of speculation, of eulogy, and of stupid flattery.—Douglas Southall Freeman, *The South to Posterity.*

2. Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison.—Samuel Johnson, *Lives of the English Poets.*

3. His tenants grow rich, his servants look satisfied, all the young women profess to love him, and the young men are glad of his company.—Richard Steele, *The Spectator,* No. 2.

4. I must observe also that, as Virgil, in the poem which was

designed to celebrate the original of the Roman empire, has described the birth of its great rival, the Carthaginian commonwealth, Milton, with like art, in his poem on the fall of man, has related the fall of those angels who are his professed enemies.—Joseph Addison, *The Spectator,* No. 267.

5. Time and space are but physiological colors which the eye marks, but the soul is light; where it is, is day; where it was, is night; and history is an impertinence and an injury if it be anything more than a cheerful apologue or parable of my being and becoming.—Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self-Reliance.*

6. They are transfigured: Lady Macbeth is "unsexed"; Macbeth has forgot that he was born of woman; both are conformed to the image of devils; and the world of devils is suddenly revealed.—Thomas De Quincey, "On the Knocking at the Gate in 'Macbeth' ".

7. They must be eaten in the fields, when your system is all aglow with exercise, when the frosty weather nips your fingers, the wind rattles the bare boughs or rustles the few remaining leaves, and the jay is heard screaming around.—Henry D. Thoreau, *Wild Apples.*

8. His mouth is sensitive and droll; his eyes look at once mild, lazy, and critical as if they had been long used to the beauty and finish of horses and to simple physical things done perfectly.—Stark Young, "Cowboy at the Antique Shop Window."

9. Every single poem written regular is a symbol small or great of the way the will has to pitch into commitments deeper and deeper to a rounded conclusion and then be judged on whether it has been strongly spent or weakly lost; be it in art, politics, school, church, business, love, or marriage—in a piece of work or in a career. Strongly spent is synonymous with kept.—Robert Frost, "The Constant Symbol."[1]

10. Although I had never passed beyond the armor of their hard bright eyes, or breached the wall of their crisp, friendly, and impersonal speech, or found out anything about them, I always thought of them with warmth, with a deep and tender affection, as if I had always known them—as if, somehow, I could have lived with them or made their lives my own if only I had said a word, or turned the handle of a door—a word I never knew, a door I never found. —Thomas Wolfe, "The House of the Far and Lost."

11. He was coursing with the fox through the trees. He could hear the sharp, pointed feet padding on the dead leaves, see the

[1]From *The Poems of Robert Frost.* Reprinted by courtesy of The Modern Library.

quick head turned now and then over the shoulder.—Caroline Gordon, "Old Red."

12. The hard, pertinacious little paragon, softened now, romantically picturesque with his luxuriant white hair and his formal black gown, had turned out to be one of the most authentic of Christian saints, serene, unbreakable, heroic—an epitome, in a sense, of the English genius, part and parcel of the English scene.—John Donald Wade, *John Wesley*.[1]

13. An environment is an abstraction, not a place; Natchez is a place but not an environment.—Allen Tate, "The Profession of Letters in the South."

14. What the Greeks only suspected, we know well; what their Aeschylus imagined, our nursery children feel.—Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native.*

PRACTICE IN PARALLELISM

A too constant use of parallelism will make a style too ornate and dull for the modern taste. In the sentences of the preceding exercise (page 226), you should note a great difference between the studied, highly wrought, interlocking parallelisms of Addison, Steele, and Emerson and the less rigid, more subtle parallelisms of Stark Young, John Wade, Robert Frost, and other modern authors.

Yet, although there is a danger in carrying parallelism too far, a certain amount of deliberate practice in parallelism is valuable. It directs one's attention to structural units, and it enforces careful organization of the sentence.

The following exercises are intended to give a practice of this kind.

EXERCISES

1. Write sentences to illustrate the use in parallel structure of the indicated elements:

   a. A sentence beginning with a series of infinitives which are the subject of the main verb or are in apposition with the subject.
   b. A sentence containing a series of noun clauses used as the object of a verb.

[1]Copyright, 1930, by Coward-McCann, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

c. A sentence containing a series of participles modifying the subject of the sentence or of a clause.
d. A sentence containing a series of gerund phrases.
e. A sentence containing a series of independent clauses.
f. A compound sentence in which the second independent clause repeats, with some agreeable variation, the pattern of the first clause, yet without violating the principle of parallelism.

2. Copy and bring to class ten examples of parallelism selected from such sources as the following:

The Bible (see especially *Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Revelation*)
The essays of Sir Francis Bacon
A collection of famous orations, classic or modern
The prose works of Sir Thomas Browne, John Donne, John Ruskin
The stories and novels of William Faulkner, Thomas Wolfe, Joseph Conrad

3. Point out and correct all violations of parallelism in the following sentences:

a. His methods of study, I must conclude after long acquaintance with his habits, are desultory in the extreme, though not without spurts of energy, and on the whole he neglects his books.

b. You may well be a victim either of circumstance, or it may be your heredity that bosses you.

c. Circling at a discreet distance, but bristling and showing their teeth, and with a considerable barrage of ugly barks and growls, the wild dogs moved with us, no matter which way we turned.

d. Timothy knew the deer were in the woods, but with no way of luring them out, and they could not be reached through the blowdown.

e. In 1927 he accepted an appointment to Yale and was followed there by a group of his California students, who were especially devoted to him.

f. She is a girl who somehow gets invited to all the parties; the boys are always tagging after her; though all the time caring about nothing but art and never seeming to value such attention.

g. Because the birth rate increased sharply during the nineteen-forties and also on account of the public's enthusiasm for college education, the colleges and universities of the nation face the prospect of a greatly expanded enrollment by 1965.

h. Newspapers today are influenced by various factors unknown to Benjamin Franklin, such as new economic complications, steadily increasing competition from radio and television, and the public demands diverse kinds of news and information, to say nothing of labor troubles.

TYPES OF SENTENCE STRUCTURE

In writing we rarely take the trouble to make each sentence conform to some rigid structural scheme. We follow the progress of the thought, shaping it as best we can to fit the need of the moment, and correcting and revising the sentences from time to time to secure an effective expression.

Nevertheless, even a cursory examination of any passage of good prose will reveal that sentences fall into three structural types, and, if we would govern the structure of our sentences, it is helpful to keep these typical structures in mind.

The three types of sentences are loose, periodic, and balanced. (We may, of course, have a combination of types—a *mixed* structure—especially in long, elaborate sentences.)

Loose Sentence. A loose sentence is a sentence which has a predicate early in the sequence of its sentence elements. Its assertion is complete, in a sense, long before the final punctuation mark is reached. A loose sentence ends with a modifier—a phrase, a subordinate clause, a coördinate clause, or some other element not absolutely necessary to the meaning of the sentence.

Example

Charles had a habit of taking early morning walks, perhaps because his aunt had commended the birds, if not the worms, to his attention, or perhaps because he just could not sleep late, anyway.

The term "loose," as applied to sentence types, means nothing derogatory. In rhetoric, a loose sentence is not a sentence that is written in a slipshod careless way. It is a sentence in which the focal point is reached, and the essential meaning is disclosed, before the full content is rounded out. It does not keep the reader in suspense, but it *adds* its qualifications, explanations, reservations *after* its assertion has been made. The loose sentence is, in fact,

the normal type of sentence organization. The majority of sentences in any passage of prose will be loose sentences.

Periodic Sentence. A periodic sentence is a sentence which withholds its predicate until the end, or near the end, of the sentence, or which, in rhetorical terms, is "massed according to the principle of suspension."[1] Its meaning is generally not complete until the final word or word-group of the sentence is reached. A periodic sentence ends, therefore, with a verb or a predicate complement or, if the sentence order is inverted, with the subject. The arrangement of the periodic sentence is generally climactic.

Examples

Either because his aunt had once commended the birds, if not the worms, to his attention, or perhaps because he could never sleep late, Charles, as had been his habit, continued his early morning walks.

How much of this morbid feeling sprang from an original disease of the mind, how much from real misfortune, how much from the nervousness of dissipation, how much was fanciful, how much was merely affected, it is impossible for us, and would probably have been impossible for the most intimate friends of Lord Byron, to decide.—Macaulay.

The periodic sentence employs the principle of suspension, as the loose sentence does not. A loose sentence seems natural and spontaneous; a periodic sentence, since it is deliberately organized so that its focal point is at the end, achieves its intended effect by methods that, to a modern reader, may often seem artificial. It does, in fact, set a premium upon artifice. It is best adapted to stately and dignified prose of a ceremonious and oratorical nature, but it may be used effectively in ordinary prose, when some sharp or highly concentrated effect is desired. Over-use of the periodic sentence will inevitably make writing seem stilted, falsely rhetorical.

Balanced Sentence. A balanced sentence is a sentence in which there is a close correspondence of parts in a symmetrical arrangement. It may be a correspondence of phrase with phrase: *"An acre in Middlesex* is better than *a principality in Utopia."* Or it

[1]Genung, *The Working Principles of Rhetoric*, p. 350.

may be a part-by-part correspondence of two independent clauses, as in Macaulay's sentence: "He prostrated himself in the dust before his Maker; but he set his foot upon the neck of his King." The following schematic arrangement shows how careful is the balance in this sentence:

He	←——→	he
prostrated	←——→	set
himself	←——→	his foot
in the dust	←——→	upon the neck
before his Maker	←——→	of his King

Parallelism is of course an important structural feature of the balanced sentence. The most obvious and effective uses of parallelism are found in balanced sentences. The balanced sentence, with its perfect symmetry, has an air of contrivance that limits its use in modern composition. It is good for sudden strokes, for witty sallies, for pithy descriptions and thumbnail sketches. But modern critics consider a style like Macaulay's abominably artificial—"rhetorical" in the bad sense. Modern taste abhors rigid patterns and prefers merely a suggestion of similarity of pattern, with an immediate suggestion of irregularity—in other words, as much variation as repetition, and perhaps more variation than repetition.

The following sentences illustrate a less precise and formal type of balance:

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.—George Santayana.

But Catherine had a wider knowledge of Western literature than had Frederick; her mind was more open to the currents that were coming in; intellectually she belonged to a later age.—Mary Colum, *From These Roots.*

Not only do we at the feast of Christmas celebrate at once Our Lord's Birth and His Death; but on the next day we celebrate the martyrdom of His first martyr, the blessed Stephen.—T. S. Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral.*[1]

[1]By permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, publishers.

It is a useful accomplishment to be able to say *no,* but surely it is the essence of amiability to prefer to say *yes* where it is possible.—Robert Louis Stevenson, *Familiar Studies.*

Mixed Structure. In long sentences, especially in long compound or compound-complex sentences, the principle of suspension may be followed through only a part of the sentence. This part of the sentence may justly be classified as periodic, and the sentence as a whole may be regarded as of a mixed type, partly periodic, partly loose.

Examples

1. I think that in England, partly from the want of an Academy, partly from a national habit of intellect to which that want of an Academy is due, there exists too little of what I may call a public force of correct literary opinion, possessing within certain limits a clear sense of what is right and wrong, sound and unsound, and sharply recalling men of ability and learning from any flagrant misdirection of their advantages.—Matthew Arnold (From "that in England" to "opinion," the sentence is periodic. The rest of the sentence is loose.)

2. If all men are mortal (an assumption), and if Socrates was a man (in the sense assumed), no doubt Socrates must have been mortal; but we suspect that we knew all this before it was submitted to the test of a syllogism.—Carl Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosopher.*[1] (From "If all" to the semicolon, the sentence is periodic; the rest is loose.)

EXERCISES

1. Determine which of the following sentences are loose, which are periodic, and which are balanced:

a. Judges and lawyers during tedious trials, legislators during debates, men relaxing during hot noons and rainy days, snow-bound farmers—all shaved away on sticks of wood they loved to feel, experiment with, and shape into useful models.—Richard B. Lillard, *The Great Forest.*[2]

[1]Reprinted by permission of the publisher, Yale University Press.

[2]Copyright, 1947, by Richard G. Lillard. Reprinted by permission of the publisher, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

b. The young man looked at him still; he looked at the young man; and the issue, by a rapid process, was that the knowledge of a perched privacy appeared to him the very last of luxuries.—Henry James, *The Ambassadors.*[1]

c. The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.—*Ecclesiastes* V, 12.

d. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.—*Isaiah* LX, 18.

e. The cultivation of poetry is never more to be desired than at periods when, from an excess of the selfish and calculating principle, the accumulation of the materials of external life exceeds the quantity of the power of assimilating them to the internal laws of human nature.—Percy Bysshe Shelley, *A Defense of Poetry.*

f. From this preface, prefixed to poems in which it was impossible to deny the presence of original genius, however mistaken its direction might be deemed, arose the whole long continued controversy.—Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria,* XIV.

g. Mine had been the first step; the second was for the young man; the third was for God.—Thomas De Quincey, "The Vision of Sudden Death."

h. Personifications, capital letters, seas of sunbeams, visions of glory, shining inscriptions, the figures of a transparency, Britannia with her shield, or Hope leaning on an anchor, make up their stock in trade.—William Hazlitt, "On Familiar Style."

i. Milton addresses his poem to God; Pope's poem is addressed to Lord Bolingbroke.—A. N. Whitehead, *Science in the Modern World.*[2]

j. Thus Whitman was a country boy before he became a young man of the streets, and he returned to this open-air life, in the days of his invalidism, after the Civil War, at Timber Creek.—Van Wyck Brooks, *The Times of Melville and Whitman.*[3]

[1]Harper and Bros.

[2]Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

[3]Copyright, 1947, by Van Wyck Brooks. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.

k. Then up the land she would see the house, the brick dark and streaked with damp, the square structure blank and irrelevant amid the bare trees set on the bare land, in the great emptiness, and the smoke from the chimneys ravelled upward with imperceptible motion, absorbed into the empty, smoke-colored sky.—Robert Penn Warren, *World Enough and Time*.[1]

l. The ashes of an Oak in the Chimney are no Epitaph of that Oak to tell me how high or how large that was; it tells me not what flocks it sheltered while it stood, nor what men it hurt when it fell.—John Donne, *Sermons*.

2. Write five sentences of your own in loose structure.
3. Rewrite the same sentences in periodic structure.
4. Compose five balanced sentences.

THE SENTENCE AS A UNIT OF COMPOSITION

So far we have studied the sentence without considering its relation to the paragraph or passage of which it is a part. But the sentence as a unit of composition cannot be studied in such isolation. The sentences of good prose support and continue each other. Grammatically, each is a separate unit, but the effectiveness of the passage will often depend upon the way in which the sentences are related to each other. Sometimes they may be so closely related that an individual sentence will not "make sense" logically if it is taken out of its context.

The grouping of sentences to develop the topic of a paragraph has been dealt with in a previous chapter. The problem, thus considered, is a matter of *composition*—the structural organization of thought. The effect of this grouping upon the form of individual sentences is a matter of *rhetoric*, concerning which it is impossible to lay down strict rules. The interdependence of sentences, one upon another, can best be understood by close examination of sentence-to-sentence relationships in specimen passages of good prose.

1.

I have a great deal of company in my house; especially in the morning, when nobody calls. Let me suggest a few comparisons, that

[1]Copyright, 1950, by Robert Penn Warren. Reprinted by permission of the publisher, Random House, Inc.

some one may convey an idea of my situation. I am no more lonely than the loon in the pond that laughs so loud, or than Walden Pond itself. What company has that lonely lake, I pray? And yet it has not the blue devils, but the blue angels in it, in the azure tint of its waters. The sun is alone, except in thick weather, when there sometimes appear to be two, but one is a mock sun. God is alone,—but the devil, he is far from being alone; he sees a great deal of company; he is legion. I am no more lonely than a single mullein or dandelion in a pasture, or a bean leaf, or sorrel, or a horse-fly, or a humble-bee. I am no more lonely than the Mill Brook, or a weathercock, or the north star, or the south wind, or an April shower, or a January thaw, or the first spider in a new house.—Henry D. Thoreau, *Walden*.

2.

Leaving the highway I turned off into the woods toward the pond, which was apparent through the foliage. The floor of the forest was strewn with dried old oak leaves and *Transcripts*. From beneath the flattened popcorn wrapper (*granum explosum*) peeped the frail violet. I followed a footpath and descended to the water's edge. The pond lay clear and blue in the morning light, as you have seen it so many times. In the shadows a man's waterlogged shirt undulated gently. A few flies came out to greet me and convoy me to your cove, past the No Bathing signs on which the fellows and the girls had scrawled their names. I felt strangely excited suddenly to be snooping around your premises, tiptoeing along watchfully, as though not to tread by mistake upon the intervening century. Before I got to the cove I heard something which seemed to me quite wonderful: I heard your frog, a full, clear *troonk*, guiding me, still hoarse and solemn, bridging the years as the robins had bridged them in the sweetness of the village evening. But he soon quit, and I came on a couple of young boys throwing stones at him.—E. B. White, "A Letter to Thoreau."[1]

Paragraph 1, by Thoreau, presents his cherished belief that individual man, dwelling close to unviolated nature, can be self-sufficient and needs little or no support from society ("company"). Thoreau chooses to state his topic in the form of a paradox: he has "company," though "alone"—in fact, most of all when most "alone." In its logical organization, the paragraph consists of a general state-

[1]From *One Man's Meat*, by E. B. White. Reprinted by permission of the author and of Harper & Brothers, publishers.

ment ("I have a great deal of company . . . when nobody calls") which is supported by a series of particulars; but the particulars are cast, as he himself indicates, into the form of "comparisons."

Such a logical organization, however, would not necessarily require a group of sentences expressed in the rhetorical form that Thoreau has used. Since he is engaged in exploring a paradox (a seeming contradiction which indirectly affirms a truth), Thoreau chooses to express his thought in sentences that make use of parallelism and antithesis. These devices necessarily lead to a certain amount of deliberate repetition of sentence patterns. But Thoreau is careful not to let this procedure become mechanical. By unobtrusive variation he contrives to avoid the monotony that his parallelisms and repetitions might otherwise produce. And the antithesis between "company" and "alone," as it runs through the several sentences, appears with a changing emphasis achieved by manipulation of the rhetorical pattern.

The strong paradox of the topic sentence: "I have a great deal of company . . . when nobody calls" is followed by an entirely colorless, matter-of-fact statement: "Let me suggest . . ," which makes a transitional bridge to the graphic sentences that develop the paradox. Three sentences begin with "I am no more lonely than"—each, with its negative form, being the first part of a comparison; the particulars of the second part follow in series. But the three sentences beginning "I am no more lonely than" do not come in monotonous succession. Between the first and the second appears an intervening passage, the first sentence of which is a rhetorical question, "What company has . . .?" This question is answered in the next three sentences. Two of these begin with statements that echo, in impersonal form, Thoreau's personal negative ("I am no more lonely than"). "The sun is alone" and "God is alone," with their trains of particulars, are thus not mere mechanical repetition. The comparisons involved in these two sentences are not developed directly, by the use of "than," but by antithesis: "sun" is set off against "mock sun"; "God" against "devil." "Company," which appears to have an ordinary social meaning in the topic sentence, acquires a disreputable meaning when it appears as an attribute of the devil; while "lonely" and "alone," repeated several times, gradually acquire dignity as attributes of "sun" and "God." The cosmic antitheses are developed in clauses. The two series "than a single mullein" and "than the Mill

Brook" are developed so as to give "humble-bee" and "spider" climactic positions.

Paragraph 2, by E. B. White, done in a much less formal, more modern prose, achieves its effects by echoing, in a deliberately ironic pattern, the procedure and style of Thoreau. Mr. White achieves his "comparisons" (which are intended as an implied commentary on Thoreau's belief in nature) less by direct comparison and antithesis than by couplings which put oddly assorted objects into juxtaposition. Beginning with two sentences that seem to copy exactly the manner of Thoreau, Mr. White explodes his first hidden mine at the end of sentence 2 ("dried old oak leaves and *Transcripts*"). Changing to inverted order in the next sentence, he deliberately brings "popcorn wrapper" and "frail violet" into jarring contrast. Next comes a Thoreau-like sentence in normal order, followed by a sentence which begins with seeming emphasis upon the natural scene, in the phrase (transposed out of normal order) "In the shallows." Whatever expectation the reader may have of another Thoreau-like sentence is destroyed by "a man's waterlogged shirt." The two sentences are therefore set in bold antithesis to each other. A similar procedure is followed, with subtle variations, throughout the remainder of the paragraph. It is important to note that, although Thoreau's sentences in Paragraph 1 are closely related, one to another, they are more "quotable," as separate sentences, than any of White's. If lifted out of their context, Thoreau's sentences retain a certain self-sufficiency and are in themselves notable. But White's sentences, if thus severed from the context, lose all force and hardly carry a meaning. White's prose is therefore much more closely woven than Thoreau's. It has less gravity of content. It is the prose of a skillful essayist. Thoreau's is the prose of a thinker and philosopher.

VARIETY IN THE SENTENCE

Such a study leads to the problem of how to obtain variety. Prose becomes tedious, or even difficult, if the writer attempts to develop his thought in sentences that are just alike in structure, or that have little variation of pattern. Variation of idea-content is not enough; it must be accompanied by variation of form. Consider how poverty-stricken Thoreau's thought would be if it were presented in the following form:

I am really never alone. Nature gives me all the company I want. The loon that laughs on Walden Pond is not lonely. Walden Pond itself is not lonely. It does not have any company, of course, but it is not lonely. It is blue like the sky. The sun is not lonely, although it is alone, except in thick weather when you may think you see two suns. You are seeing a mock sun. There is really only one sun. There is only one God, and he is alone, but he is not lonely. The devil, on the other hand is not alone. He has company all the time. So I am not lonely. I would rather be alone, the way bees and spiders and stars are alone, than to keep company like the devil.

A passage of prose, written thus, is certain to be monotonous, and it may be infantile. Inability to form varied patterns is the mark of an undeveloped mind, or else it is a product of fear. The timid writer, afraid of making a mistake, sacrifices variety to a stiff and impoverished ideal of correctness. But the paragraph would be no less objectionable if it were converted into two or three very long, very rambling sentences, or if the sentences were all periodic or all balanced.

Good writing goes to none of these extremes. It is not enough to write a group of sentences each of which is perfectly organized within itself. Sentences should not be, as Emerson's sentences frequently are, "infinitely repellent particles," but the sentences should be organized with reference to each other so as to give an interesting and pleasing general effect. For special purposes, several sentences may be organized in the same way, as when Ruskin uses long, elaborate patterns to describe a cathedral, or when Hemingway uses a series of brief sentences to secure a hard, realistic effect. But in general, variety is both agreeable and necessary, whether in a plain scientific explanation, a story, an essay, or an argument.

HOW TO OBTAIN VARIETY

If the composition is well organized, the diction fresh and exact, the sentences well shaped, and the paragraphs well developed, variety will often come without great conscious effort. An experienced and skillful writer will vary the pattern of his sentences as he goes along, without stopping to ponder. His experience has taught him how to vary sentence patterns, and he works spontaneously. For purposes of study and revision, however, it is worth while to consider a few of the obvious means of obtaining variety in sentence structure.

(1) **Variation in Length.** Variation in length is the simplest means of avoiding monotony. No rule can be laid down as to length, but a negative principle can be stated: Do not form the habit of writing always in short sentences or always in long sentences. But again, there is no fixed standard to tell us how short is a short sentence or how long is a long sentence. Sentences are short or long in comparison with other sentences in a given passage of writing. Yet certainly a two-word sentence is short; and a sentence as long as a page is a really long sentence. For example, in Samuel Clemens' description (pages 8–9) of the scene before and the scene after the arrival of a steamboat, the sentences are really long. We may of course use some arbitrary standard. Robert M. Gay, in *Reading and Writing*, calls a sentence of ten words short, of twenty words medium, of forty words long. But these prescriptions are not binding. A good sentence is as long or as short as it should be: short or long enough to express its thought.

SEGREGATION AND AGGREGATION

For special effects, however, or in certain mediums, we may wish to employ groups of short sentences or groups of long sentences.

Short sentences, thus deliberately used, may be said to observe the principle of *segregation*. The ideas in such sentences are "segregated" or separated, one from the other, so that each emerges in isolation, stark and distinct. *Segregating sentences* are common in narrative writing, where distinctness of detail is a first necessity, and where the author seeks to convey an illusion of reality by a series of sharp impressions, rather than to indulge in elaborate explanation. Most newspaper reporting uses segregating sentences. Prose in which such sentences predominate will seem matter-of-fact, or perhaps curt, harsh, brisk, noncommittal. Often the remedy for diffuseness in prose is simply to write in smaller units. There is a certain strength in separation, for the mere separation of an idea from other ideas calls attention to it, and furthermore obliges the writer to consider what idea he is separating.

Long sentences, deliberately used, employ the opposite principle of *aggregation*. That is, they fuse groups of closely related ideas into a single elaborate organization. *Aggregating sentences* give prose a

stateliness and dignity that cannot be obtained by short sentences. They are found most often in meditative or descriptive writing, or in the more subtle types of expository writing, especially in the essay. Long sentences of the aggregating type are the mark of a mature and complex style.

The different effects are illustrated in the sentences below:

A. The vicious left stabbed in once more. Sailor Jack reeled. His eyes were glassy. His knees sagged. The great hulk slumped. He was falling. He was down.

B. Now since these dead bones have already outlasted the living ones of Methuselah, and in a yard underground, and thin walls of clay, outworn all the strong and specious buildings above it, and quietly rested under the drums and tramplings of three conquests; what Prince can promise such diuturnity to his relics, or might not gladly say, *Sic ego componi versus in ossa velim?* Time, which antiquates antiquities, and hath an art to make dust of all things, hath yet spared these *minor* monuments. In vain we hope to be known by open and visible conservatories, when to be unknown was the means of their continuation, and obscurity their protection.—Sir Thomas Browne, *Urn Burial.*

The special effects obtainable by deliberate brevity or deliberate length ought to be rarely used. More commonly we find a single short sentence here, or a single long sentence there. Short and long sentences then are noticeable by their contrast with other sentences in a context. The long sentence holds attention, lingeringly; the short one focuses attention sharply.

The "First Reader style" is very likely the fault which the young writer should be most careful to avoid. This immature style would indicate that the writer has failed to see the relationship between ideas. Every idea that comes into his head takes the form of a brief, undeveloped statement:

The sky was clear. The air was warm. I did not think it would rain. So I left my slicker at home.

The sentences need to be combined; they are only parts of longer sentences:

Because the sky was clear and the air warm, I did not think it would rain. So I left my slicker at home.

The opposite fault is over-expansion of a single idea. The following "long" sentence needs, first, to have its non-essential parts cancelled and, second, to be divided:

She was confused and bewildered by the noise of the crowd, and, not knowing which way to turn or quite what to do, she only stood and looked: and, after a moment, she was still doing nothing but looking around; but presently she got her scattered wits together somehow, I don't know how; and then she just ran like a frightened rabbit, and everybody laughed.

Revised, such a "long" sentence might take this form:

Confused by the noise of the crowd, she stood and looked for a moment. Then, as if she had suddenly recovered her scattered wits, she ran like a frightened rabbit. Everybody laughed.

(2) **Variation of Structure.** To gain variety, change frequently the grammatical structure of your sentences. Structure is far more important than length; in fact, structure really determines length; and structure depends upon the degree of complication of the thought. No rule can decide for you just where, in any passage of prose, the structure of a sentence should be simple, compound, or complex. Use the structure that expresses your thought adequately. A complex sentence is no "better" than a compound sentence or a simple sentence. Nevertheless, it may happen that a piece of writing in which the sentences are unvaryingly simple or compound is likely to seem monotonous and even crude. It will lack flexibility and life. The commonest vices among young writers are the simple sentence habit (the First Reader style) and the compound sentence habit.

The following sentences, taken from student themes, will suggest how weak and ineffective an unvaried sentence structure can be:

A. A long series of simple sentences:

Blocking is very important. It is the most essential part of football. No team can succeed without being adept at this phase of the game. A football team without a good blocker is like a sailboat without a sail. No coach likes for his team to be weak in blocking.

There are several kinds of blocks. All are important in making a team work with clocklike precision.

The first blocks in a play are those used by the offensive line. They will be either the frog block, the high-low block, or the shoulder

block. A person intending to play in the line must know each one of these blocks.

B. Unvarying compound-complex structure; a subject-modifier-verb group is joined by *but* to a second subject-modifier-verb group:

The alien who steals a loaf of bread for his starving family may be mandatorily deported, but an alien habitual criminal who has been convicted a score of times can defy the Bureau of Immigration. A mother who slips into the United States to join her family may be shown no mercy, but Uncle Sam cannot deport alien gangsters that have been arrested for carrying revolvers, sawed-off shotguns, or stilettos. An alien narcotic peddler, if his offense is against Federal law, is deported, but let him be convicted under a state law, even if it is proved he is selling morphine to school children, and he can stay in the country. Aliens smuggled into the United States may be slipped back across the border, but the alien criminal who smuggles them is not deportable.

(3) **Variation of Pattern.** In the section dealing with rhetorical analysis we have called attention to the ways in which good writers shift phrases and clauses and words and in other ways manipulate the rhetorical groups to obtain some effect. We also noted that sentences might be classified, according to their rhetorical pattern, as loose, periodic, balanced, and mixed.

All these studies of the structure of single sentences may be utilized in the study of variety. Vary the rhetorical pattern of your sentences if you wish the whole composition to be pleasing. In good writing there will probably be a majority of sentences of the loose type; some will be of mixed pattern; a much slighter proportion should be periodic or balanced.

Keep steadily in mind the importance of *position* in the English sentence. The normal order of an English sentence is: subject—verb—object or predicate complement. (Modifiers may of course intervene at various points.) Any alteration of this normal order is allowable, provided it does not disturb grammatical relationships or confuse meaning. The shifting of the order of sentence elements is therefore one of the easiest and most practical means of getting variety in sentence patterns.

The examples given below illustrate some of the common ways in which the order of a sentence may be changed from the normal order.

A. Sweet are the uses of adversity.
(Predicate complement first; subject and verb reversed.)

B. Why he did it, nobody will ever know.
(The object, a noun-clause, stands first; the rest of the sentence is in normal order.)

C. Bristling with anger, he rushed out of the office.
(Participial phrase at beginning; then normal order.)

D. In the sober light of morning, the whole affair assumed a quite different aspect.
(Adverbial phrase first.)

E. There, plain as a pikestaff, stood the fugitive himself, bold and evidently unruffled by the sudden encounter.
(Complete inversion of the normal order. The order is: predicate complement—verb—subject.)

F. If you want to form a plan, then you must consider, coldly and objectively, and of course without fear, the nature of the problem before you.
(Adverbial clause first; then the subject and verb; then several adverb modifiers; then the object.)

EXERCISES

1. Compose sentences of your own, in which you follow the arrangement of sentence elements used in the examples given above.

2. Study the order of the sentence elements in the sentences given below and compose sentences of your own in which you follow similar sentence patterns.

a. At the edge of the village, where the road turns abruptly west, stands a small shrine, hardly noticeable by a motorist in a hurry, but obvious and appealing enough to a leisurely foot-traveler.

b. Last of all, smiling as usual, and blandly unaware of our impatience, came Elmira; and, as she stopped, opened her purse, and calmly took out her compact, I decided that the last thing in the world Elmira would worry about was being last.

c. Snap judgments make a clean desk; but a full wastebasket does not necessarily imply an orderly mind.

d. Here they came, vigorous as ever, hardly even puffing, as if the ascent of a 6000-foot mountain were nothing more than a bird-walk.

e. In a word, what I have to say in relation to this subject, which does not particularly concern satire, is, that the greatness of an heroic poem, beyond that of a tragedy, may easily be discovered by observing how few have attempted that work in comparison of those who have written dramas; and, of those few, how small a number have succeeded.—John Dryden, "Discourse Concerning Satire."

f. So sudden is it all, and so like a flash of unreal fancy, that but for the flake of white foam left quivering and perishing on a mail-sack after the vision had flashed by and disappeared, we might have doubted whether we had seen any actual horse and man at all, maybe.—Samuel L. Clemens, "The Pony Express."[1]

g. His notebooks impair his memory; his libraries overload his wit; the insurance office increases the number of accidents; and it may be a question whether machinery does not encumber; whether we have not lost by refinement some energy, by a Christianity entrenched in establishments and forms, some vigor of wild virtue.—Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance."

h. But still the seasons came on, the moon and the stars, all in their due moments, and I was baffled and comforted and whipped by their rightness.—Stark Young, *The Pavilion.*

i. The trunks of the trees too were dusty and the leaves fell early that year and we saw the troops marching along the road and the dust rising and leaves, stirred by the breeze, falling and the soldiers marching and afterward the road bare and white except for the leaves.—Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms.*

j. Stand unshod upon it, for the ground is holy, being even as it came from the Creator.—Alan Paton, *Cry, the Beloved Country.*

[1]From *Roughing It.*

Chapter VI

WORDS

GRAMMAR is the foundation of word-study, but it teaches only what is correct and stops at that point. It cannot tell us which word, out of many correct words, is the *best* word for a given situation. The choice of the best word is a matter of taste, judgment, and skill; and the principles of rhetoric, rather than the rules of grammar alone, must govern that decision. We are now concerned with the manner in which words may be used to express thought, rather than with their forms and relationships. *Diction* is the rhetorical term commonly employed to refer to the manner in which words are used. In studying diction, we do not discard grammar, but take it for granted. The study of the grammar of words is a study of their limitations. The study of diction is a study of possibilities; and those possibilities are infinite.

The familiar phrase, "a good command of words," implies first of all a vocabulary, or stock of words, from which a writer may make a choice. The size of the vocabulary is in itself a matter of importance. If a writer has relatively few words at his command, his range of choice is limited. A man with a vocabulary of only five hundred words can speak well enough to satisfy his ordinary wants, and, if he has learned to write at all, the small size of his vocabulary is no hindrance to his writing correctly. But he cannot write on many subjects or express many shades of feeling. To widen the range of choice must be a never-ceasing concern of every student of composition. He should strive by every means to increase the number of words that he can truly command as his own.

All of us have three vocabularies—or perhaps it would be better to say, three kinds of vocabularies. First, and smallest in number, is the stock of words we can command in ordinary conversation. Often enough this is a very simple, elementary stock—a few nouns

and verbs, a few adjectives and adverbs, rather shopworn and hackneyed, with a little spice of slang added for liveliness. Second, and considerably larger, is the stock of words that we can summon to mind when we have time to think and consider. Third, and largest, is the stock of words that we can recognize and understand when we hear them spoken or see them written.

Between the second and the third of these vocabularies there is generally a wide gap. We can recognize a great many more words than we can summon up for writing. The good writer will work systematically to narrow this gap. He will try to bring his writing vocabulary nearer to the dimensions of his recognition vocabulary.

Anyone who wishes to increase his vocabulary must first of all become familiar with the resources of the language. It is true that some individuals acquire a vocabulary by contagion. They read and they listen, and somehow make their own what they have read and heard. But for most of us, the process of acquiring a vocabulary is hardly so automatic. Our instincts are lazy. We must make a conscious effort. It will do no good to memorize the dictionary, as did one of the unsuccessful wooers, in Hans Christian Andersen's story, "Jack the Dullard." In that story, it was Jack the Dullard who had a ready wit and won the lady; the fellow who had memorized the dictionary could not think of a single word at the crucial moment. Andersen's story is a reproach to pedants, not to people who really wish to speak and write well. No good writer scorns the dictionary. It is necessary to use the dictionary methodically. It is also important to watch for memorable words and to make them one's own by early and frequent use. Only through such deliberate efforts can we accumulate a stock of words over which to exercise command.

Next, a good command of words implies that one's control over words be intelligent and discriminating. A large vocabulary will not of itself make a good writer. At a certain school there was a janitor who swept and dusted on weekdays, and on Sundays preached in a neighboring church. Every Friday this janitor went to one of the teachers and asked for "some new words." Knowing what he wanted, the teacher would mention, offhand, any impressive polysyllables that occurred to him, such as *procrastinate, eleemosynary, metempsychosis.* And on the following Sunday the janitor-preacher contrived to fit the polysyllables into his sermon.

We laugh at such naïveté, and we also laugh at Mrs. Malaprop's notion that an educated young lady should have "a supercilious knowledge of accounts." But such errors of meaning are really no worse than the sins of pomposity and wordiness. In the following passage from an early American novel, by Charles Brockden Brown, a man is supposed to be engaged in a fight with Indians. He is made to speak of his plight in the language of a United States senator:

> Perhaps you will conceive a purpose like this to have argued a sanguinary and murderous disposition. Let it be remembered, however, that I entertained no doubts about the hostile designs of these men. This was sufficiently indicated by their arms, their guise, and the captive who attended them. Let the fate of my parents be, likewise, remembered. I was not certain but that these very men were the assassins of my family, and were those who had reduced me and my sisters to the condition of orphans and dependents.—Charles Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly*.

Such writing defeats and provokes us by its verbosity. Or if the writing is weak and dull, we are no less defeated. A violent error at least provokes a laugh. A flat mediocrity of diction leaves us bored and inattentive.

Increase of vocabulary will bring *quantity* of words. Only a study of what happens in the written composition itself will give us knowledge of the *quality* of words. The purpose of the good writer should be to unite *quantity* and *quality* in his writing vocabulary. This chapter deals first with quantity: the vocabulary of English, as the student finds it set before him; and second with quality: or vocabulary in action.

1. *USE OF THE DICTIONARY*

The dictionary is a storehouse of words and a guide, as authoritative as we possess, in matters of usage. An unabridged dictionary contains—theoretically, but not actually—all the words in the language, both those in current use and those encountered in the works of English and American authors of the past. No dictionary of a living language can ever be quite complete or absolutely authoritative. New words are always coming into a living language,

and old words are dropping out of use or are changing their forms and meanings. The dictionary makers can never catch up. But the dictionaries of our time are complete and authoritative enough. Certainly they are the best that have been made thus far in the history of the English language. The accumulated resources of the language are put before us in a compact and wonderfully convenient form.

For complete information on words and the history of words the student should consult such unabridged dictionaries as the *New English Dictionary* (often called the *Oxford Dictionary*), the *Dictionary of American English, Webster's New International Dictionary,* Funk and Wagnalls' *New Standard Dictionary.* For desk use, a good abridged dictionary, such as *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* or *The American College Dictionary,* is an absolute necessity. It is assumed here that the student will have a desk dictionary for common use and that he will consult an unabridged dictionary when occasion requires him to do so.

Intelligent use of the dictionary calls for an understanding of the nature and variety of the information that it gives and of the meaning of the abbreviations and symbols used in presenting that information. The dictionary itself will give, in its preface and at other convenient places, the key to all abbreviations and symbols. The most important kinds of information given in a dictionary are as follows:

1. Correct spelling; both preferred spelling and allowed spelling if more than one spelling is in use.
2. Pronunciation, indicated by phonetic symbols and diacritical marks.
3. Grammatical functions and inflections; the use or uses of words as parts of speech; the principal parts of verbs; idiomatic combinations.
4. Etymology; the derivation of words when the derivation from Anglo-Saxon, Latin, French, Greek, or other language is known.
5. The meaning of words; the different meanings, when words have several meanings.
6. The standing of words in respect to usage; that is, whether they are obsolete, archaic, provincial, dialectal, colloquial, slang, poetic, historical, technical.
7. Synonyms.

DICTIONARY ENTRIES

The following entries, reprinted from two reliable dictionaries, will illustrate the highly condensed and convenient method used to present information.

folk (fōk), *n.*; *pl.* FOLK and FOLKS (fōks). [AS. *folc.*] **1.** A group of kindred people, forming a tribe or nation. **2.** In a people bound together by ties of race, language, religion, etc., that great proportion of its number which determines the group character and tends to preserve its civilization, customs, etc., unchanged. **3.** People; persons; as, rural *folk; folks* say. **4.** *pl. Colloq.* The persons of one's own family; relatives.

—*adj.* Of or pertaining to the folk; designating songs, dances, etc., originated or used among the common people; as, **folk air, folk dance, folk laws, folk music, folk right, folk song, folk story, folk tale, folk tune.**

‖**Fol'ke·ting'**, **-thing'** (fōl'kĕ-tĭng'), *n.* [Dan. See FOLK; THING assembly.] Lower house of the Danish legislature.

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In parentheses, immediately after the word *folk*, we find its pronunciation, indicated by a phonetic re-spelling. (The key to the symbols used in such phonetic re-spelling is given in a "Guide to Pronunciation," printed in the dictionary.) The abbreviation, *n.*, means that the word is used as a noun in the senses about to be recorded. The alternative plural forms, *folk* and *folks,* are given next. The capital letters, AS, in brackets, signify that *folk* is derived from Anglo-Saxon; and the Anglo-Saxon word itself is given: *folc.* Then come four definitions. The meaning nearest the original meaning is printed first. The derived, or later, meanings follow in order afterwards. Note that the fourth meaning applies in the plural only and is listed as "colloquial" (*Colloq.*)—that is, as proper in conversational or informal usage but not in more formal discourse.

In the second paragraph of the dictionary entry we find a dash, followed by the abbreviation, *adj.* By the dash we know that this part of the entry also refers to *folk*. The abbreviation, *adj.,* signifies that the definition following applies to *folk* only when it is used as an adjective—for example, as in the several compound terms printed in boldface type (*folk air, folk dance,* etc.).

A slightly different system is followed in the four entries reproduced from *The American College Dictionary*. The oldest meanings are set last, and the etymology is given at the end of the group of definitions. Since the adjective *rhetorical* has a different form from the noun *rhetoric,* it is entered separately. The idiomatic combination, *rhetorical question,* is also entered separately.

rhet·o·ric (rĕt′ə rĭk), *n.* **1.** the art or science of all specially literary uses of language in prose or verse, including the figures of speech. **2.** the art of prose in general as opposed to verse. **3.** (in prose or verse) the use of exaggeration or display, in an unfavorable sense. **4.** (orig.) the art of oratory. **5.** (in classical oratory) the art of influencing the thought and conduct of one's hearers. [ME *retorik*, t. L: m.s. *rhētorica*, t. Gk.: m. *rhētorikḗ* (*tĕchnē*) the rhetorical (art)]
rhe·tor·i·cal (rĭ tôr′ə kəl, -tŏr′-), *adj.* **1.** belonging to or concerned with mere style or effect. **2.** having the nature of rhetoric. —**rhe·tor′i·cal·ly,** *adv.*
rhetorical question, a question designed to produce an effect and not to draw an answer.
rhet·o·ri·cian (rĕt′ə rĭsh′ən), *n.* **1.** one versed in the art of rhetoric. **2.** one given to display in language. **3.** a person who teaches rhetoric.

The American College Dictionary.
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(page 1041)

Only by such close and careful examination of the complete entry can we make the best use of the resources of the dictionary. Hasty scanning is not enough and may even lead to deception and error.

WORD ORIGINS

There may be a temptation to pass over the etymology of words. The etymology looks forbiddingly technical and learned, as indeed it is. Yet there are times when knowledge of the derivation of a word may help to fix its meaning and associations. "Even the plainest-looking words," writes Max Eastman, "will sometimes reveal to one who likes them well enough to look for it, a lucid perception out of which they sprang. *Sarcasam* is a 'tearing of the flesh.' And we may contrast it, for our purpose, with irony, which means 'saying little—saying less than you mean,' one conveying an acute experience, the other a practical analysis. . . . *Retort* is 'a twisting back.' *Enthusiast* is 'full of God.' . . . Such is the poetry which you find in the dictionary, the unpremeditated art of men for centuries dead, whose utterance in a vivid moment rose to heights of genius and could not be forgotten."[1] The person who knows that *plebeian* comes from the Latin word *plebs,* meaning "common people," and that *aristocracy* derives from two Greek words, *aristos,* meaning "best," and *kratein,* "to rule," will use the terms with a nicer sense of their meaning than if he had never known their derivation at all. He who remembers (or learns by

[1]Max Eastman, *The Enjoyment of Poetry,* Charles Scribner's Sons.

consulting a dictionary) that *unique* comes from the Latin *unus,* meaning "one," will never write that an experience was "unique" unless it really was the one and only experience of the sort, and he will not speak of *fundamental* values unless they are really "foundations." A knowledge of derivations is sure to be of general use in giving a writer a feeling for the "undertones" of words and should guide him in his search for exact shades of meaning as well as warn him away from outright improprieties.

The most practical modern use of etymology, however, appears in the place where those who value education only for its "practical" worth may be startled and embarrassed to find it—that is, in the vocabulary of the physical and social sciences. Many an ambitious technical student has found out too late, and much to his sorrow, how large a debt engineering, psychology, medicine, chemistry, political science, and the like owe to Greek and Latin. Such terms as *hydraulics, psychosomatic, pathology, corporation* derive from classical sources. Such formidable polysyllables as *osmosis, autarchy, pyromagnetic, stearoptene, cardiograph, metalliferous, deciduous* are scientific word coinages, all of fairly recent origin, direct from Latin and Greek sources, and most of all from Greek sources. The student who does not know his Greek (and few students in the Middle Twentieth Century get the opportunity to learn that language) has every right to reproach the educational system which has encouraged him to study modern science but handicapped him in acquiring the vocabulary of modern science. He may repair his deficiency to some extent by learning the etymology indicated in the dictionary. It is also practical good sense to study and master the common prefixes and suffixes that are taken from the classic languages—prefixes such as *ad, bi, inter, pro, retro,* from the Latin, and *amphi, anti, dia, hypo, syn* from the Greek; and suffixes such as *osity, ation, ic, ous.*[1]

[1]See Section 78 for a list of common words formed on Greek and Latin roots and of prefixes and suffixes taken from classic languages. The following books may be consulted for further study of the relationship between the classic languages and English: Bradley, *The Making of English;* Earle, *Philology of the English Tongue;* Greenough and Kittredge, *Words and Their Ways in English Speech;* Hoffman, *Everyday Greek: Greek Words in English, Including Scientific Terms;* Johnson, *Latin Words of Common English;* McKnight, *English Words and Their Background.*

The study of word origins will also suggest a subject that cannot be treated here: that the English language itself is actually a composite or hybrid tongue. The English language is not one vocabulary but a group of vocabularies; and each vocabulary reflects some great historic change in the life of the English-speaking peoples. Celtic words like *bard* remind us that Britain was originally Celtic in population. Words like *mile* (Latin, *milia passuum*) and street (from the Latin *strata via*) come from the time of the Roman occupation of Britain. But the real base of the English tongue was provided when the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes invaded Britain in the fifth century. Their language was Teutonic; and the language of the people of England up to the time of the Norman invasion in 1066 was the branch of the Teutonic stock known as Anglo-Saxon, or Old English. Most of the simple, basic words in English —indeed nearly all of those that denote essential things and actions— are Anglo-Saxon. These words are generally curt, monosyllabic, homely: nouns like *home, child, fire, wit, man, woman, wife, husband, frost, wood, storm;* verbs like *go, eat, sleep, stop, strike, wear, weave, graze, plow, drink, drive;* adjectives like *good, bad, weird, straight, white, hungry, thirsty, thoughtless, strong;* and of course such structural words as *who, what, this, I, and, but, through.* Danish invasions added Scandinavian words, without changing the basic character of the language. But a great change came when the Norman Conquest brought a great stock of Norman-French words, which blended with Old English to form what is known as Middle English. Norman-French, a Romanic or Latin tongue, brought in the first great infusion of Latinisms: words like *courtesy, courage, loyal, chivalrous, mercy, pity, banner, condition, remember.* The next great infusion of Latin and Greek terms, and especially of Greek, came with the Renaissance, and gave us such words as *logic, democracy, ideal, analysis, politics, epic, dramatic* and thousands more. Men of letters and men of science have steadily continued the process, begun in the Renaissance period, of making new word coinages directly from classic sources. The last great change in the English language begins with the seventeenth century, when immigrants from British shores settled in the New World. The American language, by some called American English, has retained many old words and expressions that the people of Great Britain have discarded and has made enthusiastic and ready coinage of

new words, besides appropriating freely from Indians, Spaniards, French, Dutch, and Germans, so that the American vocabulary is now the liveliest and most flexible of English vocabularies. This liveliness and flexibility is also a general characteristic of the English language. The blending of many tongues into one tongue has given English a richness of synonyms and therefore a variety of word choice that probably no other living language now possesses.

Up to the first quarter of the nineteenth century, as is noted by Sir William Craigie, editor of the *Dictionary of American English,* the prevailing movement of new words, like the movement of the population, was from east to west. Subsequently, a strong linguistic counter-current has developed. "Americanisms" have infiltrated British usage in increasing volume, often to the distress of British purists.

Yet the British and American vocabularies remain distinct in many ways. Among the peculiarities of the American vocabulary are: (1) its tendency to coin words like *subway, backwoods, caucus, buncombe* (*bunkum*), *jampacked, tourist court, baby-sit,* which suddenly appear out of nowhere to fit changing conditions of American life; and (2) a conservative tendency to retain ancient terms that have long since become archaic or obsolete in British usage: for example, American *fall,* British *autumn;* American *sack* or *poke,* British *bag;* American *drouth,* British *drought;* American *shoat* (weaned pig), British *pig* (generalized term); American *yon* (as in *yon side of the mountain*), obsolete in British usage. The American also says *elevator* where the Britisher says *lift; editorial,* instead of the British *leader; trash,* instead of *rubbish;* and so on through many miscellaneous differences of vocabulary.[1]

OTHER USES OF THE DICTIONARY

The dictionary can also be consulted on a number of grammatical questions. Since its word-list is comprehensive, it is often a more convenient reference book than the ordinary textbook of grammar, which is necessarily selective in giving information. Should a preposition be used as an adjective, as in expressions like "a *through*

[1]See Krapp, *The English Language in America;* Mencken, *The American Language;* Pyles, *Words and Ways of American English;* Craigie, *Dictionary of American English.*

train" or "the *under* dog"? To both of these questions the dictionary returns a positive yes. But to the question, "Should *plenty* be used as an adverb, as in 'plenty good'?" the dictionary gives a silent negative: no such use is listed. What is the past tense of the verb *plead?* Is it *pleaded, plead,* or *pled?* Should *gotten* be used as the past participle of *get?* Is *dived* or *dove* the past tense of *dive?* The dictionary tells us that *pleaded* is preferred as the past tense of *plead;* the other two forms are colloquial. *Got* is preferred as the past participle of *get,* but *gotten* is in respectable use in the United States. *Dove* is a common American alternative for *dived.* The dictionary also lists the correct plurals of troublesome words. *Indexes* is the preferred plural of *index,* but *indices* is allowed; *criteria* is the preferred plural of *criterion,* but *criterions* is not forbidden.

Above all, the dictionary shows us in exact detail how changes of meaning accompany changes of syntax. The word *form,* when used as a noun, has fifteen different meanings or shades of meaning. As a transitive verb it has six meanings. As an intransitive verb it has three meanings.

The dictionary is likewise useful in recording the idioms of the language. It can tell us, if we are in doubt, that it is best to say *different from,* but that in colloquial use, especially in England, *different to* and *different than* are to be found. It will note that one *agrees to* a proposal; that the climate or the dinner *agrees with* us; and that we *agree in* our plans.

Last, the dictionary gives a classification of words according to their usage. A word not found in a recent edition of a good dictionary has not yet been given a respectable place in the language, or else is so new in currency that it has not been recorded. Words recorded without special annotation are to be regarded as "good English" or "standard English." Words marked *obsolete* have passed out of use; those marked *archaic* are tending to pass out of use. A *colloquial* word or expression is proper in conversation but not, without special reason, in formal composition. The designation, *slang,* indicates a word in the lower and more doubtful levels of the colloquial class. Besides these common distinctions of usage, the dictionary makes other distinctions by marking words that belong to the special vocabularies of sciences and professions, and notes such special varieties of usage as *historical, poetic, heraldic.* Wherever there is a point of difference between English and American

usage, it notes that difference. It also makes due record of the more important dialects.

The student who makes intelligent use of his dictionary will have his reward in increased knowledge and mastery of words. Yet with all these admonitions, it is still wise to remember that a mere dictionary knowledge is no knowledge, and is therefore rightfully despised. The dictionary is a tool, not a master. And even as a tool, the dictionary has its limitations. To compile and publish an authoritative dictionary requires the patient labor of a large staff of editors and readers over a long period of years. The result is that the best of dictionaries, no matter how scrupulous and catholic its editors may be, will inevitably lag behind current usage to some extent; or it may—because the human mind is not perfect or omniscient—fail to record what people here or there may expect to find in it. "A good dictionary," says the great scholar, George Philip Krapp, "is an important aid. But even the best dictionary cannot render absolute and universal decisions. It provides material only for adaptation, not for blind acceptance. The actual vital moment in which it is necessary to use a word in speaking or in writing is of infinitely greater importance than all the authority of the dictionary."[1]

Suggestions for Study

Familiarize yourself with a good dictionary. In beginning your study, examine first the *organization* of the dictionary that you are using: for example, in *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary,* the "Guide to Pronunciation," "Explanatory Notes," "Abbreviations," and the special material included in the appendixes—"Pronouncing Gazetteer," "Orthography," and the like, as well as the dictionary proper; or the equivalent material in the somewhat differently arranged *American College Dictionary.* When you have become familiar with the resources of the dictionary and the method of presenting the vast amount of information thus made available, you will be ready for the special exercises given below, which are intended to practice you in various uses of the dictionary.

1. Look up the following words in the dictionary. Make a study of the several meanings given in the definition of each word. Write

[1]From *The Knowledge of English,* p. 164, Henry Holt and Co., 1927. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

sentences in which you use the word correctly in at least two of the meanings given.

acute	mess
surety	pledge
gallant	conjure
trick	humanism
fret	settlement

2. Determine, by use of the dictionary, the profession, trade, sport, or special occupation to which each of the folowing terms in some special sense belongs:

buntline	fly
plumb	nol-pros
camber	parole
kingpin	spinner
wicket	canon law
timpani	grounder
whipper-in	yaw
stereotype	jig

3. Determine whether the following words are colloquial, archaic, obsolete, slang—or in good usage.

chic	stuffed shirt
fardel	squeegee
thingumbob	shimmy
unkempt	rescript
thole	tote
glim	gloze

4. Establish, from the dictionary, the correct pronunciation of the following:

effective	whoop
a priori	stratosphere
defect	essential
often	program
quintessence	status
sovereign	ration
tribunal	debut
athlete	livelihood
harass	iron
guarantee	mischievous
sumac	hospitable

5. Use the dictionary to determine, if possible, the etymological relationship between the words listed in each of the following pairs or groups. Determine, if you can, the historical background involved in that relationship.

paper, papyrus
lyre, lyric
clerk, cleric, clergy
cavalry, cavalier, chivalry
hospital. hospitality, hotel
engine, cotton gin

6. Determine which of the following words are specifically "American" and which are "British":

riffle (meaning *shallow* or *rapid*)
heath
barren, barrens (as a noun)
spinney
sticks (meaning *backwoods*)
roundup
treacle
goober
bootlegger
tram

7. From each group of words given in parentheses choose the word nearest in meaning to the word italicized. Give your reasons for your choice.

a. If you expect me to plan my life on the basis of a gypsy's horoscope, you must consider me a *credulous* fool. (Trusting, believing, credible, superstitious, devout.)

b. Cæsar's decision, taken on the Ides of March, had *fateful* results. (Solemn, dreadful, fatalistic, ominous, incalculable.)

c. Unless we have *integrity* of purpose, we will not deserve public support. (Unity, harmony, soundness, reliability, honesty, uprightness.)

d. At seventy-five, although he was still mentally competent and was able to go every day to his office and dictate letters, he was regarded by the young folks as a *senile* relic. (Ancient, veteran, mature, doddering, infirm.)

e. For a receptionist, we want a girl who is pleasant and

capable, but not *pert.* (Impudent, clever, quick, saucy, bold.)

f. It is against his principles to *thin* the syrup for the market. (Weaken, adulterate, dilute.)

g. If you follow this strategy, you will *reduce* your chances of victory. (Minimize, destroy, lessen, change.)

h. Gambling nearly always has *pernicious* results. (Unsocial, destructive, deadly, wicked, diseased.)

i. With one or two intimate companions he might be talkative; but in a larger group he was *taciturn* and reserved. (Depressed, gloomy, inarticulate, silent, incoherent.)

j. I would prefer not to locate my office in a *congested* area. (Packed, impeded, swollen, crowded, overloaded.)

k. You may wonder that he felt no *qualm* of conscience. (Scruple, nausea, faintness, compunction, guilt.)

l. That style of decoration seems *gaudy* in a Georgian house. (Vulgar, ostentatious, cheap, flashy, brilliant, excessive.)

8. Study the list of prefixes derived from Latin and Greek (Section 78) and, using your dictionary as a source of reference, give, for each word in the following list, the meaning of the prefix and the meaning of the constituent with which it is combined:

contradiction	commotion
amphitheater	incredible
polyphonic	epithet
suspicion	superficial
annotate	protocol
pseudonym	quasi-judicial
precede	ultramundane
symmetrical	proceed
effect	consonant
heterogeneous	resume

9. Establish the derivation of all the words italicized in the following passages:

a. Accordingly, when this *analytical, distributive, harmonizing process* is away, the mind *experiences* no enlargement, and is not *reckoned* as *enlightened* or *comprehensive,* whatever it may add to its knowledge. For instance, a great memory . . . does not make a *philosopher,* any more than a *dictionary* can be called a *grammar.*—John Henry Newman, "Knowledge in Relation to Learning."

b. O, there be players that I have seen *play,* and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it *profanely,* that neither having the *accent* of Christians nor the *gait* of Christian, *pagan,* nor man, have so *strutted* and *bellowed,* that I have thought some of nature's *journeymen* had made men, they *imitated* humanity so *abominably.*— William Shakespeare, *Hamlet.*

10. Look up the following "Americanisms" in the *Dictionary of American English* and report their origin and meaning:

Amen corner	arroyo
blizzard	back taxes
cracker (article of food)	eminent domain
bulldoze	chuck wagon
headright	loco
ginhouse	haymow
schooner	Yankee
sequoia	lightning bug

2. *VOCABULARY AND USAGE*

Despite its massive willingness to oblige and all its neat convenience as a bureau of general information, the dictionary can go only a little way toward helping a writer to choose his words. It provides materials; it does not teach methods. It can tell us whether a word is standard English or colloquial English; but it cannot tell us whether one word is more effective than another word in a particular passage.

We may, indeed, simplify the problem of word-choice by eliminating obsolete and archaic words. Expressions like *quoth, whilom, wend, frore, gossip* (meaning *companion*), and *certes* are improper in modern writing. If used, they will seem affected and high-flown. We may also rule out of consideration (except when we are reporting the speech of ignorant persons) all illiteracies and improprieties: *nowheres near* for *nowhere near; gent* for *gentleman; complected* for *complexioned; muchly* for *much;* and the like. Dictionaries and handbooks can help us in this eliminating process; but even such a narrowing of the problem leaves many questions unsettled.

Formal and Informal Diction. One of the most important of these questions concerns the tone of the diction in the composition as a whole rather than the mere selection or rejection of isolated words. This is the question of formal and informal usage. Or, differently stated, it is the question of how rigorous a writer must be in excluding from his composition words and phrases that lie in a borderland between severely correct English and questionable or "bad" English. The answer to this question might be Chaucer's saying, which he got from Plato: "The word must be cousin to the deed." The diction must fit the idea, the purpose, the character, the context of the discourse, and will be prevailingly formal or informal as the character of the discourse may determine.

The difference between formal and informal diction can best be shown by illustrations. Of the passages given below, the first two are written in formal diction; the others have varying degrees of informality.

1. There is a philosophic piety which has the universe for its object. This feeling, common to ancient and modern Stoics, has an obvious justification in man's dependence upon the natural world and in its service to many sides of the mind. Such justification of cosmic piety is rather obscured than supported by the euphemisms and ambiguities in which these philosophers usually indulge in their attempt to preserve the customary religious unction. For the more they personify the universe and give it the name of God the more they turn it into a devil. The universe, so far as we can observe it, is a wonderful and immense engine; its extent, its order, its beauty, its cruelty, make it alike impressive. If we dramatize its life and conceive its spirit, we are filled with wonder, terror, and amusement, so magnificent is that spirit, so prolific, inexorable, grammatical, and dull.—George Santayana, "Religio Stoici."[1]

2. I have paid no poll-tax for six years. I was put into a jail once on this account, for one night; and, as I stood considering the walls of solid stone, two or three feet thick, the door of wood and iron, a foot thick, and the iron grating which strained the light, I could not help being struck with the foolishness of that institution which treated me as if I were mere flesh and blood to be locked up. I wondered that it should have been concluded at length that this was the best use it could put me to, and had never thought

[1] *Little Essays,* Charles Scribner's Sons.

to avail itself of my services in some way. I saw that, if there was a wall of stone between me and my townsmen, there was a still more difficult one to climb or break through before they could get to be as free as I was. I did not for a moment feel confined, and the walls seemed a great waste of stone and mortar. I felt as if I alone of all my townsmen had paid my tax. They plainly did not know how to treat me, but behaved like persons who are underbred. In every threat and in every compliment there was a blunder; for they thought that my chief desire was to stand the other side of that stone wall. I could not but smile to see how industriously they locked the door on my meditations, which followed them out again without let or hindrance. As they could not reach me, they resolved to punish my body; just as boys, if they cannot come at some person against whom they have a spite, will abuse his dog. I saw that the State was half-witted, that it was timid as a lone woman with her silver spoons, and that it did not know its friends from its foes, and I lost all my remaining respect for it, and pitied it.—Henry D. Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience.*

3. Crime, as they [the new criminologists] depict it, becomes a sort of disease, either inherited or acquired by contagion, and as devoid of moral content or significance as smallpox. The criminal is no longer a black-hearted villain, to be put down by force, but a poor brother who has succumbed to the laws of Mendel and the swinish stupidity of society. The aim of punishment is not to make him sweat, but to dissuade and rehabilitate him. In every pickpocket there is a potential Good Man. All this, gradually gaining credit, has greatly ameliorated punishments. They have not only lost their old barbaric quality; they have also diminished quantitatively. Men do not sit in prisons as long as they used to; the parole boards shove them out almost as fast as the cops shove them in.—H. L. Mencken, "Criminology," *Prejudices, Sixth Series,*[1] 1927.

4. I will cheerfully subscribe to a teachers' oath formulated by all the lawyers in the legislature, if I may write a lawyers' oath. It is true that some sort of oath is already being administered to them, but it does not seem to take very well. It won't hurt them to have another. . . .

I mentioned the newspapers. Jittery legislators have quite logically turned their thoughts toward the press from time to time; and they should do so, for the daily newspaper does far more to mold student opinion than all the textbooks put together. But it is one thing to

[1]Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

curb a teacher's speech, and quite another to restrain the editor's printed word. The legislator does well not to monkey with editors; he needs them more than he needs the teachers next November. But perhaps a little oath for the editors would not be amiss; it could be attached as a rider to some bill to lower the postage rates on second-class matter.—Burges Johnson, "Oaths for Teachers," in *Professor at Bay.*[1]

5. And here poem and film link the great past to the great present. It is unlikely that anything on the subject has been written to excel Shakespeare's short study, in *Henry V,* of men stranded on the verge of death and disaster. The man who made this movie made it midway in England's most terrible war, within the shadows of Dunkirk. In appearance and in most of what they say, the three soldiers with whom Henry talks on the eve of Agincourt might just as well be soldiers of World War II. No film of that war has yet said what they say so honestly or so well.

Here again Olivier helped out Shakespeare. Shakespeare gave to a cynical soldier the great speech: *But if the cause be not good,* etc. Olivier puts it in the mouth of a slow-minded country boy (Brian Nissen). The boy's complete lack of cynicism, his youth, his eyes bright with sleepless danger, the peasant patience of his delivery, and his Devon repetition of the tolled word *die* as *doy,* lift this wonderful expression of common humanity caught in human war level with the greatness of the King.

Henry V is one of the great experiences in the history of motion pictures. It is not, to be sure, the greatest: the creation of new dramatic poetry is more important than the re-creation of old. For such new poetry, movies offer the richest opportunity since Shakespeare's time, and some of them have made inspired use of the chance. But *Henry V* is a major achievement—this perfect marriage of dramatic poetry with the greatest contemporary medium for expressing it.—*Time,* April 8, 1946.[2]

6. In the first place, the game to me is as mysterious as a Delphic rite and the rules might as well be those that govern Arabic syntax. As a girl, I was ashamed to ask the thrice-annoying, "What are they doing now?" And as a woman, I have ceased to care, dismissing rules of football along with other things I should have mastered at a more plastic period, such as handsprings or the ability to read Walter Scott.

[1]Reprinted by permission of G. P. Putnam's Sons, publishers.

[2]Reprinted by courtesy of *Time.* Copyright, Time, Inc., 1946.

I have a vague idea of what the main objective of the opposing teams is, and when anyone makes a successful dash or a drop kick, I am able to comprehend the general gist of things. Moreover, I have learned that when the opposing elevens form those curious little circles, their arms about each other's shoulders, their heads bent as if in prayer, they are neither performing an ancient Druid ceremonial nor swapping dirty stories, but executing a huddle. This much I know. For the rest, due perhaps to slowly functioning eyes or even more leisurely mental processes, I can't at all see or take in what's happening. A lot of men become hopelessly entangled in an unseemly pile and, before I have the remotest notion of who's on top of what, one side or the other of the grand stand rises amid bellows of delight. Nothing short of an X-ray machine would enable one to locate the ball through this bewildering mass of padded sweaters, nailed shoes, and human beings, and it is my secret surmise that half the spectators have not the remotest idea why they are cheering.—From *Excuse It, Please,* by Cornelia Otis Skinner.[1]

The passages from Santayana and Thoreau (selections 1 and 2) are alike in that both deal with serious subjects in a serious manner; and the diction throughout both passages is formal. No colloquialisms and no slang expressions are used. No liberties of any sort are taken with the language. The two passages differ much, however, in the kind of formal diction chosen to convey the ideas. Santayana, writing on the philosophy of the Stoics, uses a large proportion of words of Greek and Latin origin: *philosophic, justification, cosmic piety, personify, prolific, inexorable.* And this vocabulary combines with the slow rhythm of his sentences to give an effect of majestic serenity and detachment. The diction of Thoreau, as he expounds his personal view of the citizen's relation to the State, is simple and direct. It is prevailingly monosyllabic and abounds in homely words of Anglo-Saxon origin. It is terse, sinewy, concrete. Through its honest simplicity and plainness it gives much of the effect of informality without ever crossing the borderline between "good English" and doubtful English. It is indeed "plain English" of the purest and highest quality.

The other selections in this group were written for a different kind of purpose and have a much more informal diction. H. L.

[1]Copyright, 1936, by Cornelia Otis Skinner. Reprinted by permission of Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc.

Mencken, in discussing the attitude of the criminologists toward crime, uses scientific terms and high-flown language sarcastically, as if to parody the language of preachers and social scientists. He mixes almost colloquial terms with literary or scientific phrases (*a poor brother who has succumbed to the laws of Mendel*), and at the end of his paragraph is as racily informal as the police reporter of a newspaper (*the parole boards shove them out almost as fast as the cops shove them in*).

Burges Johnson, writing a personal essay on teachers' oaths, but in a whimsical and humorous rather than a solemn manner, adopts a conversational tone: *I will cheerfully subscribe; some sort of oath; it won't hurt them.* He uses three bits of slang: *take very well; monkey with; jittery legislators.*

The excerpt from *Time's* criticism of the moving picture, *Henry V,* is in a journalistic middle ground between formal and informal, but Cornelia Otis Skinner, in discussing football, is chattily informal throughout.

Of the writers quoted, Thoreau offers the best model for all purposes, because he combines the vigor and ease of common speech with literary correctness and shapeliness. Our journalists, and probably even our philosophers, would be better if they could come nearer to the plain, idiomatic English of Thoreau. Yet the difference between Santayana and Thoreau on the one hand, and Mencken, Johnson, and Skinner on the other hand, is not the difference between good English and bad English, but between two kinds of diction which we distinguish roughly and none too exactly as formal and informal. Since much depends upon the subject, the writer's purpose, and the intended audience, it is hard to lay down a rigid principle to govern the use of formal and informal diction. It must be stated in loose and partially negative terms:

(1) Any piece of *formal* writing—a serious literary essay, a textbook, a learned paper, a scientific treatise, a dignified exposition or argument—will use the "good English" of the educated world; it will permit no slang whatever; it will ordinarily exclude colloquialisms of all sorts.

(2) Any piece of *informal* writing—a personal essay, a light magazine article, a newspaper report or sketch, a personal letter, and anything of a conversational cast—will also use this same "good English," but it will *permit* (not require) some use of colloquialisms

and even of an occasional slang expression if the slang really adds to the effectiveness of the writing and does not cheapen it.

(3) The *tone* of the composition as a whole establishes the quality of its diction. A jocular colloquialism will be out of place in a scientific explanation of the preparation of a serum; the graceful Latinisms of a Santayana would seem only pompous in a discussion of the pictures of Walt Disney.

The danger in the use of informal diction is that it will become slack, vulgar, cheap, or even offensively incorrect. Yet we have little more than the shifting standards of taste to tell us how far we may go towards borrowing colloquial vigor without falling into error. Certainly the common usage of everyday life, though it continually supplies words that creep into the formal vocabulary sooner or later, is hardly the right word-stock for written composition. In familiar conversation we use colloquialisms, slang, provincialisms, cant expressions, dialect, contractions, abbreviations. We may say in conversation that Napoleon "couldn't make the grade at Waterloo," but we reject the phrase, despite its liveliness, as too flippant for use in an essay on Napoleon's strategy. Many colloquial expressions of course lie on the border line of good usage. Their propriety cannot always be determined until they are actually used in a composition and we can decide whether they justify themselves.

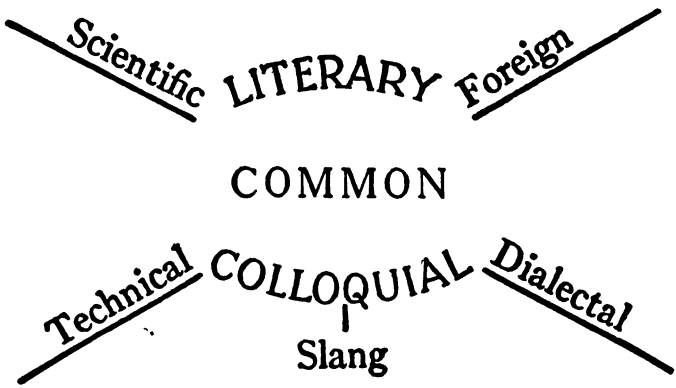
Slang. But the standard prohibition against slang is definite. Slang, according to Webster, is "language consisting either of new words or phrases, often of the vagrant or illiterate classes, or of ordinary words or phrases in arbitrary senses, and having a conventional but vulgar and inelegant use." The great defect of slang, however, is not in its "vulgar and inelegant" associations, but in its lazy inexactness and triteness. Slang words like *swell, keen, grand* are omnibus terms with no clear outline of meaning. They indicate an impoverished rather than a richly stocked vocabulary. Other slang words become a momentary fad and then quickly lose their meaning. We miss the point of Shakespeare's comic scenes when the point depends upon a knowledge of an Elizabethan slang expression now utterly empty of meaning. But slang does not wait three centuries to die. A slang term can be dead or bromidic in ten years, a year, or a season; and he who relies upon the slang

of his day to get his effect runs the risk of being unintelligible to readers of another day or another land or section. Yet students of language observe that slang words are likely to survive if they meet some real need of expression. Among slang words that have thus survived are *mob, spats, cad, bus, radio;* and it is entirely possible that words like *ad, phone, flunk,* which are now deemed "vulgar and inelegant" in written composition, will have similar survival value. In the absence of good precedent, it is best for the inexperienced writer to avoid the doubtful word. Also, except in some special context, it is necessary to avoid altogether words that resemble slang in that they are used by certain groups, classes, or trades: words marked by the dictionary as *jargon, cant,* or *argot.* The gangster's word for a thousand dollars (*grand*) is argot. *Bum* is tramp's argot. *Bulls* and *bears* are the cant expressions of the stock exchange; and even in colleges and universities we encounter the cant expressions of student life: *quilling* or *apple polishing* (for *flattering* a professor); or *plebes* (first-year students at West Point) and *frosh* (for freshmen).

The real danger is that, out of fear of violating the proprieties or out of wish to seem really literary, a writer may make his diction too formal. Such fear or such over-eagerness leads to the fault known as "over-writing" or "fine writing"; or the dressing up of ideas in fabrics too rich for them. Doctor Samuel Johnson was accused by Goldsmith of "making little fishes talk like whales." It is the mistake ridiculed in the parody which converts "There was an old Negro and his name was Uncle Ned" into the incongruously Latinistic "There was an ancient Ethiopian who rejoiced in the cognomen of Ned." The writer of the following passage has neglected plain language and made a strained effort to be literary:

Perhaps the ancient pedagogue, as he scowled upon his lowly aspirants for learning, would have been astounded had he been of a prophetic nature. But how was he to prognosticate that the succeeding centuries would infest the seats of his academic temple with scheming creatures who adjudicated the inquisition into his own character and idiosyncrasies the most beneficial and valuable of educational curricula? Especially would this fact have amazed him if he had foreseen the identity of the individuals who would most avariciously be subjected to intensive research.—*Student Paper.*

The accompanying diagram, reproduced from the *Oxford English Dictionary,* will illustrate the relationship of the various levels of usage to one another and their place in the vocabulary. The student writer will do best to keep a middle position close to the upper level of usage, designated as Scientific-Literary-Foreign, and yet not so far away from the lower level as to make his writing priggish and artificial.



The center is occupied by the "common" words, in which literary and colloquial usage meet. "Scientific" and "foreign" words enter the common language mainly through literature; "slang" words ascend through colloquial use; the "technical" terms of crafts and processes, and the "dialect" words, blend with the common language both in speech and literature. Slang also touches on one side the technical terminology of trades and occupations, as in "nautical slang," "Public School slang," "the slang of the Stock Exchange," and on another passes into true dialect. Dialects similarly pass into foreign languages. Scientific terminology passes on one side into purely foreign words, on another it blends with the technical vocabulary of art and manufactures. It is not possible to fix the point at which the "English Language" stops, along any of these diverging lines.[1]

The temptation to write or speak more grandly than the occasion requires is with us always. Our natural wish to be impressive is well set forth in the following passage:

[1]Reprinted by permission of the Clarendon Press.

A man gives ten cents to a beggar, but he makes a donation when the amount of the gift is larger. The beggar asks alms for himself, but the collector for charity solicits subscriptions. A house or barn or railway station is built, but a church is an edifice and is erected. The workman pays his bills, but the master settles his accounts. The public speaker makes a speech or addresses an audience, according to his sense of the importance of the ocasion.—George Philip Krapp, *The Knowledge of English.*[1]

The desire to be polite, like the desire to seem impressive, may also lead to the use of "fine words." In common intercourse we have many formulas by which we soften harsh experience or avoid words deemed to suggest ugliness and dirtiness. People do not die, but "pass away." For some queer reason, "illness" is thought to be more elegant than "sickness." Delicate ladies were formerly bothered not by the "bad smell" of a gutter, but by its "offensive odor." The Victorians are said to have refused to pronounce the word "leg" and instead used the word "limb," even if the object referred to was the leg of a table or a horse. Such attempts to substitute a polite or overliterary term for a plain term are called *euphemisms.* In ordinary life they are certainly not to be avoided. They are among the inexorable conventions of social intercourse, the rituals by which we live with as much dignity as we can command. But what is politeness in social intercourse may seem only affectation in written composition.

Resist the desire to be ostentatious. Do not fear the large word, but above all do not fear the small word, the plain word, the homely word. Prefer the simple word to the polysyllable if no logical content or no valuable shade of association is lost by the preference. There is no virtue in saying *prestidigitation* rather than *sleight-of-hand, similitude* rather than *likeness, protuberance* rather than *bump, perspiration* rather than *sweat.* The great vigor of American literature in certain of its best periods comes in no small measure from the supple, easy plainness of the language. The language of Thoreau, for example, is rarely literary in any affected sense. The letters of Jefferson, the writings of Franklin, the diaries of William Byrd of Westover, the papers written for *The Federalist*—all these, and many more, are notable for their directness and simplicity. In later periods, the writers of the South and West retained the homely spice and

[1]Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt & Company, publishers.

vigor of the frontier when other regions were succumbing to Victorian elegance. The humorists—Mark Twain, Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, George W. Harris, and others—carried on the tradition. The warped spellings and racy colloquialisms of Bill Arp, Artemus Ward, Josh Billings were aspects of an American desire to use the homespun word and to rebel against polite and empty verbalisms. All these are still worth studying, for they still have lessons to teach their American descendants.

EXERCISES

Formal and Informal Usage

1. What varying degrees of formality and informality are found in the following selections:

"Davy Crockett Goes A-Courting" (p. 344)
De Mille's "First Lessons in Ballet" (p. 12)
Langewiesche's "What the Wrights Really Invented" (p. 65)
Cook's "Thoreau As Saunterer" (p. 474)

2. Make a comparative study of the degrees of formality and informality observed in such publications as are indicated below. Choose one group for intensive study.

a. Signed articles about sports published in a metropolitan newspaper (New York *Times*, Baltimore *Sun*, etc.) as compared with similar articles in other newspapers, including your college paper.

b. News reports by the press services (Associated Press, United Press, etc.) as compared with "columns" by your favorite political commentator and local "feature stories."

c. Articles in the *Saturday Evening Post* compared with articles in *Harper's*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, and one of the literary quarterlies.

d. *Time, Newsweek, The Freeman, Variety, The New Republic, Art News.*

e. An essay by James Thurber compared with essays by E. B. White, Agnes Repplier, Charles Lamb, Joseph Addison.

f. Vernon L. Parrington's discussion of Davy Crockett (*Main Currents in American Thought*, Vol. II, pp. 172–179) compared with Crockett's "Autobiography" (*A Narrative of the Life of David Crockett*, 1834)

g. A speech by Webster, Lincoln, Calhoun, or Bryan compared with a present-day political speech.

3. Make a list of "cant" terms that belong to some sport, trade, or special pursuit of which you have knowledge. Have any of these terms passed over into the general American vocabulary, either as slang, colloquialisms, or accepted literary terms? (*Example: fan,* probably derived from *fanatic* [*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*], was first used to mean "an enthusiastic devotee of a particular diversion, as baseball," but now has a wider application, as in *fan-letter.*)

4. Compile a list of stock expressions that commonly appear in the conversation of your friends and acquaintances. Classify them under the following heads:

a. Campus slang—peculiar to your own institution
b. "Collegiate" slang—used in college life, but with a wider application than in your own college merely
c. Current American slang
d. Expressions once considered slang but now on the borderline of good usage
e. Expressions once classified as slang but now accepted in good usage

5. Define the following terms and give an illustration of each:

archaism	pedantry
solecism	vulgarism
neologism	spoonerism
euphemism	malapropism

3. *THE QUALITIES OF WORDS*

To study the qualities of words it is necessary to analyze their action and effect in the written composition itself. In the word-lists of the dictionary they are inert and all but dead; on the written page or in the spoken utterance their latent qualities awaken and may be identified and judged. These qualities are so various that they do not submit to one principle of classification; several different classifications, upon several different principles, are necessary if the critical analysis is to be practical and complete.

FUNCTIONAL WORDS AND CONTENT WORDS

Most sentences are made up of two kinds of words: functional words and content words. Functional words express relationships. They have but one meaning, and that meaning never changes. Con-

junctions, prepositions, articles, pronouns, and auxiliary verbs are functional words (*and, but, or; because, when, how; in, by, with; a, an, the; I, he, it; shall, will, have*—as auxiliaries). Our main concern with functional words is to use them correctly. They are colorless. Whatever quality they have is grammatical and syntactical; and therefore, essential though they are, our study here is not of them. Content words are nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs (*justice, cabin, road, police; go, worry, insinuate, block; virtuous, helpful, slimy, bizarre; awkwardly, late, sonorously, acutely*). Content words of course also have function, but their quality derives from their meaning. The content words of a sentence convey the meanings out of which, with the assistance of the purely functional words, the total meaning of the sentence is built up. It is impossible to construct a sentence without at least one content word. Sometimes, of course, content words may be implied without being actually given in the sentence.

Good fences make good neighbors. (All the words are content words.)

If we *keep* up our *fences,* we shall *stay* on *good terms* with our *neighbors.* (Six content words; nine functional words.)

If we . . . up . . ., we shall . . . on . . . with. (All functional words; no content words; no meaning; no sentence.)

To study the qualities of words we must evidently direct our attention mainly to the content words, which are the solid building material of the sentence.

DENOTATION AND CONNOTATION

Content words possess two kinds of meaning—denotative meaning and connotative meaning. The denotative meaning is the bare logical meaning, and only that. In chemistry, *proton* and *ion*, and in mathematics, *surd* and *hypotenuse*, "denote" certain concepts or objects which are precisely set forth in those sciences. We may speak of the denotative meaning of a word as the "core of meaning" that it has when applied to the object or class of objects, quality, idea to which it consistently and usually refers. Dictionary definitions generally state the denotative meaning of a word. Thus *clan*, according to the dictionary, denotes "a social group comprising a number of households the heads of which claim descent from a common ancestor,

especially in the Scottish highlands." Similarly, the words *knight, vassal, serf* denote certain degrees of status which are defined at great length in the histories of feudalism.

The connotative meaning of a word is generally regarded as being the meaning, or various meanings, added to a word by the associations that it acquires from its common uses, or that may be attributed to it from a figurative use.[1] The chemical and mathematical terms mentioned above have a very exact denotation but very little connotation, since they are not likely to be used outside the province of the strict sciences, to which they belong. The word *clan*, on the other hand, brings up suggestions of tartans, bagpipes, and claymores, the novels of Sir Walter Scott, tales of border warfare, and, to an American, some later associations with an organization called the Ku Klux Klan. So, too, the words *knight, vassal, serf* are rich in associations of the Middle Ages. An abstract word like *substance* has very little connotation, but concrete words like *marmalade, eggnog, mud, glue, opium* have a great deal of connotative meaning. The verbs *ask, beg, request, beseech, implore* have about the same denotative meaning but different connotative meanings. The adjectives *vigorous, strong, powerful, Herculean* all denote strength, but they have slightly different connotations.

All matter-of-fact writing, since it aims to be logical and informa-

[1]Whether or not the connotative meaning of a word includes its denotative meaning is a matter of argument. Rhetoricians tend to make the terms mutually exclusive, but logicians disagree with them. To connote, in logic, means "to imply or indicate the attributes involved, while denoting (or being predicated of) the subject." (J. S. Mill.) The words *childish* and *childlike* both mean, denotatively, "having the character or likeness of a child"; but *childlike* is a matter-of-fact term, implying either approval or absence of disapproval, while *childish* is likely to imply disapproval or condescension. The words have acquired, from their usage, different connotations.

Problems like these, which require sharp observation of actual meaning and a very discriminating study of shifts of meaning, fall in the province of *semantics*, which has lately been explored by psychologists like I. A. Richards and others. Semantics is too intricate to invite discussion here. In general it may be said that semanticists and psychologists are just beginning to discover what writers from Homer to the present day have always known—that words are shifty, multiple in meaning, and dangerous. For elementary studies in semantics, see such works as S. I. Hayakawa, *Language in Action*, and Irving J. Lee, *Language Habits in Human Affairs*.

tive and no more, will prefer words that have an exact denotation and little or no connotation. The scientist, for example, must strive for logical exactness, and therefore attempts to make his vocabulary as strictly denotative as is possible. Science communicates facts as facts. It does not want unruly human emotions to intrude upon its explanations. The language of mathematics probably comes nearest to the ideal of a scientific language. The symbols of mathematics—x, y, z; $(x - 6)^2$; $x \cos a$—have a pure logical content. The mathematician's axioms and theorems approach the clear exactness of its symbols. The mathematical statement, "A straight line is the shortest distance between two points," is a plainly denotative use of words. But the saying, "The longest way round is the sweetest way home," is freighted with connotations, or overtones of meaning, that science does not want and cannot use. Yet it is difficult to isolate old words from the associations that have gathered about them in the course of time; and therefore science must spend a great deal of effort in inventing new words free of the multiple meanings that the old ones possess.

In other kinds of writing, we turn to advantage the multiple meanings that so much embarrass the scientist. In descriptive writing, in narrative, in essays, in criticism, in argument, indeed in any kind of writing that tries to interest or convince the reader as well as to convey a matter-of-fact content, words may be chosen *because* they have rich associations and multiple meanings. In this sentence from Sir Thomas Browne, words are chosen partly for their rolling dignity of sound and partly for the contrasting associations between phrases like "thin walls of clay" and "specious buildings":

> Now since these dead bones have already outlasted the living ones of Methuselah, and in a yard underground, and thin walls of clay, outworn the strong and specious buildings above it, and quietly rested under the drums and tramplings of three conquests, what prince can promise diuturnity to his relics . . .?

In these simpler but equally rhetorical sentences from Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage,* words are chosen which suggest as well as state the condition of panic that seizes an inexperienced soldier's mind:

> The fight was lost. The dragons were coming with invincible

strides. The army, helpless in matted thickets and blinded by the overhanging night, was going to be swallowed. War, the red animal, war, the blood-swollen god, would have bloated fill.[1]

Henry Beston, in his essay "Sound and Life," writes of "the universal grind of gears when traffic starts again at a light, the demoniac tattoo of a riveter," and, in a contrasting description of rural sounds, of "the pleasant rattle of the mowing machine," "the clicking song of whetstone and scythe," "the swish of some blade on the grindstone and the grindstone's treadle squeak."

Stephen Crane's phrase, describing war as a "blood-swollen god," *contains* the idea that war is destructive, but *suggests*, with that idea, images of drunken abandon, cannibalism, blood-sacrifice to Moloch or Baal, and pagan slaughter in general. *Grind* and *tattoo* evoke by sound and association the noises made by changing gears and driving rivets.

With such possibilities open to him, the writer must realize that exactness in the choice of words depends on two considerations: his words must have both the right logical meaning, or denotation, and the right associational meaning, or connotation. As Herbert Read says, "A word must *mean* the thing it stands for, not only in the sense of accurately corresponding to the intention of the writer but also in the visual sense of conjuring up a reflection of the thing in its complete reality."[2] Thus, while the possibilities of choice may be often so wide as to be confusing, and will seem only to increase the writer's difficulties, his opportunities for gaining subtle degrees of exactness and new and powerful effects are enormously increased by the multiple meanings that words take on, and by the great variety of synonyms available to him, each with its own aura of connotation. Consider, for example, the varieties of connotation in the following groups of words. The words in any given group have the same denotative "core" of meaning.

hateful, odious, obnoxious, offensive, repugnant, abhorrent, loathsome

leader, commander, conductor, director, boss, chief, captain, head

[1]Reprinted by permission of D. Appleton-Century Company, publishers.

[2]Herbert Read, *English Prose Style*, G. Bell and Sons, 1931.

stubborn, obstinate, headstrong, resolute, inflexible, pertinacious, intractable, dogged, hard-headed
farmer, agriculturist, gentleman farmer, dirt farmer, peasant
teacher, pedagogue, school-master, school-teacher, school-ma'am, professor, instructor
choose, elect, select, pick, single out, cull, prefer

Many of the associations that gather around words come from traditional usage. We speak of the *chief* of an Indian tribe, a Scottish clan, a fire department, the *boss* of a ward, a section-gang, a factory, the *commander* of an army, the *leader* of a political party, the *captain* of a ship or a team, the *head* of a family. The people gathered at a football game are a *crowd;* at a church, a *congregation;* at a theater, an *audience.* A teacher is a *teacher* when we speak merely of his function, but a *pedagogue* when he takes himself too seriously or when we make light of his teaching. We *close* a door, or emphatically order it to be *shut,* or in anger *bang* or *slam* it. We may *move, scrape, shuffle,* or *scuffle* our feet. We *eat, bolt, gobble,* or perhaps only *consume* our food. We may be *moved,* or *stirred, aroused, excited, inflamed.* We *shrink* from a blow, *quail* at danger, *wince* with pain. We *cut* cake, cards, and acquaintances, but *sever* diplomatic relations. Grandfather is *hoary* with age, good wine is *old,* furniture is *antique,* tin bathtubs are *antiquated,* the thousand-year-old redwoods of California are *ancient* or *venerable.* Many associations of this sort are so well established as to have become idioms of the language. And many, too, through long use, have become worn-out and trite. They are the "counters" of speech, endlessly passed back and forth; the *clichés,* or rubber-stamp expressions, of the uninventive writer. As such, they are to be avoided. In the past hundred years we have had too much of *forlorn nightingales, moss-covered buckets, ivy-mantled towers,* villages *nestling in valleys*; and in our own time enough of *snappy roadsters, tired businessmen, streamlined efficiency, social awareness,* and the like. Yet the good writer cannot afford to neglect the associations that arise from traditional usage. When he can call them forth successfully, he calls upon all of human memory and speaks not with his own voice alone but with the voice of his race and people.

But he may also build new associations, by making new combinations of words; or call forth associations long familiar but not yet

noticed. Here, if the writer has wit and ingenuity, is the chance to be fresh and original in diction. The readiest way to make new combinations, and therefore new associative values, is through transferring words from some category where they have been familiarly used into another category where the application is new and striking. This procedure, again, is in contrast to scientific, matter-of-fact procedure. *Valence*, in chemistry, has a narrow, specific meaning of which science is jealous; the chemists made up this technical term; they did not borrow *value*, which has a flavor of the market, or *virtue*, which suggests morality, or *strength*, which suggests the gymnasium.

There is no such squeamishness in writing that is in any sense literary. Men of letters boldly appropriate whatever seems good in any special vocabulary and proceed to make it do service in the general vocabulary. *Electric*, a technical scientific word, is taken over in the familiar phrase, *electric thrill*, to suggest an excitement comparable to the tingle of an electric shock. An experience as well as a taste can be *bitter*. We *fortify* both our spirits and our seacoasts. We can *mask* a driveway or a doorway as well as a face.

Such expressions of course are metaphorical. They suggest a likeness without asserting that it is literally there, and must later be discussed more fully under the heading, "Figures of Speech." Here they are noted only as examples of word transfers, used for their connotative quality.

In the following illustrative passage, the words underlined twice have been transferred from a purely denotative category to a connotative-denotative category; those underlined once are not word transfers, yet are used for their connotative force.

Yes, news by noon is stale. But surely that is comment enough upon it. In very truth, it would have been just as stale in the morning. The events you read of so eagerly happened yesterday, or the day before, or if it was a Krakatoa that has blown its head off at the antipodes, last week. No matter; the editor claps the latest date line on the event and he hands you the hoax for which you pay him tithe every day.—Donald Culross Peattie, *A Book of Hours*.[1]

[1]Reprinted by permission of the author and of the publishers, G. P. Putnam's Sons.

EXERCISES

Denotation and Connotation

1. From the specimen paragraphs given in Chapter IV, select one in which the choice of words is prevailingly denotative, and another in which there is a large proportion of connotative words. What has determined, in each case, the author's choice of words? What differences of style and effect are produced by the choice of words?

2. In the pairs of passages given below, determine, in each instance, which has the greater number of connotative words and account for the difference in the effect produced by the use of connotative words. Are the more "denotative" passages to be criticized unfavorably because of the author's preference for denotative words?

a. (1) It happened one day, about noon, going towards my boat, I was exceedingly surprised with the print of a man's naked foot on the shore, which was very plain to be seen in the sand. I stood like one thunderstruck, or as if I had seen an apparition; I listened, I looked round me, I could hear nothing, nor see anything; I went up the shore and down the shore, but it was all one. I could see no other impression but that one.—Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe.*

(2) Their hands were still joined. The ashes under the grate were lit by the fire vertically, like a torrid waste. Imagination might have beheld a Last Day luridness in this red-coaled glow, which fell on his face and hand and on hers, peering into the loose hair about her brow, and firing the delicate skin underneath. A large shadow of her shape rose upon the wall and ceiling. She bent forward, at which each diamond on her neck gave a sinister wink like a toad's. She entered on her story of her acquaintance with Alec D'Urberville and its results, murmuring the words without flinching, and with her eyelids drooping down.—Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles.*

b. (1) Now that they were out in the hall the lieutenant assumed a grave, proprietary attitude. He made her feel that though the whole thing was unusual, she need not be worried about anything simply because he was there.

She felt that she ought to give a little scream if she were to see a spider. She was a Jane Austen heroine in spite of herself because it was expected of her. She was as good as she was beautiful, and her glove was something to be worn on a knight's helmet on the field of honor. She was Jane Eyre and Lieutenant Meek was Rochester. Once upon a time this sort of thing would have made her very nervous, but now it was pleasant for a change. Polly felt happy and gay.—John P. Marquand, *B. F.'s Daughter.*[1]

(2) It was a tentative, apologetic sort of smile, which said *please* and *thank you* and at the same time expressed an innocent and absolute confidence that your better nature would triumph. I walked across the hot pavement toward that smile and the green polka-dot figure which stood there behind the glass like something put in a show-case for you to admire but not touch. Then I laid my hand on the glass of the door, and pushed, and left the street, where the air was hot and sticky like a Turkish bath and where the smell of gasoline fumes mixed with the brackish, dead-sweet smell of the river which crept into the city on still nights in summer, and entered the bright, crisp, antiseptic, cool world behind the glass where the smile was, for there is nothing brighter, crisper, more antiseptic, and cooler than a really first-rate corner drug-store on a hot summer night. If Anne Stanton is inside the door and the air conditioning is working.—Robert Penn Warren, *All the King's Men.*[2]

c. (1) Thus, by simultaneous efforts, the infantry and cavalry of the enemy were routed. Morgan pressed home his success, and the pursuit became vigorous and general. The British cavalry having taken no part in the action, except the two troops attached to the line, were in force to cover the retreat. This, however, was not done. The zeal of Lieutenant-Colonel Washington in pursuit having carried him far before his squadron, Tarleton turned upon him

[1]Copyright, 1946, by John P. Marquand and Adelaide H. Marquand. Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown & Company, publishers.

[2]From *All the King's Men,* by Robert Penn Warren. Copyright, 1946, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

with the troop of the seventeenth regiment of dragoons, seconded by many of his officers. The American lieutenant-colonel was first rescued from this critical contest by one of his sergeants, and afterward by a fortunate shot from his bugler's pistol.—Henry Lee, *Memoirs of the War in the Southern Department.*

(2) The column that had butted stoutly at the obstacles in the roadway was barely out of the youth's sight before he saw dark waves of men come sweeping out of the woods and down through the fields. He knew at once that the steel fibers had been washed from their hearts. They were bursting from their coats and their equipments as if from entanglements. They charged down upon him like terrified buffaloes.

Behind them blue smoke curled and clouded above the treetops, and through the thickets he could sometimes see a distant pink glare. The voices of the cannon were clamoring in interminable chorus.

The youth was horror-stricken. He stared in agony and amazement. He forgot that he was engaged in combating the universe. He threw aside his mental pamphlets on the the philosophy of the retreated and rules for the guidance of the damned.—Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage.*[1]

Abstract and Concrete; General and Specific

The division of words into the classifications *abstract-concrete, general-specific* offers another useful and important angle of approach to problems of diction. In making this approach, however, the student must bear in mind: (1) that the classifications overlap to some extent; and (2) that the classification of words as *abstract-concrete, general-specific* may vary according to their use in different contexts and for different purposes.

Abstract-Concrete. An *abstract* word expresses a quality or characteristic considered apart from any particular object or action. A *concrete* word makes a particular application of a quality or charac-

[1]Reprinted by permission of Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc.

teristic or distinguishes some individual object or action. *Abstract* and *concrete* denote not only different but opposite types of meaning.

Thus *sweetness* is abstract; *sugar, honey, molasses* (objects to which the term *sweetness* may be applied) are concrete. The quality of a soldier's behavior may be expressed in the single abstract word *gallantry*. The concrete instance of his gallantry, not to be expressed in a single word, was that *at Okinawa he brought in a wounded comrade under enemy fire*. An automobile driver was *reckless* (abstract); he *ran through a traffic light* (concrete). *Anatomy* is abstract; *eyetooth, hair, kneecap* are concrete.

Abstract words, we soon discover, refer to ideas or qualities as such. They are a necessary and inescapable feature of the diction when the writing deals with ideas and non-material subjects. There are no substitutes for such terms as *love, truth, beauty, honesty, legality, virtue*. When properly used, abstract words do the work that no other words can do. Without them, the human reason could not function at its highest potential level, and religion, art, philosophy, and science would lack a proper language. At the same time, all abstractions, whether represented in single words or phrases or in processes of thought, need to be supported by details and examples; and when not so supported, they tend to become vague and meaningless. Abstract terms, when loosely defined or deliberately perverted, can cause endless confusion and trouble in human affairs. Perhaps it was a vague use of the abstract word *patriotism* (and its loose attachment to wrong particulars) that led Doctor Samuel Johnson to explode with an angry definition: "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel." The abuse of noble abstractions is one of the continuing vices of humanity. Paraphrasing Doctor Johnson, we might say that abstract terms like *progress, tradition, fundamental values, social awareness, constructive, outstanding* are often the refuge of writers who do not know what they want to say, yet wish somehow to be impressive and seem important.

In the following passage, which might be entitled "A Typical Speech at an Alumni Meeting," the speaker is using abstract words in order to seem impressive; but since the abstractions are not associated with definite particulars, nobody can be sure exactly what the speaker means:

I wish to take advantage of this occasion to emphasize the significance of the relationship between the Alumni and the College. We have always felt it to be of the greatest importance to this institution to maintain contact with our sons and daughters who have gone forth to wider fields of accomplishment. Yet we also have the conviction that they profit by fostering a spirit of co-operation with their Alma Mater as it goes ever forward upon its great constructive tasks.

On the other hand, in the passages following, abstract diction is correctly and effectively used; and although the points made may be arguable, they could not be adequately expressed without the use of abstract terms, and, in the sources from which these passages are excerpted, the abstract statements are supported by concrete particulars:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.—Thomas Jefferson, *The Declaration of Independence.*

Society never advances. It recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other. It undergoes continual changes; it is barbarous, it is civilized, it is christianized, it is scientific; but this change is not amelioration. For everything that is given something is taken.—Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self-Reliance.*

The value of concrete words is in the directness and sharpness of the image that they bring to a reader's mind. They are physical and, to use a psychological term, *sensational:* they appeal to the senses. They enable a reader to re-create in his own mind what the writer has thought: to see, hear, touch, at least in imagination. In writing that puts an emphasis on physical objects, as in description and narration, as well as in much of the detail of expository writing, concrete diction is a prime necessity, for without concreteness there will hardly be exactness and clearness. Without it, indeed, there may be only windy generality and dullness, and nothing really substantial and interesting.

The following selection will indicate how a writer of fiction may at times deliberately make an appeal to the senses. The diction in this passage is very concrete.

Suddenly, like the popping of a thread in a loom, the struggles of the flesh stopped, and the years backed up and covered her thoughts like the spring freshet she had seen so many times creep over the dark soil. Not in order but, as if they were stragglers trying to catch up, the events of her life passed before her sight that had never been so clear. Sweeping over the mounds of her body rising beneath the quilts came the old familiar odors—the damp, strong, penetrating smell of new-turned ground; the rank, clinging, resistless odor of green-picked feathers stuffed in a pillow by Guinea Nell, thirty odd years ago; tobacco on the mantel clean and sharp like smelling salts; her father's sweat, sweet like stale oil; the powerful ammonia of manure turned over in a stall; curing hay in the wind; the polecat's stink on the night air, almost pleasant, a sort of commingled scent of all the animals, man and beast; the dry smell of dust under a rug; the over-strong scent of too-sweet fruit trees blooming; the inhospitable wet ashes of a dead fire in a poor white's cabin; black Rebeccah in the kitchen; a wet hound steaming before the fire. There were other odors she could not identify, overwhelming her, making her weak, taking her body and drawing out of it a choking longing to hover over all that she must leave, the animals, the fences, the crops growing in the fields, the houses, the people in them . . .— Andrew Nelson Lytle, "Jericho, Jericho, Jericho."[1]

Both abstract and concrete diction will appear in all good writing. Neither, in its proper place, is better than the other. It is impossible to give absolute rules for the use of abstract and concrete words. Their value and use must be learned by the process of trial and error. The division of words into abstract and concrete simply affords another method for studying the qualities of words. It is a good idea to examine what you have written for its proportion of abstract and concrete words and to see how a change from one to the other will affect the diction as a whole.

General-Specific. General words refer to class, kind, or type; specific words refer to the particular members of a class, kind, or type. *Dwelling* is a general word; *house, hut, cabin, tent, barracks, mansion* are specific. But *dwelling* is specific with reference to the general term *building*, which includes all classes of structures erected for human use. A general term like *architecture* can be made specific by the

[1]From the *Southern Review*. Reprinted by permission of the author.

addition of qualifying adjectives or phrases: *Georgian architecture, early New England architecture, the architecture of Versailles.*

The overlapping of abstract-concrete with general-specific classifications, as well as the relativity of the terms, can best be indicated by examples. Thus *communicate* is both abstract and general. *Speak* is concrete and specific with reference to *communicate*, but it is general with reference to the still more concrete and specific terms, *rant, shout, whisper. Virtue* is general and abstract. *Honesty, truthfulness, chastity,* considered with reference to *virtue,* are specific but still abstract qualities.

Writing that has a preponderance of general words is likely to seem heavy and pretentious. But general terms are as necessary to the vocabulary as specific terms. When the subject is scientific or philosophical—whenever, indeed, the subject calls for generalizations —the writing will have a large proportion of general terms; but in descriptive and narrative writing the tendency will be toward the specific. The ideal is a judicious balance. The general terms must have enough specific terms to support them; but specific terms should not be used so freely and exclusively that the reader is confused by sheer detail. The writer who urges us "to cherish the fundamental values of civilization" or "to uphold the constructive ideals of Americanism" is thinking vaguely and writing badly. He needs to be specific. But Shelley's saying, "Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds," is an apt generalization which we would not wish to alter, all the more because it is convincingly supported, in *A Defense of Poetry,* by Shelley's remarks upon the specific nature of the poet's experience. The choice between "careful preparation was fundamental in the planning of our campaign" and "The establishment of bases in North Ireland and England was the first step in the Allied reconquest of the European mainland" is a choice between the general and the specific. Whether a writer will use one or the other will depend partly upon his subject and his purpose. But where no meaning is sacrificed, it is best to use the specific terms, for they give a clarity and liveliness rarely conveyed by general terms. Other things being equal, it is better to say *football game* than *athletic exercise, guitar* rather than *stringed instrument, the professor of chemistry* rather than *our learned preceptor in physical science.*

EXERCISES

Abstract and Concrete; General and Specific

1. Identify all the abstract and concrete words on one page of Henry D. Thoreau's "On Solitude" (p. 119).

2. In the following passage, would it be possible to improve the diction by substitution of concrete for abstract words:

> When the use of coin had been discovered, out of the barter of necessary articles arose the other art of wealth-getting, namely, retail trade; which was at first probably a simple matter, but became more complicated as soon as men learned by experience whence and by what exchanges the greatest profit might be made. Originating in the use of coin, the art of getting wealth is generally thought to be chiefly concerned with it, and to be the art which produces riches and wealth; having to consider how they may be accumulated. Indeed, riches is assumed by many to be only a quantity of coin, because the arts of getting wealth and retail trade are concerned with coin. . . . But how can that be wealth of which a man may have a great abundance and yet perish with hunger, like Midas in the fable, whose insatiable prayer turned everything that was set before him into gold?—Aristotle's *Politics* (Jowett translation), Bk. I, Chap. 9.

3. Would the following passage be improved by the use of a more concrete diction? If you think so, rewrite the passage:

> Daily, at regularly recurrent times, each family assembles for the consumption of food. In such occasions sociology may identify values which must be associated with fundamental aspects of the family life. Food consumption, at such times, is not a purely dietary procedure. The entire family, thus physically assembled, acquires some consciousness of unity from the fact of contiguity. Furthermore, their psychological state is one of relaxation; preoccupation with external, diffused, individual objectives is decreased and indeed minimized; and concentration on common objectives becomes natural and automatic. Raw material and functional goals are merged in a context of significant social awareness, which, though it may seem not to extend beyond the bounds of family interest, nevertheless carries broader implications.

4. In the following passages, determine, so far as you can, the prevalence of abstract or concrete, general or specific words. Determine also, in each instance, whether the diction is adapted to the subject and the author's purpose.

a. Jarvis grunted, and calling his dog, set out along the kaffir path that led up to the tops. There was no sign of drought there, for the grass was fed by the mists, and the breeze blew coolingly on his sweating face. But below the tops the grass was dry, and the hills of Ndotsheni were red and bare, and the farmers on the tops had begun to fear that the desolation of them would eat back, year by year, mile by mile, until they too were overtaken.

Indeed they talked about it often, for when they visited one another and sat on the long cool verandahs drinking their tea, they must needs look out over the barren valleys and the bare hills that were stretched out below them. Some of their labor was drawn from Ndotsheni, and they knew how year by year there was less food grown in these reserves. There were too many cattle there, and the fields were eroded and barren; each new field extended the devastation. Something might have been done, if these people had only learned how to fight erosion, if they had built walls to save the soil from washing, if they had ploughed along the contours of the hills. But the hills were steep, and indeed some of them were never meant for ploughing. And the oxen were weak, so that it was easier to plough downwards. And the people were ignorant, and knew nothing about farming methods.—Alan Paton, *Cry, the Beloved Country.*[1]

b. My father had gone in a hurry toward Landsburgh that morning. That gave him an hour to walk to his work. I was ready and on my way at seven. My day didn't begin until eight-thirty. That gave me an hour and a half. I didn't want to walk fast enough to raise a sweat and wilt the collar of my white shirt in the mild September weather. Because I knew from high-school experience that walking five miles over a country road I would have to watch my clothes. I knew my pupils would see each defect in my clothing, each speck of dirt on my shirt, or spot of mud on my shoes. I was careful where I stepped,

[1]Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950. Copyright, 1948, by Alan Paton.

and how fast I walked. I was careful as could be about touching the fringe of ragweed, Queen Anne's lace, smartweed, and sprouts that bordered my path. My father had knocked part of the dew from their leaves, stems, and blooms, but there was still enough left to wet my pant legs. I had to walk directly in the center of the path until I reached the wagon road in Academy Hollow. —Jesse Stuart, *The Thread That Runs So True.*[2]

c. In a democracy all have equal political rights. That is the fundamental political principle. A democracy, then, becomes immoral, if all have not equal political duties. This is unquestionably the doctrine which needs to be reiterated and inculcated beyond all others, if the democracy is to be made sound and permanent. Our orators and writers never speak of it, and do not seem often to know anything about it; but the real danger of democracy is that the classes which have the power under it will assume all the rights and reject all the duties—that is, they will use the political power to plunder those-who-have. Democracy, in order to be true to itself, and to develop into a sound system, must oppose the same cold resistance to any claims for favor on the ground of poverty as on the ground of birth and rank.—William Graham Sumner, *What the Social Classes Owe to Each Other.*

d. Aunt Sally's father we all spoke of as Grandfather King. He had stood six foot eight inches tall, and the portrait, nearly nine feet high, of him still to this day hangs in the parlor. The great round eyes stared out at us from the wall, the monumental frown made a deep furrow in the brow, the pleated skirt of his black coat flared out all round, as he stood with one hand touching some classical volume or other on the marble table top, a curtain of red velvet with gold tassels draped to one side. Aunt Sally would tell us how stern he was with his family at table, his two daughters and seven sons, forbidding all silly chatter and obliging them to converse about such things as history, geography, and literature, none of the family daring to oppose him. How much their conversation may have been like the symposium that Plato records is another matter, but at any rate it implanted a respect for

[2]Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951. Copyright, 1949, by Jesse Stuart.

knowledge; so that, as Pausanias says, trying to describe the relic of the monster hanging in the temple, those who have not seen a dragon have at least seen a great pine cone. —Stark Young, *The Pavilion.*[1]

FIGURES OF SPEECH

The effectiveness of diction, whether in prose or poetry, may very well depend, in the last analysis, upon the writer's skill and resourcefulness in the use of *figurative* (i.e., *metaphorical*) language. The two terms, *figurative* and *metaphorical*, are used almost interchangeably to describe language that refers to one thing in terms of another which it actually or symbolically resembles. (A *flood of sound poured* from the loudspeaker. Thought and care had *furrowed* his brow.)

Although the use of figurative language always carries the danger of extravagance or loose fancifulness, it is nevertheless true that diction can be made subtly exact or richly concrete by suggesting a correspondence between two objects, as in *simile and metaphor*; or by impressing an image upon a reader's mind in some unusual and powerful way, as in *hyperbole, litotes, synecdoche, metonymy, personification*. These traditional names for figures of speech come down to us from the Greek and Roman rhetoricians; but the student should not be misled into thinking, for that reason, that these learned polysyllables stand for something pedantic, strange, and quite outside his experience. Actually, figures of speech are natural and even commonplace ways of using language. The rhetorical categories serve only to make systematic what men do every day in familiar discourse and have done since words were invented. (The first sentence in this paragraph contains two metaphors: "richly concrete" and "impress an image.") In ordinary conversation we rarely frame half a dozen sentences without using one or more of the figures of speech that have become stock phrases in the language:

quick as lightning	pluck up courage
cold as ice	starry-eyed
smooth as silk	swallow his words
a voice like a fog-horn	cool as a cucumber
the last one on earth to	tired to death

[1]Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951. Copyright, 1948, 1950, 1951, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

Slang is almost entirely figurative in cast. The sports page may say that "the Yanks trim the Indians"; "the locals shell" an opposing pitcher; "football embarks on another season"; "the Pirates marked time in the drive for the National League pennant"; and Turnesa and Abbott "landed in the finals of the national amateur golf championship, the latter completing the longest nonstop flight ever made by a freshman in the annual fairway frolic."

The student of prose composition should avoid both the wearisome triteness of the old commonplace comparisons listed above and the flashy, too easy novelty of slang, which often cheapens its figures of speech by over-use and careless abandon. A good figure of speech will have novelty and freshness; it will state or imply a comparison that nobody ever thought of before. Yet it will seem as inevitable as old expressions like "cold as ice" and "warm as toast"; and people who hear or read the new expression will wonder why they did not think of it first themselves. Since human experience is an infinitely changing thing, the opportunities for making new comparisons, and hence new figures of speech, are as great as they ever were. But the *methods* and *forms* of figures of speech do not change. They are the same as they were in the time of Homer. By reviewing those methods and forms and by analyzing the figures of speech invented by good writers, the student should learn to do with conscious purpose what he has been doing all his life without knowing or caring.

Simile and **metaphor** are the commonest and most important of all figures of speech.[1] In a simile the comparison is stated explicitly: "Mist lay thick in the valley, flooding the ravines like a great river of greyish vapor pouring up from an unknown source." Usually a simile is introduced by the words *like, as, as if,* or *as when*. Explicit comparison is the essential feature of the simile; length is of no importance. A simile may be very brief: "He was gone like a shot"; or it may be elaborated to great length, as in the following passage:

Many were the wit-combats betwixt him [Shakespeare] and Ben Jonson: which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an

[1]In modern literary criticism there is a tendency to make *metaphor* a very broad, inclusive term, applicable to figurative language and constructions in general.

English man-of-war; master Jonson (like the former) was built far higher in learning; solid, but slow, in his performances. Shakespeare, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention.—Thomas Fuller, *Worthies of England.*

There are two requirements for a simile. First, the comparison must be between objects of different classes, so that the likeness, when pointed out, will be surprising and yet, because of its appropriateness, will be interesting. Thus the Psalmist says of the godly man: "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water." The comparison between *man* and *tree* is a comparison between objects of different classes, but we are struck with the felicity of the figure because the goodness of the godly man is, imaginatively speaking, like the vitality of a flourishing tree. But the objects compared must not be of such different classes that the unlikeness is greater than the likeness. It is incongruous to compare an elephant to a lily, or virtue to an onion.

The second requirement for a simile is that, if extended, it must be carried out with consistency. Any shifting of the basis of comparison will result in a *mixed figure of speech:* "Your contribution will seem like a drop in the bucket of this great bundle of red tape."

Examine the following similes to see how well they meet these requirements. Note in each instance what kinds of objects are compared, how great the degree of likeness and unlikeness is, and whether the comparison is fitting and consistent.

1. She sat high, as it were, on the seat, but yet gaunt, like some great Amazonian in buckram.—Stark Young, *So Red the Rose.*

2. He had a hairless, square, tallowy chin which trembled slightly as he talked, and his nose, nipped bright red by the sharp air, looked like a false nose of painted cardboard between the sallow cheeks.—Joseph Conrad, *Under Western Eyes.*[1]

3. Up scrambles the car, on all its four legs, like a black beetle straddling past the schoolhouse and the store down below, up the bare rock and over the changeless boulders, with a surge and a

[1]Copyright, 1911, 1921, by Doubleday & Co.

sickening lurch to the skybrim, where stands the rather foolish church.—D. H. Lawrence, *Mornings in Mexico.*[1]

4. Like the old woman in the story who described the world as resting on a rock, and then explained that rock to be supported by another rock, and finally when pushed with questions said it was rocks all the way down—he who believes this to be a radically moral universe must hold the moral order to rest either on an absolute and ultimate *should,* or on a series of *shoulds* all the way down.—William James, "The Sentiment of Rationality," in *The Will to Believe.*[2]

5. His life was like that river, rich with its own deposited and onward-borne agglutinations, fecund with its sedimental accretions, filled exhaustedly by life in order to be more richly itself, and this life, with the great purpose of a river, he emptied now into the harbor of his house, the sufficient haven of himself, for whom the gnarled vines wove round him thrice, the earth burgeoned with abundant fruit and blossom, the fire burnt madly.—Thomas Wolfe, *Look Homeward, Angel.*

6. Like an animal returning to the herd, he melted joyfully into the crowd, meshing his life with theirs, making their movements his movements, and responding to the same distant, all-controlling dynamo of energy.

Metaphor is immediate, and often intense, in its comparison, where simile is deliberate and illustrative. In metaphor the comparison is implied. The likeness between the two objects is assumed to be so apparent that they are identified. The simile will say, *She looks like an angel;* the metaphor, *She is an angel.* The metaphor, far more often than the simile, will consist of a single word or a phrase:

The Dean *punctured* my excuses with a question.
The policeman gave me a *hot look.*
The conversation *back-fired suddenly.*
Prisoned among his test-tubes and decanters, he could not know what the world was like.

[1]Copyright, 1927, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., and reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

[2]From *The Will to Believe,* by William James. Reprinted by permission of Longmans, Green & Co., Inc.

The headlines *leaped noisily* before my eyes.
The man is a *demon of energy.*
Come to the dormitory, and see what a *cave* I live in.

The language is full of metaphorical expressions that have lost their meaning as metaphors as the sense of imagined comparison has faded away. We have forgotten that *keystone* refers to the central supporting stone (hence the "key") of an arch, and the metaphorical content of many other words—such as *backbite, craftsman, henchman, broadside, blueblood, degrade, curfew, firebrand, fire-eater,* or even *postmaster*—has been lost in the same way.

At the same time, the making of new metaphors goes on continually. All good metaphors are rich in connotative quality. They make diction vivid and interesting, as no other single rhetorical device can; and, in addition, they enable the writer to say much in little space—they are compact and economical. For these reasons, metaphorical diction is the staple diction of poetry, of all imaginative writing whether poetry or prose, and of all those portions of the personal essay, the literary criticism, or the argument in which the effects of imaginative writing may seem desirable.

Metaphor is subject to the same requirements as simile: the likeness must be found between objects of different classes, and, if a metaphorical passage is prolonged, it must be consistent; it must not "mix the figures." But metaphor perhaps tolerates a greater degree of incongruity than simile, and hence produces often a more effective surprise, a greater imaginative leap.

The following passages from modern writers contain metaphors of many kinds. Identify the metaphors and discuss their effectiveness.

1. In short, when we begin to investigate the history of ciphers, we are digging in a graveyard whose limits we do not know and where there are headstones only for the failures.—Fletcher Pratt, *Secret and Urgent: The Story of Codes and Ciphers.*[1]

2. The magic rod of fanaticism is preserved in the very adyta of human nature; and needs only the re-exciting warmth of a master hand to bud forth afresh and produce the old fruits.—S. T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria,* Chap. X.

[1]Copyright, 1939, by Fletcher Pratt. Reprinted by permission of the author.

3. An inn restores us to the level of nature, and quits scores with society.—William Hazlitt, "On Going a Journey."

4. He, worse luck, was at the mercy of her face, and more than ever at the mercy of it now, which meant moreover not that it made a slave of him, but that it made, disconcertingly, a skeptic. —Henry James, "The Two Faces."

5. When it came night, the white waves paced to and fro in the moonlight, and the wind brought the sound of the great sea's voice to the men on shore, and they felt that they could then be interpreters.—Stephen Crane, "The Open Boat."[1]

6. When the door had closed behind his daughter, Mister Maury went to the window and stood a few moments looking out. The roses that had grown in a riot all along that side of the fence had died or been cleared away, but the sun lay in the same level lances of light that he remembered.—Caroline Gordon, "Old Red."

7. He felt the words, tasted them, breathed upon them with all the ardor of his captivated senses.—Wallace Stegner, "Bugle Song."[2]

8. At other dancers they looked with a kind of airy scorn—they, the light brigade, the heroes of a hundred Kensington "hops"—from whom alone could the right manner and smile and step be hoped.

After this the stream came fast; chaperones silting up along the wall facing the entrance, the volatile elements swelling the eddy in the larger room.

Men were scarce, and wallflowers wore their peculiar, pathetic expression, a patient, sourish smile which seemed to say: "Oh, no! don't mistake me, *I* know you are not coming up to me. I can hardly expect that!"—John Galsworthy, *The Man of Property.*

9. A school is a hopper into which children are heaved while they are still young and tender; therein they are pressed into certain standard shapes and covered from head to heels with official rubber-stamps.—H. L. Mencken, "The Human Mind."[3]

[1]Reprinted by permission of and special arrangement with Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., authorized publishers.

[2]Reprinted by permission of the author and of the *Virginia Quarterly Review.*

[3]*Prejudices, Sixth Series.* Reprinted by permission of and special arrangement with Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., authorized publishers.

Hyperbole and **Litotes** are figures of speech which obtain an effect by intensification rather than by comparison. Hyperbole is deliberate overstatement or fanciful exaggeration, such as appears in many common expressions: "a thousand thanks for your kindness"; "tired to death of such movies"; "sing his praises to the skies." Litotes is deliberate understatement, which generally takes the form of negation of an opposite in order to make an indirect affirmative: "a citizen of no mean city" (that is, of a famous or great city); "not a bad tennis player" (that is, a good tennis player). Hyperbole, when overdone, inevitably makes the diction bombastic, ranting, or, when it is applied to trivial objects, absurd. Both hyperbole and litotes are common in humorous writing.

EXAMPLES OF HYPERBOLE

1. He never got to be President, but he was the biggest man. There were thousands that trusted in him right next to God Almighty, and they told stories about him and all the things that belonged to him that were like the stories of patriarchs and such. They said, when he stood up to speak, stars and stripes came right out in the sky, and once he spoke against a river and made it sink into the ground.—Stephen Vincent Benét, "The Devil and Daniel Webster."[1]

2. He had a face of great acreage.—O. Henry, "A Municipal Report."[2]

3. There are no longer any citizens in the world; there are only subjects. They work day in and day out for their masters; they are bound to die for their masters at call. Out of this working and dying they are bound to get less and less. On some bright tomorrow, a geological epoch or two hence, they will come to the end of their endurance, and then such newspapers as survive will have a first-page story well worth its black headlines.—H. L. Mencken, "From the Memoirs of a Subject of the United States."[3]

[1]Published by Farrar and Rinehart, Inc. Copyright, 1937, by Stephen Vincent Benét. Reprinted by permission of Brandt and Brandt.

[2]In *Strictly Business*. Reprinted by permission of Doubleday, Doran & Company, publishers.

[3]*Prejudices, Sixth Series*, p. 61, Alfred A. Knopf, 1927.

EXAMPLES OF LITOTES

1. Mormon and Gentile battled for supremacy, polygamists were hunted down, at last the whole church was proscribed and its property was confiscated. And all this was less than a shadow to Jonathan, who notes the fall of rain, which counts in the desert, and the annual increase of his crop.—Bernard DeVoto, "Jonathan Dyer, Frontiersman."[1]

2. To fall out of a tree in early childhood is not a particularly reassuring experience. It does one's ego comparatively little good to get personally involved, all of a sudden, with the law of gravitation.

3. He had been ransomed by the sweat of no vulgar agony, by the blood of no earthly sacrifice.—Thomas Babington Macaulay, *Essay on Milton.*

Synecdoche and **Metonymy** are forms of indirect statement in which a part of an object or some important association connected with the object is used to symbolize the object itself. In the strict sense, synecdoche is the use of some striking part to symbolize a whole: "The regiment mustered fifteen hundred rifles." (Men equipped with rifles.) "When the speaker finished, we knew we had been listening to a great mind." (A man of great mind.) Metonymy (from the Greek words *meta* and *onyma*, meaning "change of name") substitutes some quality or aspect of the object for the name of the object itself: "In 1940, after the fall of France, England had no defense left but her ancient valor." (That is, citizens who were capable of ancient valor.) Generally, metonymy differs from synecdoche in emphasizing symbolically some large and significant aspect of an object. Some authorities, however, hold that metonymy is the more general term, and that synecdoche is really a form of metonymy. In modern writing, which is constantly alert to emphasize the concrete and particular, synecdoche is the more common figure. The following is a good modern example of synecdoche:

Never for more than a moment during those two hours was the dressing room empty. Often it was jammed, full to overflowing

[1]*Harper's Magazine*, September, 1933. Reprinted by permission of *Harper's Magazine.*

with curled cropped heads, with ivory arms and shoulders, with silk and lace and chiffon, with legs. . . .

Then the door jumped open again. Two evening gowns appeared and made for the dressing table in a bee line.—Katharine Brush, "Night Club."[1]

Personification consists in endowing an inanimate object or abstraction with human qualities. It is not often used today in serious writing, but may appear in humorous or satirical prose. The following passage is an illustration:

Corporations fill but one cage in a large menagerie. Let us glance at some of the other queer creatures created by personifying abstractions in America. Here in the center is a vast figure called the Nation—majestic and wrapped in the Flag. When it sternly raises its arm, we are ready to die for it. Close behind it rears a sinister shape, the Government. Following it is one even more sinister, Bureaucracy. Both are festooned with the writhing serpents of Red Tape. High in the heavens is the Constitution, a kind of chalice like the Holy Grail, suffused with ethereal light. It must never be joggled. Below floats the Supreme Court, a black-robed priesthood tending the eternal fire. The Supreme Court must be addressed with respect or it will neglect the fire and the Constitution will go out. This is synonymous with the end of the world.—Stuart Chase, *The Tyranny of Words*.[2]

Special Effects in Prose. Alliteration, assonance, and onomatopœia are sometimes classified as figures of speech. More properly they have to do with what may be called the "texture" of prose, or with the division of rhetoric known as euphony: pleasant or agreeable sound. Alliteration, assonance, and onomatopœia all are "sound effects" and have a greater technical importance in poetry than in prose; but, if used with subtle discrimination, and not with glaring obviousness, they may at times be useful in prose. *Alliteration* is the repetition of the same sound at the beginnings of words in pairs or in series; or, more rarely, in a series of stressed syllables within a word.

1. *L*ength of days is in her *r*ight hand, and in her *l*eft hand *r*iches and honor. Her *w*ays are *w*ays of *pl*easantness, and all her *p*aths are *p*eace.—Proverbs, III, 16, 17.

[1]Reprinted by permission of Harold Ober, author's representative.

[2]Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace & Company, publishers.

2. A *ni*ck-tailed, bow-*ne*cked, long, *po*or, *pa*le sorrel *ho*rse, *ha*lf *da*ndy, *ha*lf *de*vil.—George W. Harris, *Sut Lovingood's Yarns.*

3. The *dr*y leaves in the *di*tch *si*mmered and *bo*iled in the *s*ame *b*reezes, a tongue of air occasionally *f*erreting out a *f*ew, and *s*ending them spinning across the grass.—Thomas Hardy, *Far from the Madding Crowd.*

Assonance is the repetition of the same vowel sound in syllables that have different consonants: *break, gape, became.* Assonance may be viewed as a form of inexact rhyme. True rhyme uses the principle of consonance; that is, the repetition of the same vowel sound in syllables that have the same terminal consonants but different initial consonants: *break, take, wake; resume, perfume.* Rhyme should be avoided in prose, and a writer should take good care to revise passages into which rhymes may have crept by accident. The following passages illustrate the use of assonance in prose:

1. The barking of the *house* dogs, from the *loud*est and hoarsest bark to the *faint*est aerial palpitation under the *eaves* of heaven. —Henry D. Thoreau, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers.*

2. In the *ov*er-mastering *lone*liness of that *mo*ment, his *whole* life seemed to him nothing but vanity.—Robert Penn Warren, *Night Rider.*[1]

Onomatopœia is the conformation of sound to sense, or, as the dictionary has it, the "formation of words in imitation of natural sounds": the words *boom, hiss, quack, whiz* imitate the sounds of which they are the names. Onomatopœic effects are common in descriptive and narrative prose. They are likely to appear in any passage where a writer seeks to intensify his rendering of an action by suggesting the sounds that accompany the action.

1. He saw nothing and heard nothing but he could feel his heart pounding and then he heard the clack of stone on stone and the leaping, dropping clicks of a small rock falling.—Ernest Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls.*

2. The swish of water on the roofs became rhythmical. The tongues of flame sputtered and went out. A pile of hay burst into

[1]Copyright, 1939. Houghton Mifflin Company.

lurid flame, and was quenched. A crackle of rifle fire began from the opposite banks of the rivers. The bullets whizzed and moaned into the post. Here and there wood splintered. The tinkle of a smashed window light sounded ominous.—Hervey Allen, *The Forest and the Fort.*[1]

EXERCISES

Figures of Speech

1. After having studied, one by one, several qualities of words as used in prose, you should now strive to see how a skillful writer employs these various qualities in combination. Analyze the diction of the following passages. Use the following procedure: (*a*) look up in the dictionary any words with which you are not familiar; determine the precise meaning in the context; establish the etymology, if it is useful as a help in fixing the shade of meaning intended by the author; (*b*) make note of the degree of formality or informality adhered to; (*c*) account for any prevalence of denotative or connotative diction; (*d*) examine the proportion of abstract-concrete and general-specific words used; and in this connection note the extent to which the diction tends to be "Latinistic" or "Anglo-Saxon," "British" or "American," literary or plain or technical; (*e*) identify all figures of speech and note the extent to which the prose may depend, for its effectiveness, upon the use of metaphorical language.

a. The brilliant lights and sooty shades which struggled upon the skin and clothes of the persons standing round caused their lineaments and general contours to be drawn with Dureresque vigor and dash. Yet the permanent moral expression of each face it was impossible to discover, for as the nimble flames towered, nodded, and swooped through the surrounding air, the blots of shade and flakes of light upon the countenances of the group changed shape and position endlessly. All was unstable; quivering as leaves, evanescent as lightning. Shadowy eye-sockets, deep as those of a death's head, suddenly turned into pits of lustre; a lantern-jaw was cavernous, then it was shining; wrinkles were emphasized to ravines, or obliterated entirely by a changed ray. Nostrils were dark wells; sinews

[1]Rinehart and Co., 1943. Reprinted by permission.

in old necks were gilt mouldings; things with no particular polish on them were glazed; bright objects, such as the tip of a furze-hook one of the men carried, were as glass; eyeballs glowed like little lanterns. Those whom Nature had depicted as merely quaint became grotesque; the grotesque became preternatural; for all was in extremity.—Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native.*

b. The fifth trick of ocean flying is always to know where you are—even when you are in the middle of nowhere. If you want to get an ocean pilot's goat, just ask him: "What do you want to know for? Just keep on flying until you hit a large continent! You can't miss it!" That isn't it. Any pilot can find his way across by compass and watch; at least, 99 times out of 100. The airline captain wants to cross in style: pick the best winds; waste the least time, and all the time check, check. That's an airline pilot's life anyway: a constant bookkeeperish checking to cut out the guesswork and guard against that 1 time out of 100. He checks on his fuel, his speed, his wind, his weather map. But all the checking means nothing unless he knows exactly where he is.—Wolfgang Langewiesche, *A Flier's World.*[1]

c. He [the American taxpayer] has just footed a large part of the bill for the greatest war in history. He is riding the crest of the greatest boom in history. In 1952, he is about to attempt the greatest feat of all. He is going to give up $62.6 billion, more in a single year than the U. S. Government collected in the whole leaf-raking decade of the '30's—and almost a third again as much as in the most expensive year of World War II. Of this $62.6 billion, almost half ($29.3 billion) will come from the individual income tax, not an American creation, but one which the Americans, with their genius for large-scale organization, have brought to its fullest flowering.

The biography of the American income taxpayer is a story of surprises—and the biggest surprise may be still to come. It can be viewed as a victory of human progress or as a bitter historical joke—the joke being that when the Amer-

[1]From *A Flier's World*, by Wolfgang Langewiesche. Copyright, 1951, by Wolfgang Langewiesche. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.

ican income tax began, the mass of American voters thought they were taking a swing at a fellow named Pierpont or Cornelius. The blow, in full and crushing measure, now lands each March 15 on the chin of a fellow named John Q.—*Time*, March 10, 1952.[1]

d. The most famous rota and indeed one of the most celebrated medieval compositions that have come down to us is the so-called Reading Rota, *Sumer is icumen in*, preserved in MS Harley 978 at the British Museum. This is a four-part canon over a two-part *pes* or tenor. Dating from *c*. 1310, it is the oldest known ostensibly six-part composition. (Doublings at the unison reduce the apparent 6 parts, most of the time, to an actual 3.) The identity of its composer and of the writers of the other 13th-century English polyphonic pieces is unknown.—Gustave Reese, *Music in the Middle Ages*.[2]

2. Write short passages of prose in which you make use of hyperbole, litotes, metonymy, synecdoche, and personification.

3. Examine selections from standard authors, old and new, in order to determine the extent to which they make use of figurative language. For example, compare a passage from Jonathan Swift with a passage from Charles Lamb; or a passage from Hemingway with a passage from Sinclair Lewis.

4. To what extent does scientific and technical prose adhere to a strict denotative diction? Examine your textbook in chemistry, biology, or physics with this point in view.

5. Make a study of the figures of speech common in popular usage. For your sources, use sports pages and popular magazines; listen to street talk and the conversation of friends and acquaintances. After you have compiled your list, classify the items under the following headings: (*a*) traditional folk metaphors or similes; (*b*) hackneyed expressions; (*c*) new expressions too slangy or cheap to be valuable in formal composition; (*d*) new and valuable expressions.

[1]From "The Big Bite," *Time*, Vol. LIX, March 10, 1952. Reprinted by courtesy of *Time*. Copyright, Time, Inc., 1952.

[2]Copyright, 1940, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Reprinted by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Chapter VII

DESCRIPTIVE AND NARRATIVE WRITING

THE aim of expository writing is to inform and explain. It appeals to the understanding first of all. The aim of descriptive and narrative writing is not to explain but to evoke reality by calling up an image of what has been seen, heard, felt, enacted. Description and narration are therefore rightly called imaginative or creative. As literary forms, they must be distinguished from the matter-of-fact description and narration that may be found in catalogues, textbooks, advertisements, court records, and the like. The United States post office puts on its bulletin boards "descriptions" of criminals who are wanted by Federal officers; but these descriptions are informative and technical; they identify, but do not, in the artistic sense, "create" an image. On the other hand, Victor Hugo's description, in *Les Misérables,* of the escaped convict Jean Valjean, creates an image; we see, we imagine the ex-galley-slave as he asks lodging at the home of the Bishop. The chemistry textbook gives an account of the open-hearth process for the manufacture of steel. In a very limited sense this is a "narration" of happenings. But it merely explains. It does not convey the feeling of action itself, as it is conveyed in the following paragraph:

The stream of molten metal was running full and rumbled and hissed and gurgled deep in the bottom of the mold. Al stood over one of the heads and watched the metal inside, and I fixed my eyes on his face which became brighter as the metal rose. He shielded his face with his hands, opened his lips, hesitated, then shouted, "Ease up."

I raised the lever, and a dozen men cried "Hey" in warning and alarm. For an instant I was bewildered but immediately realized that instead of merely easing the stream I had shut it off entirely.—C. J. Freund, "Molten Steel."[1]

[1]*Harper's Magazine*, April, 1930. Reprinted by permission of *Harper's Magazine.*

As forms of creative writing, description and narration are closely allied. One is an accessory of the other, and the two often blend indistinguishably. Is a lively account of a football game description or narration? The progress of events is told, but it cannot be told effectively except in terms of the setting: the color and noise of the crowd, the music of the band, the look of the sky overhead and of the turf underneath, with its white lines across which the players move rapidly. Yet this picture is of an event, not of a setting, and it lives as the story of the game, with its series of strokes and counter-strokes, is set forth in proper order. Informal essays and reminiscences of people and places are likely to emphasize the descriptive element. Anecdotes, incidents, accounts of historical events and of course all fiction, whether within the brief limits of the tale or short story or within the wider bounds of the novel—all these emphasize the narrative element. It is best therefore to use the compound term *descriptive and narrative writing* rather than the separate terms *description* and *narration*. We isolate one from the other at this point only for purposes of study and practice.

1. *DESCRIPTIVE WRITING*

A description is likely to be a portion of a composition rather than a separate and fully rounded composition in itself. In a narrative the descriptive element may amount to no more than phrases and sentences interspersed here and there to bring out character, setting, or emotion, as in the following passage from a novel by William Faulkner:

The boy's diction was slow now, recapitulant, each word as though chosen simply and carefully and spoken slowly and clearly for the ear of a foreigner: "Listen, cap'm. When I turn off here, it's just a short cut. A short cutoff to a better road. I am going to take the cutoff. When I come to the short cut. To the better road. So we can get there quicker. See?"

"All right," Christmas said. The car bounced and rushed on, swaying on the curves and up the hills and fleeing down again as if the earth had dropped from under them. Mail boxes on posts beside the road rushed into the lights and flicked past. Now and then they passed a dark house.—William Faulkner, *Light in August*.[1]

[1]Reprinted by courtesy of Random House, Inc., New York.

But we speak here of larger descriptive passages, such as the student will have occasion to write—extended descriptions. Such passages occur frequently in narrative writing and even in some kinds of expository writing. When studied, these descriptive passages reveal an organization, a selection of details, and a selection of language that make, or tend to make, a unity of effect. A description, thus considered, is a complete picture and may be treated as a unified, partially independent composition.

What are the principles and methods that secure this unity of effect in descriptive writing? The landscape painter follows certain principles of design and perspective. He has a procedure for handling colors and masses. He works with brush and oils, or with water colors or pastels. The result, his complete picture, comes instantaneously before the physical eye. The writer's medium is words. He builds up his picture, bit by bit, and has only words with which to suggest to his reader the object that he is trying to describe. He paints slowly, for the mind's eye. He cannot produce an instantaneous view of the whole picture. His problem is to find the literary parallel to the instantaneous view. He must organize his description so that it will convey, when it has been read, something of the completeness and finality that the painter secures.

POINT OF VIEW IN DESCRIPTION

Point of view is a device for organizing the description by directing the reader's attention to a consistent order, a definite underlying structure, in the object or scene which is being described. The point of view is the literary equivalent of perspective in painting.

The point of view may be either physical or mental, or both in combination. In each instance it must be definitely indicated or clearly implied. It must be consistent throughout the description; or, if good reason arises to shift the point of view (as may happen in an extended description), the change must be noted. When the time element enters into the point of view, as when a writer is describing the passage of a boat across a lake or the changes of light between sunset and dark, a similar indication must appear.

The point of view also establishes the scale of the description, and this scale, once established, must not be violated. If you are describing a house as seen from a cliff a mile away from the house,

you must describe it as it looks at that distance. You destroy the scale and make the description ridiculous if, at the distance of a mile, you seem to represent yourself as identifying the color of the window curtains or the pattern made by moss on the chimney.

In the following description, from the opening chapter of Ellen Glasgow's novel, *Barren Ground,* the point of view is clearly establishd in the first sentence. We are to be led to see only what can be seen from the window of Pedlar's store; but we will also see it through the eyes of the girl who looks out of the window, and who knows how that Virginia scene changes with the seasons.

THE FIELDS OF BROOMSEDGE[1]

By Ellen Glasgow

A girl in an orange-coloured shawl stood at the window of Pedlar's store and looked, through the falling snow, at the deserted road. Though she watched there without moving, her attitude, in its stillness, gave an impression of arrested flight, as if she were running toward life.

Bare, starved, desolate, the country closed in about her. The last train of the day had gone by without stopping, and the station of Pedlar's Mill was as lonely as the abandoned fields by the track. From the bleak horizon, where the flatness created an illusion of immensity, the broomsedge was spreading in a smothered fire over the melancholy brown of the landscape. Under the falling snow, which melted as soon as it touched the earth, the colour was veiled and dim; but when the sky changed the broomsedge changed with it. On clear mornings the waste places were cinnamon-red in the sunshine. Beneath scudding clouds the plumes of the bent grasses faded to ivory. During the long spring rains, a film of yellow-green stole over the burned ground. At autumn sunsets, when the red light searched the country, the broomsedge caught fire from the afterglow and blazed out in splendour of colour. Then the meeting of earth and sky dissolved in the flaming mist of the horizon.

At these quiet seasons, the dwellers near Pedlar's Mill felt scarcely more than a tremor on the surface of life. But on stormy days, when the wind plunged like a hawk from the swollen clouds, there was a quivering in the broomsedge, as if coveys of frightened partridges were flying from the pursuer. Then the quivering would

[1]From *Barren Ground,* 1925. Reprinted by permission of the author.

become a ripple and the ripple would swell presently into rolling waves. The straw would darken as the gust swooped down, and brighten as it sped on to the shelter of scrub pine and sassafras. And while the wind bewitched the {solitude} a vague {restlessness} would stir in the hearts of living things on the farms, of men, women, and animals. "Broomsedge ain't jest wild stuff. It's a kind of fate," old Matthew Fairlamb used to say.

The time element in Ellen Glasgow's description is indicated in the phrases: "under the falling snow"; "on clear mornings"; "during the long spring rains"; "at autumn sunsets"; "on stormy days." These phrases introduce sentences which bring before the reader the changes of landscape produced by changes of weather and seasons. A contrast is suggested between the vitality of the girl and the desolateness of the landscape. We are led to see the landscape not only with her physical eyes but with her mental vision as well. The two opening sentences, then, illustrate the two kinds of point of view, physical and mental. And in their definiteness and suggestiveness they constitute the nucleus around which the descriptive passage is built up.

In Walt Whitman's "Manhattan from the Bay," the point of view is a sailboat returning to New York from "the wide bay southeast of Staten Island." The description proceeds in order of space —the city and its surroundings as seen in relation to certain landmarks: "to the left the North river," "to the right the East river," "and rising out of the midst . . . V-shaped Manhattan."

MANHATTAN FROM THE BAY[1]

By Walt Whitman

June 25.—Returned to New York last night. Out to-day on the waters for a sail in the wide bay, southeast of Staten Island—a rough, tossing tide, and a free sight—the long stretch of Sandy Hook, the highlands of Navesink, and the many vessels outward and inward bound. We came up through the midst of all, in the full sun. I especially enjoy'd the last hour or two. A moderate seabreeze had set in; yet over the city, and the waters adjacent, was a thin haze, concealing nothing, only adding to the beauty. From my point of view, as I write amid the soft breeze, with a sea-

[1]From *Specimen Days in America*, 1882.

temperature, surely nothing on earth of its kind can go beyond this show. To the left the North river with its far vista—nearer, three of four warships, anchor'd peacefully—the Jersey side, the banks of Weehawken, the Palisades, and the gradually receding blue, lost in the distance—to the right the East river—the mast-hemm'd shores —the grand obelisk-like towers of the bridge, one on either side, in haze, yet plainly defin'd, giant brothers twain, throwing free graceful inter-linking loops high across the tumbled tumultuous current below—(the tide is just changing to its ebb)—the broad water-spread everywhere crowded—no, not crowded, but thick as stars in the sky—with all sorts and sizes of sail and steam vessels, plying ferry-boats, arriving and departing coasters, great ocean Dons, iron-black, modern, magnificent in size and power, fill'd with their incalculable value of human life and precious merchandise—with here and there, above all, those daring, careening things of grace and wonder, those white and shaded swift-darting fish-birds, (I wonder if shore or sea elsewhere can outvie them,) ever with their slanting spars, and fierce, pure, hawk-like beauty and motion—first-class New York sloop or schooner yachts, sailing, this fine day, the free sea in a good wind. And rising out of the midst, tall-topt, ship-hemm'd, modern, American, yet strangely oriental, V-shaped Manhattan, with its compact mass, its spires, its cloud-touching edifices group'd at the centre—the green of the trees, and all the white, brown and gray of the architecture well blended, as I see it, under a miracle of limpid sky, delicious light of heaven above, and June haze on the surface below.

In Joseph Conrad's description of a tropical river, the point of view is not mentioned, but it is implied in the first sentence of the description. It is a "moving" point of view: we see the river from different angles as the white man changes his position and as the boat moves upstream; then we come into the creek.

TROPICAL RIVER[1]

By Joseph Conrad

The white man rested his chin on his crossed arms and gazed at the wake of the boat. At the end of the straight avenue of forests cut by the intense glitter of the river, the sun appeared unclouded and dazzling, poised low over the water that shone smoothly like

[1]From "The Lagoon," in *Tales of Unrest*. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc.

a band of metal. The forests, somber and dull, stood motionless and silent on each side of the broad stream. At the foot of big, towering trees, trunkless nipa palms rose from the mud of the bank, in bunches of leaves enormous and heavy, that hung unstirring over the brown swirl of eddies. In the stillness of the air every tree, every leaf, every bough, every tendril of creeper and every petal of minute blossoms seemed to have been bewitched into an immobility perfect and final. Nothing moved on the river but the eight paddles that rose flashing regularly, dipped together with a single splash; while the steersman swept right and left with a periodic and sudden flourish of his blade describing a glinting semicircle above his head. The churned-up water frothed alongside with a confused murmur. And the white man's canoe, advancing upstream in the short-lived disturbance of its own making, seemed to enter the portals of a land from which the very memory of motion had forever departed.

The white man, turning his back upon the setting sun, looked along the empty and broad expanse of the sea-reach. For the last three miles of its course the wandering, hesitating river, as if enticed irresistibly by the freedom of an open horizon, flows straight into the sea, flows straight to the east—to the east that harbours both light and darkness. Astern of the boat the repeated call of some bird, a cry discordant and feeble, skipped along over the smooth water and lost itself, before it could reach the other shore, in the breathless silence of the world.

The steersman dug his paddle into the stream, and held hard with stiffened arms, his body thrown forward. The water gurgled aloud; and suddenly the long straight reach seemed to pivot on its center, the forests swung in a semi-circle, and the slanting beams of sunset touched the broadside of the canoe with a fiery glow, throwing the slender and distorted shadows of its crew upon the streaked glitter of the river. The white man turned to look ahead. The course of the boat had been altered at right-angles to the stream, and the carved dragon-head of its prow was pointing at a gap in the fringing bushes of the bank. It glided through, brushing the overhanging twigs, and disappeared from the river like some slim and amphibious creature leaving the water for its lair in the forests.

The narrow creek was like a ditch: tortuous, fabulously deep; filled with gloom under the thin strip of pure and shining blue of the heaven. Immense trees soared up, invisible behind the festooned draperies of creepers. Here and there, near the glistening blackness of the water, a twisted root of some tall tree showed amongst the

tracery of small ferns, black and dull, writhing and motionless, like an arrested snake. The short words of the paddlers reverberated loudly between the thick and somber walls of vegetation. Darkness oozed out from between the trees, through the tangled maze of creepers, from behind the great fantastic and unstirring leaves: the darkness, mysterious and invincible; the darkness scented and poisonous of impenetrable forests.

The mental point of view may blend with the physical point of view or, in the absence of a physical point of view, may impart a consistent tone, mood, or atmosphere to the description. Sir Walter Scott's description of a ruined castle will be highly flavored with his own romantic spirit; it will seem eerie and glamorous. But to Mark Twain, a traveling American humorously disrespectful of the cult of the antique, a ruined castle will be nothing more, perhaps, than a heap of rubble that ought to be hauled off; there are such amusing descriptions in *A Tramp Abroad.* Charles Dickens, in *David Copperfield,* gives us a description of Peggotty's house as it looked to the boy David. Dickens does not describe this queer place as it would strike an adult, to whom it would seem a poor, makeshift thing, no better than a shanty. To the boy's view Peggotty's house is wholly romantic and charming.

PEGGOTTY'S HOUSE[1]

By Charles Dickens

Ham carrying me on his back and a small box of ours under his arm, and Peggotty carrying another small box of ours, we turned down lanes bestrewn with bits of chips and little hillocks of sand, and went past gas-works, rope-walks, boat-builders' yards, shipwrights' yards, ship-breakers' yards, caulkers' yards, riggers' lofts, smiths' forges, and a great litter of such places, until we came out upon the dull waste I had already seen at a distance; when Ham said:

"Yon's our house, Mas'r Davy!"

I looked in all directions, as far as I could stare over the wilderness, and away at the sea, and away at the river, but no house could *I* make out. There was a black barge, or some other kind of superannuated boat, not far off, high and dry on the ground, with an

[1]From *David Copperfield.*

iron funnel sticking out of it for a chimney and smoking very cosily; but nothing in the way of a habitation that was visible to *me*.

"That's not it?" said I. "That ship-looking thing?"

"That's it, Mas'r Davy," returned Ham.

If it had been Aladdin's palace, roc's egg and all, I suppose I could not have been more charmed with the romantic idea of living in it. There was a delightful door cut in the side, and it was roofed in, and there were little windows in it; but the wonderful charm of it was, that it was a real boat which had no doubt been upon the water hundreds of times, and which had never intended to be lived in, on dry land. That was the captivation of it to me. If it had ever been meant to be lived in, I might have thought it small, or inconvenient, or lonely; but never having been designed for any such use, it became a perfect abode.

The following selection is a good illustration of how a definite point of view may become the controlling element in a descriptive passage:

LIFE AS SEEN FROM THE FLOOR[1]

By Thomas Wolfe

Such was the state of history when Eugene entered the theatre of human events in 1900.

We would give willingly some more extended account of the world his life touched during the first few years, showing, in all its perspectives and implications, the meaning of life as seen from the floor, or from the crib, but these impressions are suppressed when they might be told, not through any fault of intelligence, but through lack of muscular control, the powers of articulation, and because of the recurring waves of loneliness, weariness, depression, aberration, and utter blankness which war against the order in a man's mind until he is three or four years old.

Lying darkly in his crib, washed, powdered, and fed, he thought quietly of many things before he dropped off to sleep—the interminable sleep that obliterated time for him, and that gave him a sense of having missed forever a day of sparkling life. At these moments, he was heartsick with weary horror as he thought of the discomfort, weakness, dumbness, the infinite misunderstanding he would have to endure before he gained even physical freedom. He grew sick as he thought of the weary distance before him, the

[1]From *Look Homeward, Angel,* Charles Scribner's Sons.

lack of co-ordination of the centres of control, the undisciplined and rowdy bladder, the helpless exhibition he was forced to give in the company of his sniggering, pawing brothers and sisters, dried, cleaned, revolved before them.

He was in agony because he was poverty-stricken in symbols: his mind was caught in a net because he had no words to work with. He had not even names for the objects around him: he probably defined them for himself by some jargon, reinforced by some mangling of the speech that roared about him, to which he listened intently day after day, realizing that his first escape must come through language. He indicated as quickly as he could his ravenous hunger for pictures and print: sometimes they brought him great books profusely illustrated, and he bribed them desperately by cooing, shrieking with delight, making extravagant faces, and doing all the other things they understood in him. He wondered savagely how they would feel if they knew what he really thought: at other times he had to laugh at them and at their whole preposterous comedy of errors as they pranced around for his amusement, waggled their heads at him, tickled him roughly, making him squeal violently against his will. The situation was at once profoundly annoying and comic: as he sat in the middle of the floor and watched them enter, seeing the face of each transformed by a foolish leer, and hearing their voices become absurd and sentimental whenever they addressed him, speaking to him words which he did not yet understand, but which he saw they were mangling in the preposterous hope of rendering intelligible that which has been previously mutilated, he had to laugh at the fools, in spite of his vexation.

And left alone to sleep within a shuttered room, with the thick sunlight printed in bars upon the floor, unfathomable loneliness and sadness crept through him: he saw his life down the solemn vista of a forest aisle, and he knew he would always be the sad one: caged in that little round of skull, imprisoned in that beating and most secret heart, his life must always walk down lonely passages. Lost. He understood that men were forever strangers to one another, that no one ever comes really to know any one, that imprisoned in the dark womb of our mother, we come to life without having seen her face, that we are given to her arms a stranger, and that, caught in that insoluble prison of being, we escape it never, no matter what arms may clasp us, what mouth may kiss us, what heart may warm us. Never, never, never, never, never.

EXERCISES

The point of view in this selection deserves special study, inasmuch as it is almost a *tour de force* or "stunt" for a mature writer to assume the point of view of an infant. Consider carefully the following questions:

1. Is the description "true to life"? That is, does it give, in terms of a baby's perceptions and desires, exactly what a baby sees and feels? Or does the author use this point of view as a device for giving his own adult notions of what a baby sees and thinks?

2. Would a psychologist approve the description? Would his approval or disapproval matter?

3. What kind of sentences does Thomas Wolfe seem to prefer? Are they effective in this kind of description?

4. Select five phrases which seem especially striking and analyze them for effectiveness. Bear in mind the studies you have made in Chapter VI.

DOMINANT IMPRESSION

Dominant impression is a means of centralizing a description around some feature or quality of the object described. The impression thus emphasized may be a striking characteristic of the object itself, notable enough to impress any observer; or it may be an interpretation made by the writer—he tells how the object impresses itself upon his own mind or selects and arranges details so as to secure the effect that he wants.

Thus Edgar Allan Poe, in "The Fall of the House of Usher," emphasizes the somberness of the autumn day and of the old mansion which his traveler is approaching. His purpose, of course, is to create a mood or atmosphere for the events of the story.

THE HOUSE OF USHER[1]

By Edgar Allan Poe

During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singu-

[1]From "The Fall of the House of Usher."

larly dreary tract of country; and at length found myself, as the shades of evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher. I know not how it was—but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit . . . I looked upon the scene before me—upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain—upon the bleak walls—upon the vacant eye-like windows—upon a few rank sedges—and upon a few white trunks of decaying trees—with an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation more properly than to the after-dream of the reveller upon opium—the bitter lapse into everyday life—the hideous dropping off of the veil. There was an iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart—an unredeemed dreariness of thought which no goading of the imagination could torture into aught of the sublime.

Poe suggests the appearance of the landscape and the house in part by describing the emotions of the traveler. In Rölvaag's description of the silence of the plains, the emphasis is more upon the silence that really was there, and less upon the emotions of the observer, although the observer, here too, is affected.

THE SILENCE OF THE PLAINS[1]

By Ole E. Rölvaag

The infinitude surrounding her on every hand might not have been so oppressive, might even have brought her a measure of peace, if it had not been for the deep silence, which lay heavier here than in a church. Indeed, what was there to break it? She had passed beyond the outposts of civilization; the nearest dwelling-places of men were far away; the waving blades of grass that trembled to the faintest breath now stood erect and quiet, as if listening, in the great hush of evening . . . All along the way, coming out, she had noticed this strange thing; the stillness had grown deeper, the silence more depressing, the farther west they journeyed; it must have been over two weeks now since she had heard a bird sing! Had they travelled into some nameless abandoned region? Could no living thing exist out here, in the empty, desolate, endless wastes of green and blue?

[1]Reprinted by permission of Harper & Brothers, publishers. From *Giants in the Earth*.

In Hardy's description of Eustacia Vye, the dominant impression is given in the first sentence. The description is an elaboration, carried out through a series of concrete and interesting details, of the significant phrase: "the raw material of a divinity."

EUSTACIA VYE[1]

By Thomas Hardy

Eustacia Vye was the raw material of a divinity. On Olympus she would have done well with a little preparation. She had the passions and instincts which make a model goddess, that is, those which make not quite a model woman. Had it been possible for the earth and mankind to be entirely in her grasp for a while, had she handled the distaff, the spindle, and the shears at her own free will, few in the world would have noticed the change of government. There would have been the same inequality of lot, the same heaping up of favours here, of contumely there, the same generosity before justice, the same perpetual dilemmas, the same captious alternation of caresses and blows that we endure now.

She was in person full-limbed, and somewhat heavy; without ruddiness, as without pallor; and soft to the touch as a cloud. To see her hair was to fancy that a whole winter did not contain darkness enough to form its shadow; it closed over her forehead like nightfall extinguishing the western glow.

Her nerves extended into those tresses, and her temper could always be softened by stroking them down. When her hair was brushed, she would instantly sink into stillness and look like the Sphinx. If in passing under one of the Egdon banks, any of the thick skeins were caught, as they sometimes were, by a prickly tuft of the large *Ulex Europæus*—which will act as a sort of hairbrush—she would go back a few steps and pass against it a second time.

She had Pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries. Their light, as it came and went, and came again, was partially hampered by their oppressive lids and lashes; and of these the under lid was much fuller than it usually is with English women. This enabled her to indulge in reverie without seeming to do so: she might have been believed capable of sleeping without closing them up. Assuming that the souls of men and women were visible essences, you could fancy the colour of Eustacia's soul to be flame-like. The sparks from it that rose into her dark pupils gave the same impression.

[1]From *The Return of the Native*, 1878.

The mouth seemed formed less to speak than to quiver, less to quiver than to kiss. Some might have added, less to kiss than to curl. Viewed sideways, the closing-line of her lips formed, with almost geometric precision, the curve so well known in the arts of design as the cima-recta, or ogee. The sight of such a flexible bend as that on grim Egdon was quite an apparition. It was felt at once that that mouth did not come over from Sleswig with a band of Saxon pirates whose lips met like the two halves of a muffin. One had fancied that such lip-curves were mostly lurking underground in the South as fragments of forgotten marbles. So fine were the lines of her lips that, though full, each corner of her mouth was as clearly cut as the point of a spear. This keenness of corner was only blunted when she was given over to sudden fits of gloom, one of the phases of the night-side of sentiment which she knew too well for her years.

Her presence brought memories of such things as Bourbon roses, rubies, and tropical midnights; her moods recalled lotus-eaters and the march in "Athalie"; her motions, the ebb and flow of the sea; her voice, the viola. In a dim light, and with a slight rearrangement of her hair, her general figure might have stood for that of either of the higher female deities. The new moon behind her head, an old helmet upon it, a diadem of accidental dew-drops round her brow, would have been adjuncts sufficient to strike the note of Artemis, Athena, or Hera respectively, with as close an approximation to the antique as that which passes muster on many respected canvases.

When the dominant impression is both greatly simplified and greatly exaggerated, the result is generally caricature. The cartoonist gets his effects by making a naturally long chin immensely long, or a large paunch exceedingly large. In such a manner Charles Dickens accents heavily the unctuous humility of Uriah Heep, in *David Copperfield.* Heep is always "'umble"; he has an oily smile; he is always bowing and rubbing his hands together. The very names of Dickens's characters suggest the dominant impressions that the author wishes to convey. Charles Cheeryble has a "clear, twinkling, honest, merry, happy eye." Harold Skimpole is "a little bright creature, with a rather large head."

The exaggeration of a dominant impression may at times become burlesque or satire. In the following selection from Sinclair Lewis's *Arrowsmith,* the author accents, with very satirical intention, the magnificent imbecility of "Fatty":

FATTY PFAFF[1]

By Sinclair Lewis

Fatty was of all the new Freshmen candidates the most useful to Digamma Pi. He was planned by nature to be a butt. He looked like a distended hot-water bottle; he was magnificently imbecile; he believed everything, he knew nothing, he could memorize nothing; and anxiously he forgave the men who got through the vacant hours by playing jokes upon him. They persuaded him that mustard plasters were excellent for colds—solicitously they gathered about him, affixed an enormous plaster to his back, and afterward fondly removed it. They concealed the ear of a cadaver in his nice, clean, new pocket handkerchief when he went to Sunday supper at the house of a girl cousin in Zenith. . . . At supper he produced the handkerchief with a flourish.

Every night when Fatty retired he had to remove from his bed a collection of objects which thoughtful house-mates had stuffed between the sheets—soap, alarm clocks, fish. He was the perfect person to whom to sell useless things. Clif Clawson, who combined a brisk huckstering with his jokes, sold to Fatty for four dollars a *History of Medicine* which he had bought, second-hand, for two, and while Fatty never read it, never conceivably could read it, the possession of the fat red book made him feel learned. But Fatty's greatest beneficence to Digamma was his belief in spiritualism. He went about in terror of spooks. He was always seeing them emerging at night from the dissecting-room windows. His classmates took care that he should behold a great many of them flitting about the halls of the fraternity.

The following passage from Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* has a considerable element of exaggeration in it, but Melville's purpose is to produce a heroic effect, not, as in Lewis's description, a comic one. Captain Ahab is a man who has suffered an all but mortal injury, and yet survived to wage an eternal feud against his adversary, the White Whale. The description is centralized by Melville's emphasis upon the peculiar scar that Ahab bears. On the realistic plane the scar represents an actual physical wound or blemish; in a symbolic way it represents a scar upon his very soul.

[1]From *Arrowsmith*, by Sinclair Lewis. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

CAPTAIN AHAB[1]

By Herman Melville

There seemed no sign of common bodily illness about him nor of the recovery from any. He looked like a man cut away from the stake, when the fire has overrunningly wasted all the limbs without consuming them, or taking away one particle from their compacted aged robustness. His whole high, broad form seemed made of solid bronze, and shaped in an unalterable mould, like Cellini's cast Perseus. Threading its way out from among his gray hairs, and continuing right down one side of his tawny scorched face and neck till it disappeared in his clothing, you saw a slender rod-like mark, lividly whitish. It resembled that perpendicular seam sometimes made in the straight, lofty trunk of a great tree, when the upper lightning tearingly darts down it, and without wrenching a single twig, peels and grooves out the bark from top to bottom, ere running off into the soil, leaving the tree still greenly alive, but branded. Whether that mark was born with him, or whether it was the scar left by some desperate wound, no one could certainly say. By some tacit consent, throughout the voyage little or no allusion was made to it, especially by the mates. But once Tashtego's senior, an old Gay-Head Indian among the crew, superstitiously asserted that not till he was full forty years old did Ahab become that way branded, and then it came upon him, not in the fury of any mortal fray, but in an elemental strife at sea. Yet, this wild hint seemed inferentially negatived by what a gray Manxman insinuated, an old sepulchral man, who, having never before sailed out of Nantucket, had never ere this laid eye upon wild Ahab. Nevertheless, the old sea-traditions, the immemorial credulities, popularly invested this old Manxman with preternatural powers of discernment. So that no white sailor seriously contradicted him when he said that if ever Captain Ahab should be tranquilly laid out —which might hardly come to pass, he muttered—then, whoever should do that last office for the dead would find a birth-mark on him from crown to sole.

So powerfully did the whole grim aspect of Ahab affect me, and the livid brand which streaked it, that for the first few moments I hardly noted that not a little of this overbearing grimness was owing to the barbaric white leg upon which he partly stood. It had previously come to me that this ivory leg had at sea been fashioned from the polished bone of the sperm whale's jaw. "Aye, he was dismasted

[1]From *Moby Dick*.

off Japan," said the old Gay-Head Indian once; "but like his dismasted craft, he shipped another mast without coming home for it. He has a quiver of 'em."

SELECTION OF DETAILS

In the descriptions quoted above, the student will notice that the authors do not attempt to give *all* the details visible in a scene from a certain point of view or apparent in some individual who is being described. A complete list of details would be only a list. A total and clear picture would never be established by such a list, but instead, the picture would be overcrowded, blurred, out of focus. The artist who paints a tree does not reproduce in line and color every leaf and twig, but selects the details which, pictorially arranged, suggest a tree or compose the image of a tree. Literary description has a similar principle of selection. The writer delineates in words the significant details, and only the significant details.

The point of view or the dominant impression furnishes the best guiding principle for the selection of details. Ellen Glasgow makes her description of the landscape around Pedlar's store a study in the changing aspects of the broomsedge that covers the desolate fields. She has little to say of trees, houses, roads, and very much to say of the colors of the broomsedge under different conditions. Whitman, with the enormous reach of New York harbor and the city before him, might easily have let his description degenerate into a mere catalogue. Instead, he concentrates on relatively few objects: the North River with its anchored warships; the obelisklike towers of the bridge; the moving ferryboats; and V-shaped Manhattan with its piled towers. In Conrad's description the detail is more profuse, as we should expect it to be in a tropical landscape; but even here the immobility of the forests is contrasted with the solitary movements of the paddlers, and so an emphasis is put on these significant details. Out of all that might be noted in a decaying house, Poe fixes on the "vacant, eye-like windows" and a few other details that convey an impression of "insufferable gloom."

In each instance, too, it will be noted that the point of view or the dominant impression provides some nucleus or core of description, which serves as a kind of topic for the description as a whole. The details of the description are arranged so as to amplify this

topic. The arrangement is spatial if the physical point of view governs the description; and the description will often end, as Whitman's does, upon some especially significant detail (like "V-shaped Manhattan") to which the writer comes as a kind of climax. Or the description may begin with a general impression, which is supported by concrete details arranged in some consistent order. David Copperfield's general impression of the ship-hulk as an "Aladdin's palace" is immediately supported by references to the "delightful door," the roof, the little windows. The silence of the plains, in Rölvaag's description, is indicated by references to the lack of dwelling places, the lack of insect buzzings, the lack even of motion in the grass. Hardy's portrait of Eustacia Vye begins with a general and yet very precise indication of character; and throughout the description, whether Hardy is describing body, nerves, hair, eyes, or mouth, he always finds some subtle way of reminding the reader that his remarkable heroine is "the raw material of a divinity."

It is impossible, of course, to expect in literary description the logical order of expository writing. The progress of a description is neither logical nor illogical. It is the order of artistic design, like the pattern of a vase or of a piece of music. But since descriptive writing deals with nature and humanity, and since words after all have a content of idea, and are not merely sounds, descriptive order will rarely if ever be merely a design, as the pattern of a carpet is a design. The "image" conveyed by a good description is an arrangement, determined partly by the material observed and partly by what the writer wishes to make of it, but it is an arrangement that says something; it is a communication between writer and reader, and must make sense.

Study the following selections to determine what selection of details has been made, what arrangement has been used, and why.

GREENE'S ARMY ON THE MARCH[1]

By James Boyd

A tall man in buckskin was swinging up the main road. His long rifle towered above his coonskin cap, his moccasins stole swiftly over the melting ruts, his powder-horn and fringed pouch tapped softly at his side. Seated in a patch of winter sunlight on the porch, Johnny Fraser called out to him, "Hi, friend! Will you rest a while?"

[1]From *Drums*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925.

The man lowered the rifle to the ground and leaned his scrubby chin on the muzzle. "Howdy, brother," he said. "I'd like to, but I can't." He spat professionally into the bushes. "I'm one of Morgan's scouts. The Army's coming." He swung his rifle to his shoulder and strode on.

Down by the ford more coonskin caps appeared. In two long files they climbed the gentle rise. Tall men's knees bent springily to their easy, low-footed strides, their tall black rifle barrels swayed, the silver front sights twinkled high in air. Some wore buck shirts, the rest wore only leggings. Their gaunt, weather-blackened shoulders showed streaks of callous where thongs of pouch and powder-horn had rubbed. They slipped by noiselessly with shy, enigmatic smiles.

Johnny Fraser stood up. His knees had turned to water; he did not know if he could walk down to the road where they were passing. Somehow it might be best simply to sit there on the porch, alone and unobserved, and watch those lean, brown mountain faces climb from the shadows into the light of the sinking sun. He sat down again.

The hoofs of horses splashed and clicked in the water of the ford. He saw the black-plumed helmets of Lee's Dragoons. Their sabers clinked slowly, their beaten horses' heads hung low. But the men themselves, light, wiry, hard-bitten, sat straight in their saddles, smoking and whistling, exchanging succinct indecencies in the rakish manner of the Light Horse. They may have noticed Johnny watching them, for they cocked their helmets over their eyes and began to whistle the Huron March. The shrill staccato passed back through the squadrons and grew in volume till the horses raised their heavy heads and pricked up ears. Long after the dull "clop-clopping" of their hoofs had been lost to hearing over the hill, the piping chorus came back on the still air, high-pitched, assertive, impudent.

The road resounded to the sound of marching boots. Here came the columns. Down to the ford and round the turn short muskets bobbed, sergeants' halberds caught the light, cased standards swayed aloft. The long blue lines of the Maryland Continentals were passing. Their naked feet peeped through their clumping shoes, red clay caked their black gaiters, but their muskets and side-arms shone, their drawn faces were clean-shaven, their queues were freshly powdered. Bent forward beneath their creaking knapsacks, they trudged with a firm, stout step, the marching step of veterans. Like their gait, their faces were dogged and stolid. It was, however, mere professional stolidity which husbanded with patience and unshakeable acumen all activity of mind and body until the moment they should be needed. That moment, as Johnny knew, would see the set

faces kindle, the plodding column wheel into line and charge with the long stride of athletes and a high, heart-shivering cheer. But now their endless ranks merely trudged, their musket barrels and cockades nodded heavily, their bayonet scabbards slapped their thighs, their canteens rocked against their buttocks. As they climbed the distant rise they looked, beneath their heavy field equipment, like curious beetles crawling onward in an obscure, inexorable migration.

Four young drummer boys toiled in the rear of the last regiment. Strapped high on their thin shoulders, their big, deep drums seemed burdens as much too great for their youthfulness as the war itself. But they, too, like the troops, were driven forward by a force still greater than that which pressed them down.

A gap in the marching files showed the General and his officers. Their swaying blue cloaks hung down over their horses. Riding in silence, they ranged the countryside with keen, tired eyes. The General, the same compact Nathanael Greene who had made them into an army, sat square and solid on his horse. His bridle reins hung in the crook of his elbow, his two big hands held out a map before him. He moved on out of sight without raising his eyes.

On creaking axles a meager train of ammunition wagons followed. The teamsters, hands in lap, feet cocked up on brakes, lurched high aloft. Drag chains clinked and buckets swung beneath the running-gear. Their spare wheels showed at the tail-gates as they passed.

Now the road was filled with linen hunting-shirts, with caps of wool and muskrat and beaver, and with old cocked hats. In uneven, close-locked ranks the militia pounded the frozen clay. Guns of all makes and sizes swayed above their heads: carbines, fowling-pieces, captured Tower muskets, and here and there, over-topping all the rest, the frontier rifle. At their belts swung home-made bayonets of hammered saw-blades or long-handled tomahawks. The legs below the hunting-shirts were clad in linen trousers and seaboots, in deer-skin leggings and moccasins, in the broadcloth breeches and spun-yarn stockings of a farmer's Sunday best. The motley legs, however, all swung together. The ripple of their movement ran down the line like the back of a serpent crawling. The Regulars had not kept time. Each man of them had used the step best suited to himself. But these Militia seemed to feel the need of rhythm. Perhaps they hoped that its compelling bond would somehow take the place of training, would help, at least, to weld them into one. Perhaps in their long retreat over icy, bloodstained roads and their long advance to victory, they had learned that only rhythm could carry them through endless months of marching so far beyond their powers. Even now they

seemed to draw their strength, not from themselves, but from its profound, somber intoxication. Unseeing, silent, they swept by in the trance of their momentum. On, on they came without end, without pause. The iteration of their footfalls, bluntly pounding all together, mounted in volume, filled the air until the opalescent dome, the fading daylight, seemed to throb. The earth was trembling to their inexorable monotone.

The last sunlight fell across their faces, faces rigid yet composed, with eyes calm, shrewd, sardonic, and mouths bitter and mocking yet touched with childish eagerness. They bore the stamp of weary patience, these endless files of marchers, beneath which lurked a hint of careless impudence and harsh, dry mirth. Old men swung by with dreaming eyes of infants; young boys with close, tight mouths of certitude. With hard self-reliance, with incredibly fantastic dreams, they seemed to move toward some assured, uncomprehended destiny.

Just as the sun sank down the column ended, the last ranks passed, wound up the hill, and disappeared from sight. Still the rhythm of their marching floated back through the twilight with a soft, insistent, sifting sound.

On padding moccasins the rear guard stole through the dusk. The white-ringed coon tails of their caps swung behind, their rifle barrels swung above, as they, too, climbed the hill.

A solitary figure followed them, a tall, half-naked mountain man. His lean tawny breast, his beaded leggings, his cheek bones shone through the shadows. He moved without a sound.

Johnny Fraser was stumbling down the lane to meet him. Before he reached the road, however, the man passed by and strode on up the rise. Standing forlorn in the shadows, Johnny felt profound frustration. He should have been in time to greet this man. With straining eyes he followed him up the hill, he saw him pause on the softly glowing crest and look behind. Perhaps the man could see him. He raised his stiff arm in the Indian salutation. The distant figure lifted a long black rifle against the sunset sky.

EXERCISES

1. In James Boyd's description, what is the point of view? Is it clearly indicated and maintained? Is there any violation of perspective?

2. Mark all the words and phrases that make a specific appeal to the senses.

3. Note any unusual figures of speech. Are there any examples of synecdoche and hyperbole?

4. Why does Boyd give such a brief description of General Greene? Would Walter Scott have been content with a single paragraph?

5. Is the paragraph beginning "The last sunlight fell across their faces" a necessary part of the description?

6. In what respects are the beginning and ending alike? Does Boyd purposely emphasize any symbolic figures or happenings?

7. Is the description authentic? That is, did Greene's army actually look like Boyd's description of it? How does Boyd's description differ from a narrative of action? How does it differ from a purely historical account?

THE BROWNSTONES[1]

By Alfred Kazin

Ahead of me now the black web of the Fulton Street El. On the other side of the Banca Commerciale, two long even pavements still raw with sunlight at seven o'clock of a summer evening take me straight through the German and Irish "American" neighborhoods. I could never decide whether it was all those brownstones and blue and gray frame houses or the sight of the library serenely waiting for me that made up the greatest pleasure of that early evening walk. As soon as I got out from under the darkness of the El on Fulton Street, I was catapulted into tranquillity.

Everything ahead of me now was of a different order—wide, clean, still, every block lined with trees. I sniffed hungrily at the patches of garden earth behind the black iron spikes and at the wooden shutters hot in the sun—there where even the names of the streets, Macdougal, Hull, Somers, made me humble with admiration. The long quiet avenues rustled comfortably in the sun; above the brownstone stoops all the yellow striped awnings were unfurled. Every image I had of peace, of quiet shaded streets in some old small-town America I had seen dreaming over the ads in the *Saturday Evening Post*, now came back to me as that proud procession of awnings along the brownstones. I can never remember *walking* those last few blocks to the library; I seemed to float along the canvas tops. Here were the truly

[1]From *A Walker in the City*. Copyright, 1951, by Alfred Kazin. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

American streets; here was where they lived. To get that near to brownstones, to see how private everything looked in that world of cool black painted floors and green walls where on each windowsill the first shoots of Dutch bulbs rose out of the pebbles like green and white flags, seemed to me the greatest privilege I had ever had. A breath of long-stored memory blew out at me from the veranda of Oyster Bay. Even when I visited an Irish girl from my high school class who lived in one of those brownstones, and was amazed to see that the rooms were as small as ours, that a Tammany court attendant's family could be as poor as we were, that behind the solid "American" front of fringed shawls, Yankee rocking chairs, and oval daguerreotypes on the walls they kept warm in winter over an oil stove—even then, I could think of those brownstone streets only as my great entrance into America, a half-hour nearer to "New York."

I had made a discovery; I had stumbled on a connection between myself and the shape and color of time in the streets of New York. Though I knew that brownstones were old-fashioned and had read scornful references to them in novels, it was just the thick, solid way in which they gripped to themselves some texture of the city's past that now fascinated me. There was one brownstone on Macdougal Street I would stop and brood over for long periods every evening I went to the library for fresh books—waiting in front of it, studying every crease in the stone, every line in the square windows jutting out above the street, as if I were planning its portrait. I had made a discovery: walking could take me back into the America of the nineteenth century.

On those early summer evenings, the library was usually empty, and there was such ease at the long tables under the plants lining the windowsills, the same books of American history lay so undisturbed on the shelves, the wizened, faintly smiling little old lady who accepted my presence without questions or suggestions or reproach was so delightful as she quietly, smilingly stamped my card and took back a batch of new books every evening, that whenever I entered the library I would walk up and down trembling in front of the shelves. For each new book I took away, there seemed to be ten more of which I was depriving myself. Everything that summer I was sixteen was of equal urgency—Renan's *Life of Jesus*; the plays of Eugene O'Neill, which vaguely depressed me, but were full of sex; Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, to which I was so devoted that even on the day two years later Hitler came to power I could not entirely take it in, because on the same day John Galsworthy died;

anything about Keats and Blake; about Beethoven; the plays of W. Somerset Maugham, which I could not relate to the author of *Of Human Bondage; The Education of Henry Adams,* for its portrait of John Quincy Adams leading his grandson to school; Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians,* for its portrait of Cardinal Newman, the beautiful Newman who played the violin and was seen weeping in the long sad evening of his life; Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice,* which seemed to me vaguely sinister and unbearably profound; Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons,* which I took away one evening to finish on my fire escape with such a depth of satisfaction that I could never open the book again, for fear I would not recapture that first sensation.

The automatic part of all my reading was history. The past, the past was great: anything American, old, glazed, touched with dusk at the end of the nineteenth century, still smoldering with the fires lit by the industrial revolution, immediately set my mind dancing. The present was mean, the eighteenth century too Anglo-Saxon, too far away. Between them, in the light from the steerage ships waiting to discharge my parents onto the final shore, was the world of dusk, of rust, of iron, of gaslight, where, I thought, I would find my way to that fork in the road where all American lives cross. The past was deep, deep, full of solitary Americans whose careers, though closed in death, had woven an arc around them which I could see in space and time—"lonely Americans," it was even the title of a book. I remember that the evening I opened Lewis Mumford's *The Brown Decades* I was so astonished to see a photograph of Brooklyn Bridge, I so instantly formed against that brownstone on Macdougal Street such close and loving images of Albert Pinkham Ryder, Charles Peirce, Emily Dickinson, Thomas Eakins, and John August Roebling, that I could never walk across Roebling's bridge, or pass the hotel on University Place named Albert, in Ryder's honor, or stop in front of the garbage cans at Fulton and Cranberry Streets in Brooklyn at the place where Whitman had himself printed *Leaves of Grass,* without thinking that I had at last opened the great trunk of forgotten time in New York in which I, too, I thought, would someday find the source of my unrest.

SELECTION OF LANGUAGE

The choice of words in descriptive writing is governed by the same considerations as those discussed above. The language at every point must shape in the reader's mind the image that the writer seeks

to convey. General and abstract words are of little use; they convey no image. Description is a process of visualization, and the writer of description must make his language concrete and specific. His aim is, as Joseph Conrad said, "to make you hear, to make you feel, . . . to make you see." General and abstract words cannot possibly make the necessary appeal to the senses. Hardy does not say that Eustacia Vye had beautiful eyes and mouth, but that she "had Pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries . . ." "Their light was partially hampered by their oppressive lids and lashes. . . . The mouth seemed formed less to speak than to quiver, less to quiver than to kiss." Faulkner does not say that the automobile moved rapidly over the rough road, but that it bounced, swayed, and fled up and down hill "as if the earth had dropped from under them."

The diction of descriptive writing is thus in a very different category from the diction of matter-of-fact writing. Matter-of-fact writing uses words for their denotative and logical content. In a scientific treatise words must mean exactly what they say, and no more; they must never have overtones of meaning; they must never mean more than they say. In descriptive writing, the author seeks exactness of *connotation.* Overtone of meaning is what he is seeking, because he wants his words, while denoting certain objects and features of objects, also to *suggest* something over and above mere logical meaning. The vocabulary of descriptive writing always means more than it says, in so far as it sets the imagination to working and surrounds the object with an aura of associations.

For these reasons, the language of descriptive writing is more concrete and specific than the language of expository writing; and, besides, it makes greater and freer use of all the rhetorical devices that help to make an image vivid. Among these devices, figures of speech are of first importance.

The matter-of-fact writer will say of a certain person: he is small in size, and thin, but he is active in his movements. Conrad, writing of such a person, uses a simile: "a little man, dry as a chip and agile as a monkey." The root of a tree, in Conrad's "The Lagoon," shows "writhing and motionless, like an arrested snake." Lafcadio Hearn describes the dew-fall in a tropic night as follows: "Under the roof of our hotel I hear a continuous dripping sound; the drops fall heavily, like the bodies of clumsy insects."

The following passages illustrate the uses of figures of speech in descriptive writing:

Suddenly he came, a great rolling front of chin and abdomina, towards me.—H. G. Wells, *Twelve Stories and a Dream.*

Through the falling dusk, the machine boomed steadily with a new sound, a solemn roar, rising at intervals to a rattling impatient yell as the cylinder ran momentarily empty.—Hamlin Garland, *A Son of the Middle Border.*[1]

It was a fast train and it did not always stop at Jefferson. It halted only long enough to disgorge the two dogs: a thousand costly tons of intricate and curious metal glaring and crashing up and into an almost shocking silence filled with puny sounds of men, to vomit two gaunt and cringing phantoms whose droop-eared and mild faces gazed with sad abjectness about at the weary pale faces of men who had not slept very much since night before last, ringing them about with something terrible and eager and impotent.—William Faulkner, *Light in August.*[2]

Although the diction of descriptive writing tends to be richly connotative and metaphorical, certain cautions must be observed. An excess of metaphor is cloying and artificial; it is like cake that has been too heavily spiced. It is better to have a plain descriptive style than a style that seems forced, affected, ornate. The metaphors must come at the place where they really contribute to the effect; they must not get in one another's way. A study of the examples given in this chapter will show that most good writers observe a principle of balance: they are neither excessively plain nor excessively "literary." The ideal descriptive style is a style that directs the reader to the subject described rather than to the verbal means by which the subject is evoked or suggested.

Another caution needs to be made against the use of adjectives, catch-phrases, figures of speech that have become trite or conventional. "Eyes like stars," "the blanket of the snow," "the carpet of the grass," "the cottage nestling in the valley," and the like, have long since lost any effectiveness that they may once have possessed.

Furthermore, the work of conveying impressions must be distrib-

[1]Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.
[2]Reprinted by courtesy of Random House, Inc., New York.

uted among the various parts of speech. It would be unwise to issue a prohibition against the use of adjectives and adverbs; but it is a common error to attempt to make them do all the work of description. They cannot effectively do all that work. Nouns and verbs must do their part. The phrase is an important element in descriptive writing. The principles explained in the two chapters on sentences and words are of the greatest importance in descriptive writing and may be studied and applied with good result because, in descriptive writing, the work is done within narrow limits, and technical details can be analyzed and controlled with greater satisfaction than in extensive compositions.

THE OZARK GIGGERS[1]

By Ward Allison Dorrance

In the dead of the night comes a brightness, sifted evenly among the leaves so that its origin is vague. Something is coming from up the river. Something is yet above the bend. Suddenly, at the moment of its turning, the light is gathered, brought into the circle of one ball of flame. Slowly, not yet revealing the way of its moving, it comes on; and the ripples before it are fixed, like the lines of the wind in dunes. There is no sound. What wakened us? Was it the light—or sheer cold-fingered wonder?

This is the boat of the giggers. Here come the Ozark giggers.

Naked to the navel a bearded man stands erect in the prow, his feet apart. High in one hand (strapped to the wrist with a deerhide thong) is poised the three-tined fork, ready for the instant delicate aim. The front of him rises in dim silhouette. From the bright flesh of his back the muscles stand, articulated clearly, as on an anatomical plate. He seems to have but two dimensions.

In the center of the boat, on a pole, is a ball of wire holding an angry flame, withering the tips of the hanging boughs, shedding a snow of ash, spitting long needles that end each in a quick little cross of fire.

Beneath and behind it cowers the steersman. Of him we see only the oval face, white with the clinging ash, afloat in the night, in the darting sparks. From time to time, over his matted hair he throws a mug of water which runs down, furrowing the crust of his temples,

[1]From *Three Ozark Streams*, The Missourian Press, Richmond, Missouri, 1938. Reprinted by permission of the author and of the publisher.

his cheeks. There is no pupil in the white of his eye as he throws back his head to know the weather and time of the stars.

The flame twists in its wire cage with the hiss of indrawn breath.

There is the discreet "plop" of poles as the craft is steered among the rocks. Else no sound. The boat and her men float on. Over them and the last red spark the darkness closes, the darkness which had opened to let them in.

The night has yet three hours to run. . . .

EXERCISES

1. Study the plan of Dorrance's sketch. The contrast between shadow and light is handled as carefully and subtly as a painter would handle it in his picture. Mark all the words and phrases that have to do with light and darkness and study their significance in the tone and organization of the description.

2. What is the point of view? Study the relation between point of view, dominant impression, and selection of details.

EXPOSITORY DESCRIPTION

At the beginning of this chapter a distinction was made between expository writing—which appeals first of all to the "understanding" —and descriptive and narrative writing—which strive "to evoke reality by calling up an image."

It is proper to note that expository writing sometimes borrows the methods of literary description to such an extent that, except in its emphasis upon matter-of-fact, it becomes almost indistinguishable from description. For this border-line kind of writing the name *expository description* may be appropriately used. The following description of Lake Erie is of this type. Although it is heavily weighted with matter-of-fact detail, it is so organized as to emphasize a dominant image ("Lake Erie is intimate and wayward"), and it ascribes to the lake characteristics that imply individuality and even "personality." In such devices the author follows the method of the literary naturalists (Thoreau, Burroughs, Muir) rather than of the man of science or commerce. It is not at all the description that a geologist would write; nor is it, on the other hand, the kind of "blurb" that an advertising agency would compose for a pamphlet intended for tourists.

LAKE ERIE[1]

By Harlan Hatcher

Lake erie is intimate and wayward. Of the five Great Lakes, Erie is fourth in size, for only Ontario is smaller. Cool, deep Lake Superior is the Amazonian one; Lake Huron, wild and island-studded, is next; and Lake Michigan with her gates of gold at Mackinac and the silver finger of Green Bay to break her regular coast line is third. Lake Erie is less than half the size of Lake Michigan—9,940 square miles in area, or a little larger than the state of Vermont.

The long grain ships, loaded to the Plimsoll line with wheat from the elevators at Duluth, ease down the Livingstone Channel past Grosse Isle and out into the western corner of Lake Erie. They swing round at the Detroit River Lighthouse and head east-southeast through Canadian waters and keep between the buoys north of Ontario's Pelee Island. They usually have the wind behind them as they clear Point Pelee and Southeast Shoal Light and steer straight for Buffalo, about 200 miles away at the eastern corner. They are never far from land. At the widest point the Erie shores are only fifty-eight miles apart; at the narrowest they are separated by only twenty-eight miles. In her present state Erie is shallow. Her thirty-foot-depth contour is regularly about a mile offshore. Her harbors were filled with sand which has had to be dredged out. Her deepest soundings are but 210 feet, 1,000 feet less than Superior's, and 660 feet less than Michigan's; and her mean depth is only ninety feet. That is one reason why Erie is vagrant and temperamental rather than brooding.

Erie's waters stir in this shallow bowl. Perhaps saucer is more accurate than bowl. Or, if we think of its shape as well as it shallowness, it is more like a trencher of the era of Hawkins and Drake. The water from Lake Huron pours hurriedly under the International Bridge at Sarnia and Port Huron. It flows down the St. Clair River, widens lazily out into a lake in the St. Clair Flats, then gathers itself together again at Windmill Point to become the Detroit River. It moves on down the twenty-eight-mile-long channel past Detroit and Windsor, flows around the islands in the river, and spreads imperceptibly into the long narrow basin that confines Lake Erie. At the

[1]From *Lake Erie*, by Harlan Hatcher. Copyright, 1945, by The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., and used by permission of the publisher, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc.

Buffalo end it is channeled once more and funneled out through the Niagara River under the Peace Bridge past Squaw Island at the rate of 215,000 cubic feet each second. Then it runs rapidly down to spill over the Niagara Falls into Lake Ontario, about 330 feet below the level of Lake Erie.

The northern half of Lake Erie belongs to Canada, the southern half to the United States. The province of Ontario borders its entire north shore—all the way from Fort Erie at the entrance to the Niagara, and Port Colborne where the ships enter the Welland Canal, to Amherstburg and Windsor on the Detroit River. The province is shaped exactly like a big Indian arrowhead with its point aimed straight at Detroit. The Erie shore forms one edge of the point, the Huron shore the other; the Niagara escarpment is its southern barb, the Saugeen Peninsula the northern. Its neck is the narrow strip of land between Georgia Bay and the Hamilton wedge of Lake Ontario. Only a few small creeks and one fairly large river—the Grand—flow down from the north into Lake Erie. The Thames River is only a few miles away, but it runs parallel to the Lake Erie shore and empties into Lake St. Clair. The regular shore line is broken only by the jutting peninsulas of Point Pelee and Rondeau in the west and Long Point in the east.

The big port cities of the province are on Georgia Bay and Lake Ontario at the neck of the arrowhead. The Erie shore line on Canada's side is a bit lonely. There are no great cities, few roaring mills, no giant elevators, fine harbors, long wharves or railroad yards on the north coast. The smokestacks of the International Nickel Company's plants loom up against the sky at Port Colborne where they are clearly visible from the steamship lanes on Lake Erie. The stacks and brick walls of the mills at Amherstburg rise high above the texas houses of freighters going up the Amherstburg Channel in the Detroit River. Between them are beaches and summer resorts, quiet towns and fishing villages, marshes, forestry stations, and provincial parks.

The proud cities with crowded harbors and teeming lake commerce are on the United States side. The recital of their names sounds like a Walt Whitman chant to the muscular new world whose sons and daughters have erected monuments fit for these states: Detroit, Toledo, Sandusky, Huron, Vermilion, Lorain, Cleveland, Fairport, Ashtabula, Conneaut, Erie, Dunkirk, and Buffalo. These are the harbors where the great ships come and go. These cities receive the stupendous tonnage of ore and grain that flows in an ever-increasing river of red and gold from Duluth and Superior,

Ashland and Marquette, Chicago and Milwaukee. And from seven of these cities flows back an equally stupendous tonnage in the unending black river of coal for the thriving cities of the Upper Lakes.

Suggestions for Themes

In selecting subjects on which to write descriptive themes, prefer objects, scenes, and persons that you yourself have seen. It is best to avoid subjects that involve descriptions of nature in its grander aspects—mountains, canyons, the ocean—unless, like Harlan Hatcher in his expository description of Lake Erie, you are sufficiently well informed to visualize your subject as a whole and in all its fundamental aspects and to relate it significantly with the human activity that centers in it or around it. If you choose a historical subject which you wish to treat imaginatively, you will need to do enough research to assure yourself of basic historical authenticity.

1. Study the method and style of one of the descriptive selections given in this chapter, and then write a description of your own in which you follow the method and style of that selection.

2. Write a description in which a physical point of view is used. Suggestions:

The Kentucky Derby, a steeplechase, a horseshow, as seen from a particular point in the stands
The Ski Jump—as seen from points below and above
Southern Plantation: New Style
Iowa Cornfield
Kansas Wheat Farm
College Bookstore: an Interior View
River Town
A Street in Greenwich Village (or the French Quarter of New Orleans, or the Battery at Charleston, or any other old street or section)
Hospital Admission Room
A Seaport—as viewed from the harbor
Bus Terminal
An Airport

3. Write a description in which you make use of a dominant impression. Suggestions:

A court day, market day, festival, celebration, or social gathering
A Good Day to Hunt
The Snack Bar
Roadside Diner

The "Pro" at the Golf Club
Night Club Hostess
Ringside Seats at the Boxing Match
The West Pointer
Social Welfare Worker
Salesgirl
A Rainy Day on the Beach
A Winter Morning on the Prairie (or some other specific place)
Hurricane Warning

4. Write a description in which, through use of verbal imagery, you make a deliberate effort to appeal to the senses. Suggestions:

The Candy Shop
A Modern Freezing Plant
Packing Peaches (or getting in any other fruit or farm crop)
Feeding the Cattle in Winter
Country Dinner—Old Style
Fashion Show
Mid-July in the South (or elsewhere)
October Morning
Circus Day

5. Describe a wild animal, bird, fish, or marine creature in its native state.

6. Visualize some historic event, using, as James Boyd does, the point of view of some relatively undistinguished observer, and write a description of the impression made by the event, or some aspect of it, upon the observer.

2. *NARRATIVE WRITING*

Technically, a narrative is a sequence of connected actions, so told or written as to make a complete and satisfying whole. The action related is generally physical: it represents what happens during some significant portion of human experience, and there can be no experience that is not in some way or other physical experience. Nevertheless, mental experience is also significant. The external acts of human beings are often less important than their mental states, and the true meaning of men's deeds can often best be told by relating what goes on in their heads. The action of a narrative can therefore be mental in part. In some modern narratives the action is almost wholly mental.

The other basic features of narrative are: a character or characters —the person or persons whose experience is being related; a place or "scene," since the events related must have a particular location; and a time-sequence, for events take place in a definite order of time. Last, the narrative must have a meaningful organization—a form. To use Aristotle's terms, it must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. The parts of the general action must be so connected, and the circumstantial details so chosen, as to make a complete whole.

Accounts of happenings in nature—the eruption of a volcano, the action of a storm—may seem to be narratives that lack a character. But such events acquire significance in narrative only as they are seen in relation to human experience. A volcanic eruption must be seen by a human observer if it is to be related. It acts upon people and their institutions. So does a storm, an earthquake, a flood. In order to state in narrative form the meaning of purely natural events, we tend to ascribe human traits to natural phenomena, and they thus become "characters" of the narrative. Ancient writers, using the mythology to which they were accustomed, represented natural forces as supernatural beings. In Homer's *Iliad* the hero Achilles fights the angry river-god, Scamander. Modern writers avoid such outright mythologizing and personification. Nevertheless, in Joseph Conrad's *Typhoon* the typhoon itself is a dominant character, which displays almost a personal animus toward a ship and its crew. In stories of animals, from Æsop's fables to Kipling's *Jungle Books,* wild animals are endowed with human speech, human virtues, human frailties. There is no other way for us to tell stories about them.

But the true nature of narrative cannot be revealed by a brief formalized definition. What narrative really is becomes clearer when we distinguish it from other types of writing. An explanation of a process, for example, may be like a narrative in some respects.

In "Rowing the Eight-oared Shell" (page 57), Oliver La Farge tells how the oarsman performs "the forward reach to get ready for a stroke," moving hands, shoulders, and body "in related time one to another, and in perfect time with the other seven men"; how the oarsman drops his blade into the water and the shoulders "take hold" for the stroke; how the legs "start to drive"; and, most important of all, how, in executing stroke after stroke in unison, the crew "becomes one." The series of actions thus set forth constitutes what

seems to be a narrative. But this quasi-narrative is expository in purpose. It aims to convey information and to enable the reader to understand that information. The oarsmen of the quasi-narrative are generalized. They are merely oarsmen. They and the coxswain appear in their functions as members of a crew rather than as individuals with names and personal histories. Since Mr. La Farge is giving his explanation as a phase of his own personal experience, his own individuality flavors the account to some extent. The "scene" is particularized—indeed is sharply dramatized. The *sensations* of an oarsman (who is clearly La Farge) are woven into the explanation; and in the final paragraph there is an interesting suggestion of what *might* happen if "a single antagonistic personality" should be a member of a crew who are otherwise "in unison."

But Mr. La Farge does not dwell upon the possible *conflict* that might arise if the antagonistic personality should assert itself and there should be a need for recovering unity.

A writer of narrative—whether of fiction or of fact—would be deeply interested in the conflict to which Mr. La Farge refers only for purposes of information, and which he does not develop. In that conflict and its resolution the narrative writer would see the possibility of a "story" which in a series of subordinate actions blending into one larger unified action would dramatize a meaningful human situation. If this writer chose to begin his story at a point when the members of the crew were not yet perfected in the stroke, he would need to use such material as appears in Mr. La Farge's exposition, but it would be subdued to the purpose of narrative. The clash of personalities would become the dominant element. The germ of the story would be in the situation to which Mr. La Farge devotes only two or three sentences—that is, the passage beginning: "My crews at Harvard contained men with whom I had nothing in common, men by whom I should have been bored and antagonized, and who should have disliked me." The crew members and the coxswain would be named and individualized. The story might be told from the point of view of some young Lionel Cabot, whose forebears for generations have attended Harvard—and perhaps rowed in the Harvard crew. The "antagonistic personality" might be some young Randolph of Virginia, some Jorgensen of Minnesota, or some Zdanowicz of Pennsylvania—or at any rate some young fellow who at first does not impress Lionel Cabot any more favorably than Rooney Lee, as

represented in *The Education of Henry Adams,* seems to have impressed the young descendant of President John Quincy Adams. The story would perhaps depict the "boredom" or "antagonism" that threatens to destroy the unity of the crew despite the much-desired strength, endurance, and skill of the "antagonistic" member. The conflict would be resolved by some episode which would reveal in dramatic terms how Cabot and Randolph (or Jorgensen or Zdanowicz), through rowing together or for reasons of latent congeniality, "became fond of each other."

At any rate such a narrative, whatever its course of development, would center on a particular man, in a particular situation, involved, with other individual personalities, in a series of very definite occasions that would form a unified narrative pattern. If the narrative should deal with *actual* persons, it would then be a "matter-of-fact" narrative and would faithfully adhere—as in autobiography and other types of reminiscent narrative—to actual events. If it should deal with imagined characters, the author would control and shape the events of the story to fit his fictional theme and purpose.

The point is that, even though the basic materials of exposition and narrative may often be the same, the treatment is not at all the same. The governing principle of true narrative is different from the governing principle of exposition.

THE ILLUSION OF REALITY

A narrative seeks to convey, as expository writing does not, the *illusion of reality.* By special means, used only in the various forms of narrative, a narrative "re-creates" an actual experience or "creates" an imaginary one in such a way that the reader is persuaded to conceive himself as present at the scene of the action, watching, in his his mind's eye, the progress of events, and drawn into them as a sympathetic participant. He shares in the emotions of the characters. He identifies himself with their life. He "lives over" the happenings of the narrative. In the technical phrase, he has a vicarious experience.

The composition of a narrative is determined by the author's desire to establish the illusion of reality for the events which he is recounting. Before we consider the means by which the narrative writer accomplishes his end, it is necessary to comment on the nature of the illusion which he is creating. It is not a deception, a trick, a lie. It is

an illusion (that is, in the dictionary phrase, "an unreal image, a deceptive appearance") only in the sense that the events being related are not actually occurring at the time of the reading of the narrative. A narrative of events is not the same thing as the events themselves any more than a portrait of a beautiful woman is the flesh-and-blood person. When the ghost of Hamlet's father speaks to Hamlet in Shakespeare's play, we know that it is not an actual ghost but an actor, who is speaking lines written centuries ago. When Hamlet dies at the end of the drama, we know that the actor is not dying but is acting a death. A historical narrative of some battle is not the actual battle. What we get from a narrative, as from a play, is a significant representation of something that has happened or that may be imagined as happening. If the author is skillful, we become absorbed in his representation, as we do in the play on the stage. The illusion thus created may well be a high and noble form of reality and thus an aspect of truth. It has this difference from actual experience: that, although actual experience is fleeting, and cannot be recovered once it has gone, and furthermore is rarely intense in character, and may be confusing rather than clear, a narrative of experience gives experience a lasting form, permits it to be recovered and re-experienced in that form by any reader, establishes it forever in a certain degree of intensity, and makes it stand forth clear and precise.

The actual experience of fighting the battle of Thermopylæ was possible only once, to the Spartans and Persians who took part in it. But hundreds of readers from ancient to modern times have relived that battle in the famous account of it given by the Greek historian Herodotus. The events of Poe's story, "The Gold Bug," never happened at all; but many readers have had the imagined experience which Poe the story writer contrived that they should have—and always in the exact form in which Poe intended the experience to be imagined.

THE METHOD OF NARRATIVE

By what method does the writer of narrative achieve this powerful illusion? The method develops from the narrative writer's differentiation of his subject-matter and from the necessity of dramatizing that subject-matter.

The subject-matter of a narrative is a *situation* affecting one or

more characters in such a way that a conflict arises between opposing forces which can be followed to its inevitable or reasonable conclusion. Perhaps it would do equally well to say that the subject-matter is the experience of a character or characters involved in a situation which brings about an interplay of opposing forces. But it is well to emphasize situation, because the statement of the situation puts the narrative on its way. The situation also implies the limits of the action which is to be related, for when the conflict inherent in the situation has been worked out, the end of the narrative will have been reached. The situation, the characters, the conflict of forces, the development of the conflict to its logical end —these are the indispensable elements of a narrative.

What is a narrative situation? Much labor might be expended without achieving a completely satisfactory definition. It might be defined as a difficulty of some sort that somehow must be faced by the characters of the narrative. It is an intrusion of matters incalculable or strange or disconcerting into normal human relationships.

Two people eating breakfast in a commonplace way do not make a situation. If a writer says, "The average American husband eats breakfast with his wife at some time between seven and eight o'clock in the morning," that is not a statement of a situation; it is a sociological observation. But if the writer says, "Not until John had drunk his second cup of coffee and read the comic strips did he realize that neither of them had spoken a word since they started on the orange juice; and now Anne was softly crying into her napkin," then we have a situation. We know that trouble is brewing and that the story of that trouble is about to be told.

How will it be "told"? It will not be told but written. In a stage drama it will be acted. That is, persons taking the "parts" of the characters will simulate the action to be related, principally through spoken dialogue, but with some help, too, from gestures, facial expression, and stage "business." A written—or literary—narrative also simulates an action, but through the medium of written or printed words. It "tells" or "describes" or "relates" the action conceived as taking place.

Literary narrative is much less dependent on dialogue than the play. In fact, it can dispense with dialogue entirely. The stage play is limited to the stage and to actually visible and audible means of

representation, but narrative is unlimited in its range. It can enter the thoughts of the characters while they are speaking, can give the reaction of the characters to one another and to events, can represent both their sensations and their ideas. It can shift the time and place of action at will. It can summon up past action at any relevant point. In one way or another it can interpret the action for the reader.

To convey the significant details of action in this way, so that the struggle of opposing forces is developed and the attention of the reader is directed to the important and meaningful aspects of the action, is a kind of dramatization no less valid than the dramatization of a play. The physical immediacy of the play, which works upon the eyes and ears of an audience, makes it very attractive and absorbing, but that same physical immediacy also limits the play severely. Many of the stage devices for indicating place and interpreting action are very awkward. The "scenery" is all too obviously a painted contrivance. The soliloquy used in a Shakespearean play is a rather clumsy, artificial device for commenting on the action and rendering the thoughts of a character. The literary narrative lacks the immediate physical appeal of the play, but its range is infinitely wider. It can dramatize anything that is relevant to the action. The resources of narrative are so varied that, even though it be read silently, without a speaking voice to give it emphasis, it works powerfully upon the reader's mind. In Sir Philip Sidney's phrase, the narrative writer "holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner."

OTHER FEATURES OF NARRATIVE

A successful narrative must establish *tension* and maintain that tension until a satisfying conclusion is reached. It must be *circumstantial* in its account of events: that is, it must provide enough details to dramatize the action effectively. And it must have a *focus:* that is, the narrative interest must be organized around the fortunes or desires of a single character.

Tension. The tension of narrative is one of its chief distinguishing features. In expository and argumentative writing there is comparatively little tension. Whatever curiosity may be aroused is

intellectual curiosity. The reader is informed or persuaded, and the appeal to the emotions, if it is made at all, is a side issue. In narrative the reader's curiosity is emotional. He identifies himself with the characters of the narrative and is impelled to follow the progress of events to their outcome. The opening situation centers his attention upon some conflict of forces. The Green Mountain Boys are preparing to attack Ticonderoga. How will they attack it, and will the attack succeed? Daniel Boone has been captured by Indians. Will he escape the torture stake and, if so, when, where, how? Cinderella is sitting alone while her sisters go off to the ball. She would like to go, too, but how can she when she has no gown and no coach? What will happen when, after the fairy godmother has provided these essentials, she arrives at the ball-room, even more gorgeously clad than her sisters?

These are small illustrations of how tension is established. It is maintained by "keeping the reader in suspense," as is commonly said. Technically, this means that the action is developed by a series of incidents or episodes, each of which leads to the one that follows it, and in each of which the struggle of opposing forces shifts into a new phase. These incidents or episodes correspond to the scenes of a play. The narrative writer could not and should not present the whole body of events available to him. He selects from the whole body of events only those which he can represent significantly in a single, unified series. The incident, episode, or "scene" which carries the greatest amount of tension deals, of course, with the decisive event of the series. It will always be near the end of the series and will constitute the "turning point" or "climax" of the action. But each incident will also have its own point of chief tension, which constitutes a minor climax, and each will have, until the decisive moment is reached, its portion of unsolved complication which will lead the reader on to the next incident.

Narratives differ in degree of tension. In some amusing or instructive bit of autobiographical narrative, such as any of us can relate, the struggle between contending forces may not be very grim. The tension will be correspondingly slight. But it must be there if the account is a true narrative. In historical narrative the tension varies with the subject-matter. An account of Pickett's charge at Gettysburg is inherently more exciting than an account of the quarrels in Washington's cabinet. Narratives of fact, which must

take their material as they find it, may strive through dramatic means to create a tension sufficient to hold the reader; but if they are mere chronicles, they will have no tension. Narratives of fiction, such as stories and novels, use the device known as plot. Plot is a highly developed means of presenting the struggle of opposing forces and thus of maintaining a high degree of tension.

Circumstantiality. Tension cannot be achieved, and the struggle of opposing forces cannot be presented convincingly, unless the narrative is richly circumstantial. It must explore and set forth in narrative form the particulars which compose the real substance of the action. A narrative without abundant particulars is but a summary, a mere statement of generalities. It is impossible to secure the illusion of reality unless the narrative presents, bit by bit, the significant details of the experience which is being related. Without these, the reader cannot create in his own mind the image of events. In expository and argumentative writing, a generalization will be made and then will be followed by the particulars that illustrate it or validate it—only enough particulars to do that. In narrative, the particulars carry the burden of the narrative. The reader *infers* from the particulars just what is going on and what its "meaning" is. The generalization—if any is intended—is left unstated, for it is the purpose of a narrative to "evoke" the experience, not to explain it or argue about it.

Generalized and Circumstantial Narrative. A sharp distinction must therefore be made between *generalized* narrative and *circumstantial* narrative. The ordinary newspaper report of an event (called a "story" in newspaper parlance) is likely to be a generalized narrative. Its account of events is given in summary form, with relatively few particulars, and those broadly indicated. Its particulars are "facts"; names, places, times, numbers, important circumstances. The newspaper reporter says: "Fire, starting at an early morning hour, destroyed an entire block in the business section of North Main Street today." Then he estimates the total loss, names the business houses affected, traces in broad outline the efforts of the fire department, and of course dwells briefly upon any interesting or tragic features of the occurrence. He makes no attempt to "evoke" the experience; his prose is strictly matter-of-fact, if he is a good reporter. The main purpose of the newspaper "story" is to convey

authentic information in a condensed form. Textbooks of history, because they must compress their accounts of events into comparatively small space, are obliged to resort to generalized narrative. The "Synopsis of Preceding Installments" given at the beginning of a serialized novel in a magazine is a good example of generalized narrative. It informs the reader, but is not an adequate substitute for the circumstantial narrative which it summarizes. The older British and American novelists—Fielding, Scott, Thackeray, Cooper —use a considerable amount of generalized narrative in their large works, and modern critics blame them for this fault. Yet these novelists may be excused to some extent, since they always return to circumstantial narrative in time to save the story.

Generalized narrative has certain legitimate uses. It may be needed in transitional passages, in cutbacks and recapitulations, in special types of matter-of-fact narrative. Elsewhere it should be avoided. Dramatization is impossible in generalized narrative. Only a circumstantial narrative can be truly dramatic.

The principle applies even to short passages. Unless the particulars are set forth vividly, in concrete and specific terms, the texture of the prose will become loose, characterization will become vague and slack, the narrative will "talk about" events rather than present them. Do not say: "Then, by the exercise of great ingenuity and tact, our friend persuaded the hotel to cash a check." Instead, go at the problem in somewhat this fashion: "The elevator boy leered insolently, or seemed to, as he flung open the door. Henry ignored him and strode grandly past. He hoped he didn't look as scared as he felt. As he walked down the carpeted hall to the desk, he debated with himself. What technique should he use? What did people do? Should he throw himself on the mercy of the management? Or should he just open his checkbook on the marble counter and begin to write, as if cashing a check were something he did anywhere, any time, as a matter of course? Then an idea came to him. . . ."

Focus. A narrative is not unified as a piece of expository writing is unified, by close adherence to a single topic. Its unity is "dramatic unity," which derives in part from its concern with a limited action, isolated from the confused welter of events and developed in the way described above. Equally important in securing dramatic unity

is the device which may be termed the *focus of the narrative.* It is sometimes called "angle of narration."

The focus of the narrative is the particular aspect of events toward which the author directs the reader's attention, with the purpose of bringing the action into meaningful perspective. Generally it will be the particular character to whom the events related will be of central importance. The focus is the "point of reference" in relation to which the account of events is led to assume its intended dramatic meaning.

In broad historical narrative and in some other kinds of matter-of-fact narrative the action reported may have such a pattern that, in its very nature, it is already centralized. In a narrative account of a battle, attention is necessarily centered on the struggle of the contending armies. In Hanson Baldwin's "H. M. S. *Titanic*" (*Harper's Magazine,* 1934) the focus is the ill-fated liner which was sunk, during its maiden voyage, by a collision with an iceberg. But even a narrative of a battle is likely to focus on "our army" rather than on "the enemy," and "the enemy's" actions are related only with reference to the actions of "our army."

The focus may be narrowed still further. The author may concentrate on the strategy and personality of the commanding general, who often becomes, even in quite matter-of-fact narrative, the symbol of the army that he commands. In Douglas Southall Freeman's *R. E. Lee,* a massive, four-volume work, the focus is very strict. Freeman excludes any general history of the Civil War. He rarely gives the reader any insight into the situation on the Federal side, but develops his account solely on the basis of what Lee knew, thought, guessed, or planned at the time of the events themselves. The focus is the mind of General Lee.

Human experience is rarely so simple that the mere progress of an action will automatically determine its focus. The writer must choose the "angle" of events which seems to serve his purpose best. He will then be able to organize his narrative according to a consistent principle. In autobiographical narrative the problem of focus is naturally simple. The focus is the character who is relating his own experience. Historical and biographical narratives require third-person narration, and the focus is generally, though not always, on the person who is "making history." In fictional narrative the problem of the focus becomes involved with the very complex problem

of "point of view." This problem will be discussed fully in connection with the short story (see pages 367–370).[1]

TYPES OF NARRATIVE

If considered according to their use, narratives may be divided into two classes: dependent and independent. If classified according to content and essential character, they are either narratives of fact or narratives of fiction.

A dependent narrative is a narrative inserted into an exposition or an argument, usually to illustrate or to emphasize some point under discussion. Such a narrative is likely to be slight and undeveloped in character. Anecdote and incident are the familiar forms of dependent narrative.

An independent narrative is a narrative written to stand alone. It may be either factual or fictional. If it is factual, its purpose may be to give information, but it does so by telling the "story" of what has happened. Expository, argumentative, and descriptive elements may be mingled with it, but these elements are subordinate. The narrative is dominant in independent narrative. Autobiography, biography, history, reminiscent narrative, the sketch, the tale, the short story, the novel—all are independent narratives. Sometimes incident and anecdote are treated as independent narratives.

Of much greater importance to the writer is the distinction between narrative of fact and narrative of fiction. Although each of these broad types borrows some of the methods of the other to some extent, their differences of subject-matter, purpose, and technique set them apart. Narratives of fact are concerned with the actual, with what has really happened. They are "reports" which propose to record facts in an authentic way and to interpret them. In general, they are more straightforward in method than narratives of fiction. They use less artifice, and are only mildly concerned with the "illusion of reality." Autobiography, biography, history, the lesser forms of reminiscent narrative, the newspaper report—these are narratives of fact. Narratives of fiction deal with imagined happenings, or with actual happenings in such a way as to establish

[1]There may be minor foci in a narrative which are subordinate to the main focus. Brooks and Warren, in *Understanding Fiction* (p. 585 ff.), distinguish and explain three types of focus: (1) "focus of interest"; (2) "focus of character"; (3) "focus of narration."

the "illusion of reality." They use a great deal of artifice, are indirect rather than direct in their methods, and are strongly dramatic. The tale, the short story, the novel are the principal prose forms of fictional narrative. Sketch and incident may be either factual or fictional.

The technique of narrative writing is best acquired by practicing the simpler and briefer forms of narrative of fact before going on to the far more difficult and complex tasks of fictional narrative, such as are encountered in the short story. In brief narratives of fact, such as may be put into the form of reminiscent incident or sketch, the material is ready to hand. The subject-matter comes from one's own experience and does not have to be made up. The writer can devote his entire attention to practicing narrative technique.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL AND REMINISCENT NARRATIVE

The following two selections illustrate the methods used in relatively simple narratives of fact of the autobiographical type. Both are direct and simple in their style. They are only mildly dramatic and seem to make little effort to "work up" narrative tension. Both are highly colloquial in their diction. Crockett is speaking, or is being made to speak, in his own language, as is quite proper, since he is telling his own story. But although he uses the vernacular of the backwoodsman, he does not use it to excess; there is just enough of it to give the narrative a proper flavor. In "The Run for the Cherokee Strip," the narrative is "retold" as Marquis James heard it from his mother and his father, and he therefore assumes the character of a reporter who, in reminiscent mood, is reproducing, as faithfully as possible, what the original narrators said.

DAVY CROCKETT GOES A-COURTING[1]

By David Crockett

I continued in this down-spirited situation for a good long time, until one day I took my rifle and started hunting. While out, I made a call at the house of a Dutch widow, who had a daughter

[1]From *A Narrative of the Life of David Crockett, of the State of Tennessee*, 1834.

that was well enough as to smartness, but she was as ugly as a stone fence. She was, however, quite talkative, and soon began to laugh at me about my disappointment.

She seemed disposed, though, to comfort me as much as she could; and, for that purpose, told me to keep in good-heart, that "there was as good fish in the sea as had ever been caught out of it." I doubted this very much; but whether or not, I was certain that she was not one of them, for she was so homely that it almost give me a pain in the eyes to look at her.

But I couldn't help thinking, that she had intended what she had said as a banter for me to court her! ! !—the last thing in creation I could have thought of doing. I felt little inclined to talk on the subject, it is true; but, to pass off the time, I told her I thought I was born odd, and that no fellow to me could be found. She protested against this, and said if I would come to their reaping, which was not far off, she would show me one of the prettiest little girls there I had ever seen. She added that the one who had deceived me was nothing to be compared with her. I didn't believe a word of all this, for I had thought that such a piece of flesh and blood as she was had never been manufactured, and never would again. I agreed with her, though, that the little varment had treated me so bad, that I ought to forget her, and yet I couldn't do it. I concluded the best way to accomplish it was to cut out again, and see if I could find any other that would answer me; and so I told the Dutch girl I would be at the reaping, and would bring as many as I could with me.

I employed my time pretty generally in giving information of it, as far as I could, until the day came; and I then offered to work for my old friend, the Quaker, two days, if he would let his bound boy go with me to the reaping. He refused, and reproved me pretty considerable roughly for my proposition; and said, if he was in my place, he wouldn't go; that there would be a great deal of bad company there; and that I had been so good a boy, he would be sorry for me to get a bad name. But I knowed my promise to the Dutch girl, and I was resolved to fulfil it; so I shouldered my rifle, and started by myself. When I got to the place, I found a large company of men and women, and among them an old Irish woman, who had a great deal to say. I soon found out from my Dutch girl, that this old lady was the mother of the little girl she had promised me, though I had not yet seen her. She was in an outhouse with some other youngsters, and had not yet made her appearance. Her mamma, however, was no way bashful. She

came up to me, and began to praise my red cheeks, and said she had a sweetheart for me. I had no doubt she had been told what I come for, and all about it. In the evening I was introduced to her daughter, and I must confess, I was plaguy well pleased with her from the word go. She had a good countenance, and was very pretty, and I was full bent on making up an acquaintance with her.

It was not long before the dancing commenced, and I asked her to join me in a reel. She very readily consented to do so; and after we had finished our dance, I took a seat alongside of her, and entered into a talk. I found her very interesting; while I was setting by her, making as good a use of my time as I could, her mother came to us, and very jocularly called me her son-in-law. This rather confused me, but I looked on it as a joke of the old lady, and tried to turn it off as well as I could; but I took care to pay as much attention to her through the evening as I could. I went on the old saying, of salting the cow to catch the calf. I soon become so much pleased with this little girl, that I began to think the Dutch girl had told me the truth, when she said there was still good fish in the sea.

We continued our frolic till near day, when we joined in some plays, calculated to amuse youngsters. I had not often spent a more agreeable night. In the morning, however, we all had to part; and I found my mind had become much better reconciled than it had been for a long time. I went home to the Quaker's, and made a bargain to work with his son for a low-priced horse. He was the first one I had ever owned, and I was to work six months for him. I had been engaged very closely five or six weeks, when this little girl run in my mind so, that I concluded I must go and see her, and find out what sort of people they were at home. I mounted my horse and away I went to where she lived, and when I got there I found her father a very clever old man, and the old woman as talkative as ever. She wanted badly to find out all about me, and, as I thought, to see how I would do for her girl. I had not yet seen her about, and I began to feel some anxiety to know where she was.

In a short time, however, my impatience was relieved, as she arrived at home from a meeting to which she had been. There was a young man with her, who I soon found was disposed to set up claim to her, as he was so attentive to her that I could hardly get to slip in a word edgeways. I began to think I was barking up the wrong tree again; but I was determined to stand up to my rack, fodder or no fodder. And so, to know her mind a little on the subject, I began to talk about starting, as I knowed she would then

show some sign, from which I could understand which way the wind blowed. It was then near night, and my distance was fifteen miles home. At this my little girl soon began to indicate to the other gentleman that his room would be the better part of his company. At length she left him, and came to me, and insisted mighty hard that I should not go that evening; and, indeed, from all her actions and the attempts she made to get rid of him, I saw that she preferred me all holler. But it wasn't long before I found trouble enough in another quarter. Her mother was deeply enlisted for my rival, and I had to fight against her influence as well as his. But the girl herself was the prize I was fighting for; and as she welcomed me, I was determined to lay siege to her, let what would happen. I commenced a close courtship, having cornered her from her old beau; while he set off, looking on, like a poor man at a country frolic, and all the time almost gritting his teeth with pure disappointment. But he didn't dare to attempt any thing more, for now I had gotten a start, and I looked at him every once in a while as fierce as a wild-cat. I staid with her until Monday morning, and then I put out for home.

It was about two weeks after this that I was sent for to engage in a wolf hunt, where a great number of men were to meet, with their dogs and guns, and where the best sort of sport was expected. I went as large as life, but I had to hunt in strange woods, and in a part of the country which was very thinly inhabited. While I was out it clouded up, and I began to get scared; and in a little while I was so much so, that I didn't know which way home was, nor any thing about it. I set out the way I thought it was, but it turned out with me, as it always does with a lost man, I was wrong, and took exactly the contrary direction from the right one. And for the information of young hunters, I will just say, in this place, that whenever a fellow gets bad lost, the way home is just the way he don't think it is. This rule will hit nine times out of ten. I went ahead, though, about six or seven miles, when I found night was coming on fast; but at this distressing time I saw a little woman streaking it along through the woods like all wrath, and so I cut on too, for I was determined I wouldn't lose sight of her that night any more. I run on till she saw me, and she stopped; for she was as glad to see me as I was to see her, as she was lost as well as me. When I came up to her, who should she be but my little girl, that I had been paying my respects to. She had been out hunting her father's horses, and had missed her way, and had no knowledge where she was, or how far it was to any house, or what

way would take us there. She had been travelling all day, and was mighty tired; and I would have taken her up, and toated her, if it hadn't been that I wanted her just where I could see her all the time, for I thought she looked sweeter than sugar; and by this time I loved her almost well enough to eat her.

At last I came to a path, that I know'd must go somewhere, and so we followed it, till we came to a house, at about dark. Here we staid all night. I set up all night courting; and in the morning we parted. She went to her home, from which we were distant about seven miles, and I to mine, which was ten miles off.

I now turned in to work again; and it was about four weeks before I went back to see her. I continued to go occasionally, until I had worked long enough to pay for my horse, by putting in my gun with my work, to the man I had purchased from; and then I began to count whether I was to be deceived again or not. At our next meeting we set the day for your wedding; and I went to my father's, and made arrangements for an infair, and returned to ask her parents for her. When I got there, the old lady appeared to be mighty wrathy; and when I broached the subject, she looked at me as savage as a meat axe. The old man appeared quite willing, and treated me very clever. But I hadn't been there long, before the old woman as good as ordered me out of her house. I thought I would put her in mind of old times, and see how that would go with her. I told her she had called me her son-in-law before I had attempted to call her my mother-in-law, and I thought she ought to cool off. But her Irish was up too high to do any thing with her, and so I quit trying. All I cared for was, to have her daughter on my side, which I knowed was the case then; but how soon some other fellow might knock my nose out of joint again, I couldn't tell. I however felt rather insulted at the old lady, and I thought I wouldn't get married in her house. And so I told her girl, that I would come the next Thursday, and bring a horse, a bridle, and saddle for her, and she must be ready to go. Her mother declared I shouldn't have her; but I know'd I should, if somebody else didn't get her before Thursday. I then started, bidding them good-day, and went by the house of a justice of the peace, who lived on the way to my father's, and made a bargain with him to marry me.

When Thursday came, all necessary arrangements were made at my father's to receive my wife; and so I took my eldest brother and his wife, and another brother, and a single sister that I had, and two other young men with me, and cut out to her father's

house to get her. We went on, until we got within two miles of the place, where we met a large company that had heard of the wedding, and were waiting. Some of that company went on with my brother and sister, and the young man I had picked out to wait on me. When they got there, they found the old lady as wrathy as ever. However the old man filled their bottle, and the young men returned in a hurry. I then went on with my company and when I arrived I never pretended to dismount from my horse but rode up to the door, and asked the girl if she was ready; and she said she was. I then told her to light on the horse I was leading and she did so. Her father, though, had gone out to the gate, and when I started he commenced persuading me to stay and marry there; that he was entirely willing to the match, and that his wife like most women, had entirely too much tongue; but that I oughtn't to mind her. I told him if she would ask me to stay and marry at her house, I would do so. With that he sent for her, and after they had talked for some time out by themselves, she came to me and looked at me mighty good, and asked my pardon for what she had said, and invited me stay. She said it was the first child she had ever had to marry; and she couldn't bear to see her go off in that way; that if I would light, she would do the best she could for us. I couldn't stand every thing, and so I agreed, and we go down, and went in. I sent off then for my parson, and got married in a short time; for I was afraid to wait long, for fear of another defeat. We had as good treatment as could be expected; and that night all went on well. The next day we cut out for my father's where we met a large company of people, that had been waiting a day and a night for our arrival. We passed the time quite merrily until the company broke up; and having gotten my wife, I thought I was completely made up, and needed nothing more in the whole world. But I soon found this was all a mistake—for now having a wife, I wanted every thing else; and, worse than all, I had nothing to give for it.

I remained a few days at my father's, and then went back to my new father-in-law's; where, to my surprise, I found my old Irish mother in the the finest humour in the world.

She gave us two likely cows and calves, which though it was a small marriage-portion, was still better than I had expected, and indeed, it was about all I ever got. I rented a small farm and cabin and went to work; but I had much trouble to find out a plan to get any thing to put in my house. At this time, my good friend the Quaker came forward to my assistance, and gave me an orde

to a store for fifteen dollars' worth of such things as my little wife might choose. With this, we fixed up pretty grand, as we thought, and allowed to get on very well. My wife had a good wheel, and knowed exactly how to use it. She was also a good weaver, as most of the Irish are, whether men or women; and being very industrious with her wheel, she had, in little or no time, a fine web of cloth, ready to make up; and she was good at that too, and at almost any thing else that a woman could do.

We worked on for some years, renting ground, and paying high rent, until I found it wasn't the thing it was cracked up to be; and that I couldn't make a fortune at it just at all. So I concluded to quit it, and cut out for some new country.

THE RUN ON THE CHEROKEE STRIP[1]

By Marquis James

From my mother I learned of Papa's own part in the race. It was the kind of story that Mama, with her love of horses, would tell with relish.

Especially for the Run, Papa had bought a race horse in El Reno. It was wind-broken but otherwise a sound and strong animal, capable of carrying my father's more than two hundred pounds.

"In his young days your father was a real fancy rider," Mama would say. "And for a man of his size very easy on a horse."

This was no small tribute. My mother was about as accomplished a judge of riding as any woman in our part of the country.

The Run was a young man's undertaking. My father was crowding forty-nine, a good twenty years older than the average man who entered the race on horseback with serious intentions of reaching Enid in time to stake anything. A year and a half of law practice in Old Oklahoma and the Indian nations had made him fairly used to the saddle again. Nevertheless, he took three weeks to condition himself and to find out what he and his horse could do. He knew the ropes well enough to get himself the best possible place on the starting line—smack on the Chisholm Trail, just north of Hennessey, in Old Oklahoma.

You could begin your race anywhere you could get to on one of the four borders of the Strip, which was about a hundred and

[1]From *The Cherokee Strip: A Tale of an Oklahoma Boyhood*, 1945. Reprinted by permission of the Viking Press, publishers.

sixty-five miles east and west by fifty-eight miles north and south. Papa picked the Hennessey section because it lay closest Enid, which he figured would be *the* town of the Strip. There was also the Trail to follow. It made for easier riding and led straight to the desired townside. On a prairie, experience is necessary to preserve a sense of direction.

Mama's understanding was that Papa spent about three days and nights on the line, holding his place. The wonder is the wait wasn't longer, considering the premium on places in the neighborhood of the Trail. I have heard men tell of spending three weeks on the line. Probably they were with covered-wagon outfits, but, unless close to water, they must have got pretty tired of it. The sheets of some of the wagons were scrawled with notices of intention such as "Oklahoma or Bust." Substituting "Texas" or "Oregon," the phrase had been western usage for a good fifty years.

The line was patrolled by soldiers to prevent anyone from crossing over before the opening gun. The country had been evacuated by the cattle outfits which formerly leased it from the Indians. Excepting land-office and post-office staffs and soldiers on the site of each county seat, the Strip was depopulated. That was the theory, and it came tolerably close to being the fact. Nobody knows how many sooners did manage to hide out in the promised land before the opening gun was fired, but probably not more than you would find trying to obtain their ends by illegal means in any collection of a hundred thousand persons. . . .

After a man had staked a claim he had to "file" at the nearest land office. In order to file he was required to exhibit an evidence of registration permitting him to make the Run in the first place. Registration slips were issued from booths along the line. It was in no way difficult for a prospective sooner who knew the country to register a week before the Run and sneak up a draw through the thinly patrolled line. He could camp in the blackjacks west of Enid, for instance, and ride out with the first honest comers—as Mr. Wilcox suspected the man in light blue overalls had done. A cavalry troop encamped on the Enid site had reconnoitered the surrounding country for three weeks. Though the lieutenant in command was sure a number of sooners had eluded him they must have formed a minute proportion of the whole body of settlers.

The Hennessey stretch of the line broke five minutes before the official gun. Somebody may have discharged a firearm by accident. My father was in the saddle and ready. Waiting only to see that

there was no turning back the tide, he, too, set off, keeping to the Chisholm Trail and reining his horse to a pace it could maintain for fifteen or sixteen miles and have a spurt left for an emergency.

The Chisholm Trail was the name cowmen gave to the Oklahoma section of the Abilene Trail, greatest of the southwestern cattle thoroughfares. It ran from San Antonio, Texas, to the railway terminus at Abilene, Kansas, a distance of eighteen hundred miles. Though little used for cattle drives since the completion of the Rock Island Railroad through the Cherokee Strip in 1889, the famous prairie road was still distinct. Like a carelessly laid ribbon, which your eye would lose in the dips and pick up in the rises of the undulating plain, the Oklahoma part stretched almost due north. On level places it was like several ribbons side by side. These markings were the Trail's core, made by the wheels of chuck wagons, calf wagons, freighters and stages. When wheels and hoofs wore through the sod, creating a "high center," teamsters would start a new road alongside the old. For two or three hundred years on either side of these ruts the grass had been beaten down by the feet of the cattle. This on level stretches. To ford a stream or cross a draw the Trail narrowed.

The race was going well for my father. At first many riders and some drivers passed him; but this he had counted on. In the fullness of time, without increasing the pace of his horse, he began to pass them. When Papa calculated that he had gone about fifteen miles he was feeling the strain, and his horse was feeling it. Ahead of him were perhaps fifty riders in sight whom he doubted his ability to pass. (Fifty out of fifteen thousand starters from Hennessey.)

Glancing to the east my father saw the top of a distant string of trees. That meant a stream, an asset of great value to a claim: also an asset of great value to my father, who liked trees. They were the thing he missed most on the plains. Turning his horse from the Trail, he crossed the Rock Island track and the bed of a dry creek. He urged his tiring mount up the rise. On the other side he saw only a shallow draw, its naked sides exposing coarse sandy soil tinted from red to orange. Was this a wild-goose chase? Holding a northeast course he made for the next rise. He was traveling over short-grass prairie, knobby-surfaced and with washes of bare red soil: a good place for a horse, especially a tired, wind-broken horse, its breath coming in rasps, to stumble; and no good to grow any-

thing. The crest of this second rise brought a welcome sight into view: the trees he had seen from the Trail; and beyond them more trees.

Watering the roots of the first trees was a disappointing stream, hardly more than a yard wide. (This was the driest season of the year.) But better trees were beyond; indeed, what seemed a veritable forest, in terms of the plains, with a noble green mass—surely the granddaddy of all the trees in the Cherokee Strip—dominating the whole. The first of these trees were soon reached. The creek was wider there: ten or twelve feet across. The illusion of a grove had been caused by the way the creek curved in the shape of an S. Papa followed the course of the stream in the direction of the Big Tree. He crossed the creek once and found that, to reach the Big Tree, he must cross again or double a loop. He started to double the loop and came upon a steep ravine. The ravine wouldn't have been much to head, but Papa didn't take the time. Precious minutes had been lost feeling his way toward the trees. On the next fold of the prairie to the south other riders were in sight. Unseen riders might be coming up the draws. Papa wanted that creek, flowing in the shape of an S with good bottom land in the loops; and he wanted the Big Tree. His horse barely made the steep yonder side of the ravine. A few rods farther, at the high point on our pasture, luxuriant in red top, Papa dismounted and set his stake on what proved to be the Southeast Quarter of Section 17, Township 22, Range 6 West of the Indian Meridian.

It was 12:53 P.M., September 16, 1893. As the Hennessey line had broken at 11:55, my father had ridden seventeen miles in fifty-eight minutes without injuring his horse. A note of pride would touch Mama's tone as she spoke the last four words. Walter Cook covered eighteen miles in fifty to fifty-five minutes—he carried no watch and no one seems to have timed him exactly. . . .

Having driven his stake, Papa set up a pup tent to which he affixed an American flag. I would like to know who gave him that flag, which was the last thing my father would ever have thought of taking along. From the tent he could see almost the entire claim, barring the East Draw and where the bluff hid the creek. He removed his saddle and, leading his horse so it would cool off gradually, began a tour of his estimated boundaries—probably looking for the markers. In the East Bottom he found a man preparing to set his stake. Cases of lead poisoning developed from a number of such meetings that day. But this man was no sooner or intentional

claim-jumper. He rode with Papa to higher ground and took a look at the tent and the flag.

"You beat me out, stranger," said the man. "I'll strike eastward a piece."

Papa wished him luck, and never saw the man again.

NARRATIVES OF FACT AND FICTION COMPARED

The two selections given below (pages 356–360) illustrate the difference between narrative of fact and narrative of fiction. They are chosen for this purpose because both deal with the same episode —namely, General Braddock's rejection, during his march against Fort Duquesne, of the proffered services of the famous "Captain Jack," a frontiersman of the Pennsylvania border. The episode has been treated, or at least noticed, by various chroniclers, biographers, and historians. In the two selections given here we have opportunity to make an interesting comparison between the procedure of a good, if somewhat old-fashioned, biographer and a modern novelist, both of whom utilize the same source material.

Washington Irving's treatment of the episode is narrative of fact. To Irving, the incident is necessarily a minor part of the long historical account of Braddock's defeat which he gives in his *Life of George Washington*. Irving is interested mainly in relating and explaining Braddock's tragic campaign, especially in its bearing on the career of George Washington. To him, therefore, Captain Jack's appearance at Braddock's camp and Braddock's rejection of his aid are merely facts to be recorded among other relevant facts. His aim is to discover the facts, to authenticate them, to combine them so as to reconstitute the actual order of events, with whatever explanation and interpretation may be needed. Irving is not particularly interested in arousing the reader's sympathy for Captain Jack as an individual. He makes no attempt to dramatize the episode or to evoke the illusion of reality by creating tension and setting forth exciting circumstantial details. His narrative is generalized. His descriptions and characterizations are conventional. He makes little attempt to persuade the reader to "see" Captain Jack. As a biog-

rapher, however, Irving is under obligation to prove that Captain Jack is authentic—that he really existed. Irving does this by footnotes which refer the reader to an early Pennsylvania newspaper (Hazard's *Register of Pennsylvania*) and which quote from this source.

In Hervey Allen's historical novel, *Bedford Village,* this same Captain Jack is an important character. Captain Jack's encounter with the British general is treated as a revealing episode in the personal history of a valiant but rather mysterious Indian fighter. Allen's account is fiction, built up around a core of historical fact.

The fictional account is a simple but sharply dramatized bit of action, with the narrative focused on Captain Jack. It is so written that the sympathetic interest of the reader is turned toward the frontiersman. Instead of Irving's three brief paragraphs of generalized narrative, we have an episode rich with circumstantial details —a sequence of closely conected small actions which reach a decisive point near the end of the episode. Instead of Irving's conventionalized descriptions—"looking almost like a band of Indians" . . . "received him . . . in his usual stiff and stately manner"—we have the concrete details of Captain Jack's Indian-like appearance. We witness the effects of his formidable appearance upon Braddock and his officers. We visualize, through the acts and spoken words of the two chief characters, the clash of different personalities.

It may be noted, too, that in this episode Hervey Allen prefers to treat Captain Jack alone and to omit temporarily all mention of his followers. And Washington, who is a major personage in Irving's narrative of fact, appears but briefly in Allen's narrative of fiction. Allen may thus have taken a slight liberty with "facts" as such, or with the "values" of history. But the license is justifiable. The novelist wishes to fix attention positively and warmly upon Captain Jack as an individual. Allen, as writer of fiction, is not interested in establishing facts as such. He wishes to construct a narrative that will enable us to imagine Captain Jack as he appeared in this striking and by no means unimportant incident. His narrative is authentic in its own way to the degree that it establishes verisimilitude and evokes for us in dramatic form the sense of the real presence of the actors in the scene.

BRADDOCK'S APPROACH TO FORT DUQUESNE[1]

By Washington Irving

On the 10th of June, Braddock set off from Fort Cumberland with his aides-de-camp, and others of his staff, and his body-guard of light horse. Sir Peter Halket, with his brigade, had marched three days previously; and a detachment of six hundred men, under the command of Colonel Chapman, and the supervision of Sir John St. Clair, had been employed upwards of ten days in cutting down trees, removing rocks, and opening a road.

The march over the mountain proved, as Washington had foretold, a "tremendous undertaking." It was with difficulty the heavily laden wagons could be dragged up the steep and rugged roads, newly made, or imperfectly repaired. Often they extended for three or four miles in a straggling and broken line, with the soldiers so dispersed, in guarding them, that an attack on any side would have thrown the whole in confusion. It was the dreary region of the great Savage Mountain, and the "Shades of Death" that was again made to echo with the din of arms.

What outraged Washington's notions of the abstemious frugality suitable to campaigning in the "backwoods," was the great number of horses and wagons required by the officers for the transportation of their baggage, camp equipage, and a thousand articles of artificial necessity. Simple himself in his tastes and habits, and manfully indifferent to personal indulgences, he almost doubted whether such sybarites in the camp could be efficient in the field.

By the time the advanced corps had struggled over two mountains, and through the intervening forest, and reached (16th June) the Little Meadows, where Sir John St. Clair had made a temporary camp, General Braddock had become aware of the difference between campaigning in a new country, or on the well-beaten battle-grounds of Europe. He now of his own accord turned to Washington for advice, though it must have been a sore trial to his pride to seek it of so young a man; but he had by this time sufficient proof of his sagacity, and his knowledge of the frontier.

Thus unexpectedly called on, Washington gave his counsel with becoming modesty, but with his accustomed clearness. There was just now an opportunity to strike an effective blow at Fort Duquesne, but it might be lost by delay. The garrison, according to

[1]From Irving's *Life of George Washington.*

credible reports, was weak; large reinforcements and supplies, which were on their way, would be detained by the drought, which rendered the river by which they must come low and unnavigable. The blow must be struck before they could arrive. He advised the general, therefore, to divide his forces; leave one part to come on with the stores and baggage, and all the cumbrous appurtenances of an army, and to throw himself in the advance with the other part, composed of his choicest troops, lightened of everything superfluous that might impede a rapid march.

His advice was adopted. Twelve hundred men selected out of all the companies, and furnished with ten field-pieces, were to form the first division, their provisions and other necessaries to be carried on pack-horses. The second division, with all the stores, munitions, and heavy baggage, was to be brought on by Colonel Dunbar.

The least practicable part of the arrangement was with regard to the officers of the advance. Washington had urged a retrenchment of their baggage and camp equipage, that as many of their horses as possible might be used as pack-horses. Here was the difficulty. Brought up, many of them, in fashionable and luxurious life, or the loitering indulgence of country quarters, they were so encumbered with what they considered indispensable necessaries, that out of two hundred and twelve horses generally appropriated to their use, not more than a dozen could be spared by them for the public service. Washington, in his own case, acted up to the advice he had given. He retained no more clothing and effects with him than would about half fill a portmanteau, and gave up his best steed as a pack-horse—which he never heard of afterwards.[1]

During the halt at Little Meadows, Captain Jack and his band of forest rangers, whom Croghan had engaged at Governor Morris' suggestion, made their appearance in the camp; armed and equipped with rifle, knife, hunting-shirts, leggings, and moccasins, and looking almost like a band of Indians as they issued from the woods.

The captain asked an interview with the general, by whom, it would seem, he was not expected. Braddock received him in his tent, in his usual stiff and stately manner. The "Black Rifle" spoke of himself and his followers as men inured to hardships, and accustomed to deal with Indians, who preferred stealth and stratagem to open warfare. He requested his company should be employed as a reconnoitering party to beat up the Indians in their lurking-places and ambuscades.

Braddock, who had a sovereign contempt for the chivalry of the

[1]Letter to J. Augustine Washington. Sparks, II, 81. [Irving's note.]

woods, and despised their boasted strategy, replied to the hero of the Pennsylvania settlements in a manner to which he had not been accustomed. "There was time enough," he said, "for making arrangements; and he had experienced troops, on whom he could completely rely for all purposes."

Captain Jack withdrew, indignant at so haughty a reception, and informed his leathern-clad followers of his rebuff. They forthwith shouldered their rifles, turned their backs upon the camp, and, headed by the captain, departed in Indian file through the woods, for the usual scenes of their exploits, where men knew their value, the banks of the Juniata or the Conococheague.[1]

CAPTAIN JACK MEETS GENERAL BRADDOCK[2]

By Hervey Allen

In the year 1755, in the early summer when the British army advancing against Fort Duquesne was only a few miles west of Frederick, Maryland, but already tangled in the wilderness, a sinister figure emerged from the forests at twilight and demanded to be taken to the commanding general. He would tell neither his name nor his mission. It was Captain Jack, his face blackened for murder at midnight, his belt fringed with dangling scalps, and his already legendary rifle nursed in his left arm with a composite epitaph of nicks upon its stalk. In the company of a sergeant he passed between the campfires of evening towards the tent of the general, which stood on a small knoll.

Captain Jack bore a letter from Benjamin Franklin, and he was presented by Colonel Washington to General Edward Braddock about the time the general and his staff were sitting down to mess. The staff, dressed in scarlet and gold lace, looked at this apparition from the woods with astonishment and horror. Even the younger officers, usually inclined to laugh, found nothing funny in the grim frontiersman. They were even astonished that he spoke the same language they did.

[1]On the Conococheague and Juniata is left the history of their exploits. At one time you may hear of the band near Fort Augusta, next at Fort Franklin, then at Loudon, then at Juniata—rapid were the movements of this hardy band.—Hazard's *Reg. Penn.*, IV, 390; also V, 194. [Irving's note.]

[2]From *Bedford Village*, by Hervey Allen. Copyright, 1944, by Hervey Allen, and reprinted by permission of Rinehart & Company, Inc., publishers.

"This is the man whose reputation I have enlarged to you, sir," said Colonel Washington. "Far west of the mountains, which we soon hope to cross, the cries of Indian children are stilled by the syllables of his name." Colonel Washington then withdrew, leaving Captain Jack alone with the general. The colonel had already learned that his presence might prejudice as well as predispose.

The general shook the hand of the savage figure presented to him, not wholeheartedly. He could not conceal his astonishment and reluctance. In any event, he regarded handshaking as barbarous. And the mien of Captain Jack was anything but cordial, neither was it subservient or respectful. The general felt repulsed. He was angry before a word passed between them. He was not in a good mood anyway, as he had been forced to give up his coach that very afternoon and to send it back to the governor at Annapolis. What kind of a campaign was it going to be in which a general could not even sleep in his coach! Captain Jack seemed gloomily to personify the grim and barbarous hardships ahead. The general glowered at him.

He then read the letter in which Franklin urged him strongly to retain Captain Jack as the leader of advance rangers. Before he reached the end his indignation rose. He had not thought of having any advance rangers at all. Mr. Franklin was helpful, but who was he to give military advice to a veteran British general? The terror of the name of English regulars would clear the way for the army. Franklin seemed to think they might be surprised, might even suffer defeat! "You are overconfident, I opine," read the general. His gorge rose.

"Humph, humph," said he, "pshaw!"

He put the letter under a candlestick, and looked up at Captain Jack.

"So you wish to serve his Majesty?" he asked.

"You have read Mr. Franklin's letter, general?" replied Captain Jack, restraining another reply with difficulty.

"I have, sir!" shouted the general, turning scarlet above his collar. He snatched it up again, rose, and led the way out of the tent followed by Captain Jack. The mess were now all regarding the general uneasily. Braddock choked. . . .

"And my reply," shouted he at Captain Jack, "is that his Majesty's troops can do without your eminent services, and still conquer for a' that"—he rustled Franklin's letter angrily. There was a pause while for a moment the general and the woodsmen glowered at each other.

"Farewell, sir," said Captain Jack prophetically.

"By God, Halket, you'd think *I'd* been dismissed," complained Braddock to one of his majors as he sat down at the mess. "I'll have to instruct Colonel Washington not to bring low characters like that to headquarters."

"A portent, a grisly portent from the woods," said Sir Peter Halket, and shivered uncomfortably.

"Nonsense, damned impudence!" snorted the general, crumpling up Franklin's letter. He tossed it into the fire kindled before his tent and began to eat heartily. . . .

NARRATIVES OF FICTION: IMAGINED ACTION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Another type of fictional narrative is represented in novels and stories that have a definite *locus* as to time and place, but that deal with wholly imaginary characters taking part in imagined actions. Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* deals with events and scenes of World War I in Italy; but though, to this extent, it has a "historical background," it is not a "historical novel." No historical personages appear in the novel. The hero, Lieutenant Frederick Henry, an American officer serving with an ambulance unit on the Italian front, is an imaginary character, and although he is represented as being present during certain actual events—such as the retreat from Caporetto—the story of his participation in those events is fictional, not "real" in a matter-of-fact sense. The "historical background" itself—the significant physical details of war on the Italian front—may seem "authentic," and doubtless Hemingway took pains to render them accurately. But his real interest is in presenting the significant aspects of one tragic human experience—the truth of art, rather than the truth of history. In the following selection, which is well worth study as a closely organized and subtly presented narrative unit, we see Lieutenant Henry at a critical moment, when he is mistaken for a German agent in Italian uniform and is in danger of being summarily shot by the Italian battle police who are striving to check the retreat. Note that the action is related from the Lieutenant's point of view, both in terms of his physical sensations and of his mental reactions to the crisis. Suspense is maintained, great ten-

sion is created, and the extreme isolation of the Lieutenant is emphasized by his being depicted as one of a group of officers who, in turn, are harshly examined and inexorably sentenced to be shot.

THE LIEUTENANT ESCAPES[1]

By Ernest Hemingway

Before daylight we reached the bank of the Tagliamento and followed down along the flooded river to the bridge where all the traffic was crossing.

"They ought to be able to hold at this river," Piani said. In the dark the flood looked high. The water swirled and it was wide. The wooden bridge was nearly three-quarters of a mile across, and the river, that usually ran in narrow channels in the wide stony bed far below the bridge, was close under the wooden planking. We went along the bank and then worked our way into the crowd that were crossing the bridge. Crossing slowly in the rain a few feet above the flood, pressed tight in the crowd, the box of an artillery caisson just ahead, I looked over the side and watched the river. Now that we could not go our own pace I felt very tired. There was no exhilaration in crossing the bridge. I wondered what it would be like if a plane bombed it in the daytime.

"Piani," I said.

"Here I am, Tenente." He was a little ahead in the jam. No one was talking. They were all trying to get across as soon as they could: thinking only of that. We were almost across. At the far end of the bridge there were officers and carabinieri standing on both sides flashing lights. I saw them silhouetted against the sky-line. As we came close to them I saw one of the officers point to a man in the column. A carabiniere went in after him and came out holding the man by the arm. He took him away from the road. We came almost opposite them. The officers were scrutinizing every one in the column, sometimes speaking to each other, going forward to flash a light in some one's face. They took some one else out just before we came opposite. I saw the man. He was a lieutenant-colonel. I saw the stars in the box on his sleeve as they flashed a light on him. His hair was gray and he was short and fat. The carabiniere pulled him in behind the line of officers. As we came opposite I saw one or two of them look at me. Then one pointed at me and spoke to

[1]From *A Farewell to Arms*. Copyright, 1929, 1949, by Charles Scribner's Sons. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

a carabiniere. I saw the carabiniere start for me, come through the edge of the column toward me, then felt him take me by the collar.

"What's the matter with you?" I said and hit him in the face. I saw his face under the hat, upturned mustaches and blood coming down his cheek. Another one dove in toward us.

"What's the matter with you?" I said. He did not answer. He was watching a chance to grab me. I put my arm behind me to loosen my pistol.

"Don't you know you can't touch an officer?"

The other one grabbed me from behind and pulled my arm up so that it twisted in the socket. I turned with him and the other one grabbed me around the neck. I kicked his shins and got my left knee into his groin.

"Shoot him if he resists," I heard some one say.

"What's the meaning of this?" I tried to shout but my voice was not very loud. They had me at the side of the road now.

"Shoot him if he resists," an officer said. "Take him over back."

"Who are you?"

"You'll find out."

"Who are you?"

"Battle police," another officer said.

"Why don't you ask me to step over instead of having one of these airplanes grab me?"

They did not answer. They did not have to answer. They were battle police.

"Take him back there with the others," the first officer said. "You see. He speaks Italian with an accent."

"So do you, you——," I said.

"Take him back with the others," the first officer said. They took me down behind the line of officers below the road toward a group of people in a field by the river bank. As we walked toward them shots were fired. I saw flashes of the rifles and heard the reports. We came up to the group. There were four officers standing together, with a man in front of them with a carabiniere on each side of him. A group of men were standing guarded by carabinieri. Four other carabinieri stood near the questioning officers, leaning on their carbines. They were wide-hatted carabinieri. The two who had me shoved me in with the group waiting to be questioned. I looked at the man the officers were questioning. He was the fat gray-haired little lientenant-colonel they had taken out of the column. The questioners had all the efficiency, coldness and command of themselves of Italians who are firing and are not being fired on.

"Your brigade?"

He told them.

"Regiment?"

He told them.

"Why are you not with your regiment?"

He told them.

"Do you not know that an officer should be with his troops?"

He did.

That was all. Another officer spoke.

"It is you and such as you that have let the barbarians onto the sacred soil of the fatherland."

"I beg your pardon," said the lieutenant-colonel.

"It is because of treachery such as yours that we have lost the fruits of victory."

"Have you ever been in a retreat?" the lieutenant-colonel asked.

"Italy should never retreat."

We stood there in the rain and listened to this. We were facing the officers and the prisoner stood in front and a little to one side of us.

"If you are going to shoot me," the lieutenant-colonel said, "please shoot me at once without further questioning. The questioning is stupid." He made the sign of the cross. The officers spoke together. One wrote something on a pad of paper.

"Abandoned his troops, ordered to be shot," he said.

Two carabinieri took the lieutenant-colonel to the river bank. He walked in the rain, an old man with his hat off, a carabiniere on either side. I did not watch them shoot him but I heard the shots. They were questioning some one else. This officer too was separated from his troops. He was not allowed to make an explanation. He cried when they read the sentence from the pad of paper, and they were questioning another when they shot him. They made a point of being intent on questioning the next man while the man who had been questioned before was being shot. In this way there was obviously nothing they could do about it. I did not know whether I should wait to be questioned or make a break now. I was obviously a German in Italian uniform. I saw how their minds worked; if they had minds and if they worked. They were all young men and they were saving their country. The second army was being reformed beyond the Tagliamento. They were executing officers of the rank of major and above who were separated from their troops. They were also dealing summarily with German agitators in Italian uniform. They wore steel helmets. Only two of us had steel helmets.

Some of the carabinieri had them. The other carabinieri wore the wide hat. Airplanes we called them. We stood in the rain and were taken out one at a time to be questioned and shot. So far they had shot every one they had questioned. The questioners had that beautiful detachment and devotion to stern justice of men dealing in death without being in any danger of it. They were questioning a full colonel of a line regiment. Three more officers had just been put in with us.

"Where was his regiment?"

I looked at the carabinieri. They were looking at the newcomers. The others were looking at the colonel. I ducked down, pushed between two men, and ran for the river, my head down. I tripped at the edge and went in with a splash. The water was very cold and I stayed under as long as I could. I could feel the current swirl me and I stayed under until I thought I could never come up. The minute I came up I took a breath and went down again. It was easy to stay under with so much clothing and my boots. When I came up the second time I saw a piece of timber ahead of me and reached it and held on with one hand. I kept my head behind it and did not even look over it. I did not want to see the bank. There were shots when I ran and shots when I came up the first time. I heard them when I was almost above water. There were no shots now. The piece of timber swung in the current and I held it with one hand. I looked at the bank. It seemed to be going by very fast. There was much wood in the stream. The water was very cold. We passed the brush of an island above the water. I held onto the timber with both hands and let it take me along. The shore was out of sight now.

THE SHORT STORY

Many books have been written about the short story, and many formulas have been devised to explain story technique. The books are interesting to read. The formulas are ingenious and sometimes plausible. But neither the books nor the formulas will give much real help to the writer of short stories. No other form in our literature, except the novel, is quite so variable as the short story. It is continually escaping from the bounds to which theorists would confine it. Nevertheless, like all other literary forms, it has its principles of composition. These principles can be defined and illustrated, but they are not rules to be learned and applied mechanically. They cannot be mastered—or hardly even understood—until the aspiring

writer has attempted to follow them in stories of his own and has learned through trial and error what the principles really mean. They are not theories. They are true principles—guiding principles—derived from the successes and failures of experienced writers of short stories.

The Short Story Defined. A perfectly acceptable definition of a short story probably cannot be devised. The range of the short story, both as to subject-matter and form, is best realized from close acquaintance from numerous good examples. But some characteristic features of the short story can be described. These mark the approximate limits of the *genre*.

It is important to remember that the short story as we know it developed out of the oral tale. The oral tale was *told*—and is still often told today—to a listening audience, generally by a practiced teller of tales. Its medium was the spoken word. It was carried in memory and transmitted from person to person, and from generation to generation, through the remembered spoken words only. Very largely because of these conditions, the folk tale as it survives to us follows highly conventional patterns. Its subject-matter is nearly always either marvelous or humorous. It is never "realistic" or "psychological" as our written stories are. The folk tale delights in queer or unusual events, beyond the pale of ordinary life. But its characters are not developed as individuals; they are stereotypes. A folk tale that treats ordinary life is likely to be a humorous story or one that illustrates some homely truth. Its plot is nearly always sharply defined and involves physical action. The characters are symmetrically arranged. The development of the plot is likely to be symmetrical also. The folk tale delights in—and needs—a great deal of repetition, an obvious balance, easy and conventional formulas of description and narration. It is prone to indulge in generalized narrative. Since its medium is the spoken word, its idiom is colloquial. It speaks with the tongue of the people, not in the refined and self-conscious language of the educated classes.

The short story first appears in literary history as a conscious and somewhat refined imitation of the folk tale. The next historical stage is a deliberate exploitation and extension of the narrative effects of the folk tale. As soon as artists realize that their medium is the written or printed word and no longer the spoken word, they

explore the literary possibilities of the form. The tale then becomes the short story, a completely literary type, adapted to reception by readers rather than by listeners. This process of historical development is analogous in many respects to the development of the so-called "literary ballad" from the true folk ballad. An old story like Irving's "Rip Van Winkle" is a literary imitation of a folk tale. It stands in about the same relationship to the folk tale as Walter Scott's "Proud Maisie" would stand to a true ballad. But a story by William Faulkner or Ernest Hemingway is at as great a distance from the folk tale as Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" and Coleridge's "The Ancient Mariner" are from an old ballad like "Sir Patrick Spens."

The oral tradition, however, is very powerful. In the United States, where it has remained a part of our culture, the popularity of the oral tale has been so great that even to this day it strongly influences the practice of many very sophisticated writers of short stories. These "borrow" some of the effects of the folk tale, especially its racy colloquial idiom. But they borrow and exploit only those effects which can be used successfully in a *written* story. If they are skillful in so doing, the story is a success. On the other hand, *a naïve or unconscious echoing* of the method of the folk tale—as in the use of a rigid plot, generalized narrative, stereotyped characters, forced ending—is a certain mark of the novice, and is sure to bring failure. Such practice does violence to the medium of the short story—the written word.

The first limitation upon the short story is, therefore, its medium. It can achieve only those effects which can be achieved by written or printed words. Although it may be read aloud—and should be —it does not depend, for its survival, upon recital from memory by tale tellers. It cannot rely upon voice, gestures, rhythmic repetition to supply a meaning that is not in the written words themselves. Its arrangement is a literary arrangement, not an oral arrangement.

The second important limitation upon the short story is its shortness. This term has no valid reference to "length"—that is, mere number of words. It refers to dramatic concentration. In his choice of subject the story writer elects to deal with a situation that can be explored dramatically within brief limits—brief as compared with the limits of a novel or a novelette. The story will then be sufficiently "long" to round out the conflict related in the narrative, yet

not so short as to leave it insufficiently dramatized. At the upper limit of "length" are stories like Conrad's "Heart of Darkness," which is almost a novelette. At the lower limit are some of the stories of Chekhov, Maupassant, O. Henry, Hemingway, which occupy but a few pages of print.

The short story uses all the devices of narrative, but its use of these devices is conditioned by the brevity, or the concentration, of its form. It has plot, characterization, thematic emphasis, setting, as a novel does, but only the kind of plot, the degree of characterization, the sort of theme, the amount of setting that can be adapted to its relatively brief limits. This limitation means, among other things, that a highly complicated plot is not practicable in a short story; that the interest of the story should generally be concentrated in one character, not divided among many characters; that elaborate symbolic treatment, though possible, should ordinarily be avoided; that leisurely description is out of order, except in stories of "atmosphere," in which setting becomes a dominant aspect of the narrative. On the other hand, as compared with the incident or sketch, the short story does have plot, it does dramatize a character rather fully, and it does often have a thematic meaning.

Considered in such terms, then, the short story is that form of prose fiction which achieves a unified and meaningful dramatization of a situation within limits narrower than the limits of novel or novelette.

POINT OF VIEW IN THE SHORT STORY

The point of view from which a story is related must be clearly evident from the beginning of the narrative and must be maintained consistently throughout. Frequently the point of view and the focus of narrative will be identical, but it is important to understand that, although the focus may sometimes be shifted, the point of view cannot, because the structure of the short story is too closely knit and dramatic unity is too important to tolerate such a change.

In a strictly technical sense, there are only two basic types of point of view: (1) the *omniscient* or impersonal point of view; (2) the *limited* or personal point of view. In a story written from the omniscient point of view, the author assumes the role of an all-seeing, all-knowing observer who, without declaring his identity or speaking

in the first person, relates in objective fashion all the events of the story. In a story written from a limited point of view, the author presents the story as if it were being told from the point of view of one of the characters, or of someone who has observed the action. Honoré de Balzac's "Christ in Flanders," Stephen Crane's "The Open Boat," Stephen Vincent Benét's "The Devil and Daniel Webster" are good examples of stories that use the omniscient point of view. Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher," Sherwood Anderson's "I'm a Fool," Ring Lardner's "Haircut" are examples of the limited or personal point of view.

In practice there are certain refinements in the use of these two main types. For example, an author who uses the omniscient point of view may choose to exert his omniscience mainly with regard to one character and to follow his thoughts and actions rather exclusively. The story then takes on some of the character of a first-person narration, although it is actually "told" in the idiom of the third person. Furthermore, a first-person narration may be handled in at least two ways. The narrator of the story may be (1) either the leading character in the story or (2) a minor character whose participation in events is so limited that he almost assumes the role of observer. In Poe's "The Telltale Heart" the leading character is the narrator. In "The Fall of the House of Usher" the narrator is a minor character, a mere visitor to the doomed "house." Another possible variation appears in stories like Hardy's "Tony Kytes," in which the narrator tells a story about events that the narrator knows without having been either direct observer or participant. This device partakes of the manner of the folk tale and tends to merge into the omniscient point of view.

The omniscient point of view offers by far the widest range of possibilities. It allows human events to be brought into full perspective. An author who uses the omniscient point of view with real skill can achieve a fine quality of light and shading, can present a great variety of characters and events, and can render fully and subtly the play of motives, the interrelation of human acts, the whole richness of the human scene.

But such freedom may also create difficulties. The author, being at liberty to reveal any and every aspect of events, may be tempted to wander too far. The story may become diffuse or prolix. The author may find it hard to apply a consistent principle of selection to the

material of his story. He may overemphasize setting, or give undue attention to trivial actions. Worst of all, he may be tempted to intrude his own interpretation of characters and events into what is supposed to be an impersonal account. This intrusion of the author through direct commentary, sometimes addressed to the reader, is common in stories by the older British and American writers. We excuse it in these authors, because their virtues in other respects may make up for the technical fault; but in modern fiction such intrusion is counted a defect, generally a serious defect.

The Visible Author belongs to the days of Scott, Dickens, and Thackeray. In those days it was fashionable to address the "dear reader," and to begin an incident with some such flourish as this: "Let us now follow the bewitching Miss X——— into her boudoir and discover the effect of Mr. Y———'s cruel trifling with her affections." Such things are not done in stories of the twentieth century—not seriously. The author of today must be an Invisible Author. If he intrudes and becomes a Visible Author, even for a moment, the dramatic effect is spoiled, just as if, in a play, the author were to enter upon the stage and instruct the audience about what the actors are doing and saying.

Modern writers of fiction take care to remain "invisible"—that is, not to intrude or seem to intrude an obviously biased interpretation into the narrative. Sometimes they are so anxious to prune away any semblance of an imposed interpretation that their narratives become exceedingly spare and noncommittal. In Hemingway's "The Killers" we are given only the most simple particulars of action and dialogue. The reader must give very shrewd attention to the particulars if he is to discover what the story is about.

When the limited point of view is used, the author automatically becomes invisible, because he is bound to represent the course of events strictly from the point of view of the character chosen as narrator-participant or narrator-observer. A consistent form of dramatization is thus obtained by natural means. The author will represent the action and setting only in terms of the narrator's—or leading character's—awareness of them. The words and actions of other characters, the interpretation of events, the interplay of motives, the clash of forces will be rendered exclusively from one point of view.

The limited point of view thus affords a principle of selection

which makes the composition of the story relatively easy as compared with the composition of a story from an omniscient point of view. It is as if the author need not take full responsibility for deciding what to say, or how much to say. His narrator-participant or narrator-observer takes that responsibility. The story then, in a fashion, "tells itself."

If the narrator's or principal character's view of events is fumbling and imperfect, that is not the author's fault. The narrator's imperfections may even be used to advantage of the story, for he may unconsciously reveal, or may be made to reveal, more than he seemingly intends. The reader, quick to seize such unconscious revelation, will take pleasure in his superiority over the narrator. He will then exercise independent judgment upon the events related by the narrator, and thus the author, although bound to the limited point of view, will have some of the advantages of the omniscient point of view, without its handicaps. In the first sentence of Poe's "The Tell-tale Heart" the narrator says: "True!—nervous,—very, very dreadfully nervous I have been and am! but why *will* you say that I am mad?" The reader knows or suspects that this narrator, who is also the principal character, is indeed mad. With this superior knowledge he is able to exert objective judgment upon the extraordinary recital of events that follows.

The limited point of view also has its disadvantages. The limitation upon what can be seen and heard narrows the range of the story. Only one person's thoughts can be revealed. One person's motives, judgments, desires, prejudices are always in the foreground, and we get a "firsthand" account of events only within those limits. All the rest is "second hand": it must be inferred or comes to the reader with the coloring of the narrator's views. Most modern writers are ready to accept these possible losses because the limited point of view affords them a device for obtaining clear, sharp dramatization, for bringing the entire story into focus, and for organizing its action and establishing its tone.

OTHER FEATURES OF THE SHORT STORY

The major difficulties involved in the composition of a short story center in two questions: (1) *What is the story about?* (2) *Whose story is it?* Only when the author is able to answer those questions

will he be able to shape his story—that is, to answer such related questions as: Where ought I to begin? How shall I end the story? What point of view shall I use? What arrangement of events is best? What special technical means shall I use?

The question, *What is the story about?* directs attention to the central meaning, or theme, of the story. Stated in an another form, it is: What aspect of human experience is revealed by the struggle between contending forces which is depicted in this story? The answer to this question gives the "theme" of the story—the "idea" it contains, the possible "generalization" or "truth" to which all the elements of the story contribute. Poe had in mind such a thematic, unifying organization when he wrote, in his criticism of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales,* his famous statement of what he believed to be the great main principle of story-writing:

> A skilful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single *effect* to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents—he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tend not to the outbringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design.

Kipling's story "The Man Who Was" is not "about" a polo game, or a Russian officer's love of strong drink, or the conflict between Russian and British imperialism on the Indian frontier, although all those matters are a part of the scheme of the story. It is about the power of regimental tradition in the British army—tradition which developed a loyalty so strong that it could survive the extremest trials. This habit of loyalty also meant loyalty to Great Britain, and the survival of loyalty in that poor wreck, "the man who was," suggests to us, indirectly and symbolically, something very important about human nature itself. Every part of the story contributes to this theme.

The second question—*Whose story is it?*—relates to what has been called "the focus of character."[1] The answer to this question determines who is to be the Protagonist, or main character, of the story—that is, the person to whom the events related are of crucial impor-

[1]As in Brooks and Warren, *Understanding Fiction,* pp. 586–588.

tance. The selection of the Protagonist may also influence, or even determine, the point of view of the story. Naturally the question *Whose story is it?* also identifies the characters and forces that are either "for" or "against" the main character. The principal force or character that is "against" the main character is the Antagonist.

Once an author has answered these two fundamental questions, he is in a position to control the direction of his story and to shape it so that every detail will fall into its right place and will bear its right relationship to every other detail. Writing the story should then become a process of exploring a human situation in such a way that its meaning will be revealed dramatically. It should *not* be a process of imposing upon events a forced schematic arrangement (an artificial "plot") which is not inherent in the events themselves. Good stories are not "made up." Rather they are discovered or apprehended by those who have the capacity for seeing events in a dramatic form. To write a story is to unfold its dramatic nature and to disentangle it from all that is irrelevant.

The *beginning* of a story is extremely important, not merely because it must be so devised as to engage the reader's attention, but also because it fixes the point in time at which a situation is already sufficiently developed to be capable of being dramatized within relatively brief limits. The end must be implied in the beginning—must be latent in it. The point at which to take hold of a story must therefore be a significant point, relatively near the end of the series of events to be set forth. The beginning will necessarily involve a certain amount of "exposition"—that is, the place, the time, the characters must somehow be identified, and the reader must be put in possession of enough information to enable him to answer for himself the questions, *Who? When? Where?* In a skillful dramatic rendition much of this information will be conveyed by inference. It is not necessary for the author to indulge in direct explanation. No definite rule can be laid down, however. The student will do well to consider and analyze the methods of beginning a story that are used by good writers. Generally, he will find, they launch the reader, in the classic phrase, *in medias res.*

The story should then proceed, as if by its own motive power and not by artificial contrivance, through the stages of the action. These, as has been said, will be incidents linked one to another like scenes in a play. They should develop and steadily heighten the tension

created through the dramatic revelation of the opening events. The story must move step by step as the struggle of contending forces is dramatized. What the story writer is rendering by such means may be called, in technical terms, the *complication*. It proceeds until the narrative reaches a decisive moment—the *climax* of the story. Generally the climax will be fairly near the end of the story and will be followed by a scene or two which will constitute the *denouement*, or dramatic conclusion, of the story. In some stories climax and denouement coincide.

According to its dominant tendency, a story may be either a plot story, a character story, or, less often, a story of setting or "atmosphere." But such terms indicate emphasis only. There can be no plot without characters and setting; and no character can be dramatized without at least the vestiges of a narrative design. The basic elements appear in combination. Each is supported by the others.

The prose idiom of a short story is a narrative idiom, which does not resemble the idiom of exposition and argumentation. What it is like can best be learned from close examination of good stories. Again, no general rules can be laid down. The idiom of narrative prose, like the idiom of poetry, achieves its results more through suggestion than through explicit statement. It may seem very matter-of-fact and simple, but it is likely to imply much more than it explicitly says. The story writer, obliged to seek dramatic concentration, must weight his prose with meaning, even when he chooses to speak, as he often does, in the vocabulary of an unlettered person. For him no less than for the poet every word must count, and every word must ring with overtones. He must use not one word too many and yet must have exactly enough. He must catch the inflection of the voice he would render. He must be avid to discover how in sheer words the movement of life may be represented. He must watch the "pace," or rhythm, of his prose. He must deal in images, not in abstractions and generalities. He should avoid needless elaboration and fear undue complexity of construction. The sentences of narrative prose are likely to be straightforward and uncomplicated. They are not clogged with the subordinations and reservations found in expository prose.

The most important thing of all in story writing is to have a story to tell. If you have a story, it is possible to write that story. Yet you may not discover what that story really is or how it ought to be

written until you have not only written it but rewritten it—perhaps several times.

TONY KYTES, THE ARCH-DECEIVER[1]

By Thomas Hardy

"I SHALL never forget Tony's face. 'Twas a little, round, firm, tight face, with a seam here and there, left by the smallpox, but not enough to hurt his looks in a woman's eye, though he'd had it badish when he was a little boy. So very serious looking and unsmiling 'a was, that young man, that it really seemed as if he couldn't laugh at all without great pain to his conscience. He looked very hard at a small speck in your eye when talking to 'ee. And there was no more sign of a whisker or beard on Tony Kytes's face than on the palm of my hand. He used to sing 'The Tailor's Breeches' with a religious manner, as if it were a hymn:

"'*O the petticoats went off, and the breeches they went on!*' and all the rest of the scandalous stuff. He was quite the women's favourite, and in return for their likings he loved 'em in shoals.

"But in course of time Tony got fixed down to one in particular, Milly Richards, a nice, light, tender little thing; and it was soon said that they were engaged to be married. One Saturday he had been to market to do business for his father, and was driving home the waggon in the afternoon. When he reached the foot of the very hill we shall be going over in ten minutes who should he see waiting for him at the top but Unity Sallet, a handsome girl, one of the young women he'd been very tender toward before he'd got engaged to Milly.

"As soon as Tony came up to her she said, 'My dear Tony, will you give me a lift home?'

"'That I will, darling,' said Tony. 'You don't suppose I could refuse 'ee?'

"She smiled a smile, and up she hopped, and on drove Tony.

"'Tony,' she says, in a sort of tender chide, 'why did ye desert me for that other one? In what is she better than I? I should have made 'ee a finer wife, and a more loving one too. 'Tisn't girls that are so easily won at first that are the best. Think how long we've known each other—ever since we were children almost—now haven't we, Tony?'

[1]From *Life's Little Ironies: A Few Crusted Characters*, by Thomas Hardy. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Harper and Brothers.

"'Yes, that we have,' says Tony, a-struck with the truth o't.

"'And you've never seen anything in me to complain of, have ye, Tony? Now tell the truth to me!'

"'I never have, upon my life,' says Tony.

"'And—can you say I'm not pretty, Tony? Now look at me!'

"He let his eyes light upon her for a long while. 'I really can't,' says he. 'In fact, I never knowed you was so pretty before!'

"'Prettier than she?'

"What Tony would have said to that nobody knows, for before he could speak, what should he see ahead, over the hedge past the turning, but a feather he knew well—the feather in Milly's hat—she to whom he had been thinking of putting the question as to giving out the banns that very week.

"'Unity,' says he, as mild as he could, 'here's Milly coming. Now I shall catch it mightily if she sees 'ee riding here with me; and if you get down she'll be turning the corner in a moment, and, seeing 'ee in the road, she'll know we've been coming on together. Now, dearest Unity, will ye, to avoid all unpleasantness, which I know ye can't bear any more than I, will ye lie down in the back part of the waggon, and let me cover you over with the tarpaulin till Milly has passed? It will all be done in a minute. Do!—and I'll think over what we've said; and perhaps I shall put a loving question to you, after all, instead of to Milly. 'Tisn't true that it is all settled between her and me.'

"Well, Unity Sallet agreed, and lay down at the back end of the waggon, and Tony covered her over, so that the waggon seemed to be empty but for the loose tarpaulin; and then he drove on to meet Milly.

"'My dear Tony!' cries Milly, looking up with a pout at him as he came near. 'How long you've been coming home! Just as if I didn't live at Upper Longpuddle at all! And I've come to meet you as you asked me to do, and to ride back with you, and talk over our future home—since you asked me, and I promised. But I shouldn't have come else, Mr. Tony!'

"'Ay, my dear, I did ask ye—to be sure I did, now I think of it—but I had quite forgot it. To ride back with me, did you say, dear Milly?'

"'Well, of course! What can I do else? Surely you don't want me to walk, now I've come all this way?'

"'Oh, no, no! I was thinking you might be going on to town to meet your mother. I saw her there—and she looked as if she might be expecting 'ee.'

"'O no; she's just home. She came across the fields, and so got back before you.'

"'Ah! I didn't know that,' says Tony. And there was no help for it but to take her up beside him.

"They talked on very pleasantly, and looked at the trees, and beasts, and birds, and insects, and at the ploughmen at work in the fields, till presently who should they see looking out of the upper window of a house that stood beside the road they were following, but Hannah Jolliver, another young beauty of the place at that time, and the very first woman that Tony had fallen in love with —before Milly and before Unity, in fact—the one that he had almost arranged to marry instead of Milly. She was a much more dashing girl than Milly Richards, though he'd not thought much of her of late. The house Hannah was looking from was her aunt's.

"'My dear Milly—my coming wife, as I may call 'ee,' says Tony in his modest way, and not so loud that Unity could overhear, 'I see a young woman a-looking out of window, who I think may accost me. The fact is, Milly, she had a notion that I was wishing to marry her, and since she's discovered I've promised another, and a prettier than she, I'm rather afeared of her temper if she sees us together. Now, Milly, would you do me a favour—my coming wife, as I may say?'

"'Certainly, dearest Tony,' says she.

"'Then would ye creep under the empty sacks just here in front of the waggon, and hide there out of sight till we've passed the house? She hasn't seen us yet. You see, we ought to live in peace and good-will since 'tis almost Christmas, and 'twill prevent angry passions rising, which we always should do.'

"'I don't mind, to oblige you, Tony,' Milly said; and though she didn't care much about doing it, she crept under, and crouched down just behind the seat, Unity being snug at the other end. So they drove on till they got near the roadside cottage. Hannah had soon seen him coming, and waited at the window, looking down upon him. She tossed her head a little disdainful and smiled off-hand.

"'Well, aren't you going to be civil enough to ask me to ride home with you!' she says, seeing that he was for driving past with a nod and a smile.

"'Ah, to be sure! What was I thinking of?' said Tony, in a flutter. 'But you seem as if you was staying at your aunt's?'

"'No, I am not,' she said. 'Don't you see I have my bonnet and

jacket on? I have only called to see her on my way home. How can you be so stupid, Tony?'

"'In that case—ah—of course you must come along wi' me,' says Tony, feeling a dim sort of sweat rising up inside his clothes. And he reined in the horse, and waited till she'd come downstairs, and then helped her up beside him. He drove on again, his face as long as a face that was a round one by nature well could be.

"Hannah looked round sideways into his eyes. 'This is nice, isn't it, Tony?' she says. 'I like riding with you.'

"Tony looked back into her eyes. 'And I with you,' he said after a while. In short, having considered her, he warmed up, and the more he looked at her the more he liked her, till he couldn't for the life of him think why he had ever said a word about marriage to Milly or Unity while Hannah Jolliver was in question. So they sat a little closer and closer, their feet upon the footboard and their shoulders touching, and Tony thought over and over again how handsome Hannah was. He spoke tenderer and tenderer, and called her 'dear Hannah' in a whisper at last.

"'You've settled it with Milly by this time, I suppose,' said she.

"'No—no, not exactly.'

"'What? How low you talk, Tony.'

"'Yes—I've a kind of hoarseness. I said, not exactly.'

"'I suppose you mean to?'

"'Well, as to that—' His eyes rested on her face, and hers on his. He wondered how he could have been such a fool as not to follow up Hannah. 'My sweet Hannah!' he burst out, taking her hand, not being really able to help it, and forgetting Milly and Unity, and all the world besides. 'Settled it? I don't think I have!'

"'Hark!' says Hannah.

"'What?' says Tony, letting go her hand.

"'Surely I heard a little sort of screaming squeak under those sacks. Why, you've been carrying corn, and there's mice in this waggon, I declare!' She began to haul up the tails of her gown.

"'Oh, no; 'tis the axle,' said Tony in an assuring way. 'It do go like that sometimes in dry weather.'

"'Perhaps it was. . . . Well now, to be quite honest, dear Tony, do you like her better than me? Because—because, although I've held off so independent, I'll own at last that I do like 'ee, Tony, to tell the truth; and I wouldn't say no if you asked me—you know what.'

"Tony was so won over by this pretty offering mood of a girl

who had been quite the reverse (Hannah had a backward way with her at times, if you can mind) that he just glanced behind, and then whispered very soft, 'I haven't quite promised her, and I think I can get out of it, and ask you that question you speak of.'

"'Throw over Milly?—all to marry me! How delightful!' broke out Hannah, quite loud, clapping her hands.

"At this time there was a real squeak—an angry, spiteful squeak, and afterward a long moan, as if something had broke its heart, and a movement of the empty sacks.

"'Something's there!' said Hannah, starting up.

"'It's nothing, really,' says Tony in a soothing voice, and praying inwardly for a way out of this. 'I wouldn't tell 'ee at first, because I wouldn't frighten 'ee. But, Hannah, I've really a couple of ferrets in a bag under there, for rabbiting, and they quarrel sometimes. I don't wish it knowed, as 'twould be called poaching. . . . Oh, they can't get out, bless you—you are quite safe! And—and—what a fine day it is, isn't it, Hannah, for this time of year? Be you going to market next Saturday? How is your aunt now?' And so on, says Tony, to keep her from talking any more about love in Milly's hearing.

"But he found his work cut out for him, and wondering again how he should get out of this ticklish business, he looked about for a chance. Nearing home he saw his father in a field not far off, holding up his hand as if he wished to speak to Tony.

"'Would you mind taking the reins for a moment, Hannah,' he said, much relieved, 'while I go and find out what father wants?'

"She consented, and away he hastened into the field, only too glad to get breathing time. He found that his father was looking at him with rather a stern eye.

"'Come, come, Tony,' says old Mr. Kytes, as soon as his son was alongside him, 'this won't do, you know.'

"'What?' says Tony.

"'Why, if you mean to marry Milly Richards, do it, and there's an end o't. But don't go driving about the country with Jolliver's daughter and making a scandal. I won't have such things done.'

"'I only asked her—that is, she asked me, to ride home.'

"'She? Why, now, if it had been Milly, 'twould have been quite proper; but you and Hannah Jolliver going about by yourselves—'

"'Milly's there too, father.'

"'Milly? Where?'

"'Under the corn-sacks! Yes, the truth is, father, I've got rather into a nunny-watch, I'm afeared! Unity Sallet is there too—yes, at

the other end, under the tarpaulin. All three are in that waggon, and what to do with 'em I know no more than the dead! The best plan is, as I'm thinking, to speak out loud and plain to one of 'em to kick up a bit of a miff, for certain. Now which would you marry, father, if you was in my place?'

" 'Whichever of 'em did *not* ask to ride with thee.'

" 'That was Milly, I'm bound to say, as she only mounted by my invitation. But Milly—'

" 'Then stick to Milly, she's the best. . . . But look at that!'

"His father pointed toward the waggon. 'She can't hold that horse in. You shouldn't have left the reins in her hands. Run on and take the horse's head, or there'll be some accident to them maids!'

"Tony's horse, in fact, in spite of Hannah's tugging at the reins, had started on his way at a brisk walking pace, being very anxious to get back to the stable, for he had had a long day out. Without another word Tony rushed away from his father to overtake the horse.

"Now of all things that could have happened to wean him from Milly there was nothing so powerful as his father's recommending her. No; it could not be Milly, after all. Hannah must be the one, since he could not marry all three as he longed to do. This he thought while running after the waggon. But queer things were happening inside it.

"It was, of course, Milly who had screamed under the sack-bags, being obliged to let off her bitter rage and shame in that way at what Tony was saying, and never daring to show, for very pride and dread o' being laughed at, that she was in hiding. She became more and more restless, and in twisting herself about, what did she see but another woman's foot and white stocking close to her head. It quite frightened her, not knowing that Unity Sallet was in the waggon likewise. But after the fright was over she determined to get to the bottom of all this, and she crept and crept along the bed of the waggon, under the tarpaulin, like a snake, when lo and behold, she came face to face with Unity.

" 'Well, if this isn't disgraceful!' says Milly in a raging whisper to Unity.

" 'Tis,' says Unity, 'to see you hiding in a young man's waggon like this, and no great character belonging to either of ye!'

" 'Mind what you are saying!' replied Milly, getting louder. 'I am engaged to be married to him, and haven't I a right to be here? What right have you, I should like to know? What has he been

promising you? A pretty lot of nonsense, I expect! But what Tony says to other women is mere wind, and no concern to me!'

" 'Don't you be too sure!' says Unity. 'He's going to have Hannah, and not you, nor me either; I could hear that.'

"Now at these strange voices sounding from under the cloth Hannah was thunderstruck a'most into a swound; and it was just at this time that the horse moved on. Hannah tugged away wildly, not knowing what she was doing; and as the quarrel rose louder and louder Hannah got so horrified that she let go the reins altogether. The horse went on at his own pace, and coming to the corner where we turn round to drop down the hill to Lower Longpuddle he turned too quick, the off wheels went up the bank, the waggon rose sideways till it was quite on edge upon the near axles, and out rolled the three maidens into the road in a heap.

"When Tony came up, frightened and breathless, he was relieved to see that neither of his darlings was hurt, beyond a few scratches from the brambles of the hedge. But he was rather alarmed when he heard how they were going on at one another.

" 'Don't ye quarrel, my dears—don't ye!' says he, taking off his hat out of respect to 'em. And then he would have kissed them all round, as fair and square as a man could, but they were in too much of a taking to let him, and screeched and sobbed till they was quite spent.

" 'Now I'll speak out honest, because I ought to,' says Tony, as soon as he could get heard. 'And this is the truth,' says he. 'I've asked Hannah to be mine, and she is willing, and we are going to put up the banns next—'

"Tony had not noticed that Hannah's father was coming up behind, nor had he noticed that Hannah's face was beginning to bleed from the scratch of a bramble. Hannah had seen her father, and had run to him, crying worse than ever.

" 'My daughter is *not* willing, sir!' says Mr. Jolliver hot and strong. 'Be you willing, Hannah? I ask ye to have spirit enough to refuse him, if yer virtue is left to 'ee and you run no risk?'

" 'She's as sound as a bell for me, that I'll swear!' says Tony, flaring up. 'And so's the others, come to that, though you may think it an onusual thing in me!'

" 'I have spirit, and I do refuse him!' says Hannah, partly because her father was there, and partly, too, in a tantrum because of the discovery, and the scar that might be left on her face. 'Little did I think when I was so soft with him just now that I was talking to such a false deceiver!'

" 'What, you won't have me, Hannah?' says Tony, his jaw hanging down like a dead man's.

" 'Never—I would sooner marry no—nobody at all!' she gasped out, though with her heart in her throat, for she would not have refused Tony if he had asked her quietly, and her father had not been there, and her face had not been scratched by the bramble. And having said that, away she walked upon her father's arm, thinking and hoping he would ask her again.

"Tony didn't know what to say next. Milly was sobbing her heart out; but as his father had strongly recommended her he couldn't feel inclined that way. So he turned to Unity.

" 'Well, will you, Unity dear, be mine?' he says.

" 'Take her leavings? Not I!' says Unity. 'I'd scorn it!' And away walks Unity Sallet likewise, though she looked back when she'd gone some way, to see if he was following her.

"So there at last were left Milly and Tony by themselves, she crying in watery streams, and Tony looking like a tree struck by lightning.

" 'Well, Milly,' he says at last, going up to her, 'it do seem as if fate had ordained that it should be you and I, or nobody. And what must be must be, I suppose. Hey, Milly?'

" 'If you like, Tony. You didn't really mean what you said to them?'

" 'Not a word of it!' declares Tony, bringing down his fist upon his palm.

"And then he kissed her, and put the waggon to rights, and they mounted together; and their banns were put up the very next Sunday. I was not able to go to their wedding, but it was a rare party they had, by all account."

DISCUSSION

"Tony Kytes, the Arch-deceiver," is one of a group of stories published by Hardy under the general title, *Life's Little Ironies: A Few Crusted Characters*. The crusted characters are old-fashioned English country people who are returning, after a market-day, to their own locality. As they ride along together in a van, each of them tells a story to beguile the journey. "Tony Kytes" is one of these stories. The introductory portion, which identifies the narrator and serves as a prologue, is omitted here.

It seems likely that Thomas Hardy is using a genuine folk tale

which he had heard in his native "Wessex" region. But if so, we can be sure that the story as Hardy wrote it is not the actual folk tale that he heard. Hardy has not merely reproduced the folk tale. He has retained, probably, the substance of the original and has followed the idiom and pattern of folk tale to a considerable extent. But he has told the story with far more deftness, more insight into human character, and more subtle regard for the ironies of the situation than a country narrator could be expected to use. Hardy is exploiting the manner of the folk tale in order to make a new story of his own, which, although it has a traditional cast, also bears the marks of Thomas Hardy's personal style.

We find here a narrator, a country woman, who tells a story about a person known to her—and no doubt to others in her company. The story begins in the first person, from the narrator's point of view. It returns briefly to the narrator's point of view at the end. The narrator also makes a few small personal comments here and there. But as soon as the story gets well under way, it is rendered *as if* from an omniscient point of view with the narrative steadily focused on Tony Kytes. Occasionally the omniscient narrator even reveals Tony's thoughts. The narrator's point of view thus provides a small "enveloping narrative." The main story, contained within the "envelope," is from Tony's point of view as that point of view is set forth by the "omniscient" narrator. This subtle combination of the omniscient and limited point of view grows out of the fusion of folk tale and literary story.

The general organization follows rather strictly the conventional pattern of the folk tale. Tony is only slightly individualized. He is a more or less stereotyped character—the philanderer whose promises to women get him into trouble. He is involved with three women who, though they have different names, are not very unlike. They are the same in their determined forwardness and possessiveness. They are charming but conventionalized versions of the "man-hunting" woman. The story falls into a three-part pattern, with each of the three women dominating in her turn. Tony's difficulties are resolved by an accident, which throws all of the girls out of the wagon and leaves Tony at last with Milly, to whom he was engaged in the first place. All this is in the pattern of a folk tale. Much of the narrative, too, is in a generalized form. There are certain conventional forms of expression, of the sort common in folk tales: "who

should he see waiting for him but . . .," and the like. Each young woman asks about the same question of Tony, and he makes the same kind of response to each.

Nevertheless, the critical parts of the narrative are so well dramatized and the details are so carefully worked out that the story is enormously effective. It is, in fact, as sympathetic and "true" a story of how human affections get tangled and rearranged as will be found in many other stories of a far more ambitious type.

How does Hardy achieve this result? Make a careful study of the following questions:

1. What parts of the narrative are generalized, and what parts are dramatized?
2. In the dramatization, what is the function of the dialogue?
3. How is tension created and maintained?
4. How is the sympathy of the reader controlled and directed? (Since it is a humorous story, consider whether the story invites us to "laugh at" Tony, or at the three women, or at all of them.)

ANOTHER APRIL[1]

By Jesse Stuart

"Now, Pap, you won't get cold," Mom said as she put a heavy wool cap over his head.

"Huh, what did ye say?" Grandpa asked, holding his big hand cupped over his ear to catch the sound.

"Wait until I get your gloves," Mom said, hollering real loud in Grandpa's ear. Mom had forgotten about the gloves until he raised his big bare hand above his ear to catch the sound of Mom's voice.

"Don't get 'em," Grandpa said, "I won't ketch cold."

Mom didn't pay any attention to what Grandpa said. She went on to get the gloves anyway. Grandpa turned toward me. He saw that I was looking at him.

"Yer Ma's a-puttin' enough clothes on me to kill a man," Grandpa said, then laughed a coarse laugh like March wind among the pine tops at his own words. I started laughing but not at Grandpa's words. He thought I was laughing at them and we both laughed together. It pleased Grandpa to think that I had laughed with him over something funny that he had said. But I was laughing at the way

[1]Taken from *Tales of the Plum Grove Hills*, by Jesse Stuart, published and copyright, 1946, by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York. Reprinted by permission.

he was dressed. He looked like a picture of Santa Claus. But Grandpa's cheeks were not cherry-red like Santa Claus' cheeks. They were covered with white thin beard—and above his long white eyebrows almost as white as percoon petals and very much longer.

Grandpa was wearing a heavy wool suit that hung loosely about his big body but fitted him tightly round the waist where he was as big and as round as a flour barrel. His pant legs were as big 'round his pipestem legs as emptied meal sacks. And his big shoes, with his heavy wool socks dropping down over their tops, looked like sled runners. Grandpa wore a heavy wool shirt and over his wool shirt he wore a heavy wool sweater and then his coat over the top of all this. Over his coat he wore a heavy overcoat and about his neck he wore a wool scarf.

The way Mom had dressed Grandpa you'd think there was heavy snow on the ground but there wasn't. April was here instead and the sun was shining on the green hills where the wild plums and the wild crab apples were in bloom enough to make you think there were big snowdrifts sprinkled over the green hills. When I looked at Grandpa and then looked out at the window at the sunshine and the green grass I laughed more. Grandpa laughed with me.

"I'm a-goin' to see my old friend," Grandpa said just as Mom came down the stairs with his gloves.

"Who is he, Grandpa?" I asked, but Grandpa just looked at my mouth working. He didn't know what I was saying. And he hated to ask me the second time.

Mom put the big wool gloves on Grandpa's hands. He stood there just like I had to do years ago, and let Mom put his gloves on. If Mom didn't get his fingers back in the glovefingers exactly right Grandpa quarreled at Mom. And when Mom fixed his fingers exactly right in his gloves the way he wanted them Grandpa was pleased.

"I'll be a-goin' to see 'im," Grandpa said to Mom. "I know he'll still be there."

Mom opened our front door for Grandpa and he stepped out slowly, supporting himself with his big cane in one hand. With the other hand he held to the door facing. Mom let him out of the house just like she used to let me out in the spring. And when Grandpa left the house I wanted to go with him, but Mom wouldn't let me go. I wondered if he would get away from the house—get out of Mom's sight—and pull off his shoes and go barefooted and wade the creeks like I used to do when Mom let me out. Since Mom wouldn't

let me go with Grandpa, I watched him as he walked slowly down the path in front of our house. Mom stood there watching Grandpa too. I think she was afraid that he would fall. But Mom was fooled; Grandpa toddled along the path better than my baby brother could.

"He used to be a powerful man," Mom said more to herself than she did to me. "He was a timber cutter. No man could cut more timber than my father; no man in the timber woods could sink an ax deeper into a log than my father. And no man could lift the end of a bigger log than Pap could."

"Who is Grandpa goin' to see, Mom?" I asked.

"He's not goin' to see anybody," Mom said.

"I heard 'im say that he was goin' to see an old friend," I told her.

"Oh, he was just a-talkin'," Mom said.

I watched Grandpa stop under the pine tree in our front yard. He set his cane against the pine tree trunk, pulled off his gloves and put them in his pocket. Then Grandpa stooped over slowly as the wind bends down a sapling, and picked up a pine cone in his big soft fingers. Grandpa stood fondling the pine cone in his hand. Then, one by one, he pulled the little chips from the pine cone—tearing it to pieces like he was hunting for something in it—and after he had torn it to pieces he threw the pine-cone stem on the ground. Then he pulled pine needles from a low-hanging pine bough and he felt of each pine needle between his fingers. He played with them a long time before he started down the path.

"What's Grandpa doin'?" I asked Mom. But Mom didn't answer me.

"How long has Grandpa been with us?" I asked Mom.

"Before you's born," she said. "Pap has been with us eleven years. He was eighty when he quit cuttin' timber and farmin'; now he's ninety-one."

I had heard her say that when she was a girl he'd walk out on the snow and ice barefooted and carry wood in the house and put it on the fire. He had shoes but he wouldn't bother to put them on. And I heard her say that he would cut timber on the coldest days without socks on his feet but with his feet stuck down in cold brogan shoes and he worked stripped above the waist so his arms would have freedom when he swung his double-bitted ax. I had heard her tell how he'd sweat and how the sweat in his beard would be icicles by the time he got home from work on the cold winter days. Now Mom wouldn't let him get out of the house for she wanted him to live a long time.

As I watched Grandpa go down the path toward the hog pen he

stopped to examine every little thing along his path. Once he waved his cane at a butterfly as it zig-zagged over his head, its polka-dot wings fanning the blue April air. Grandpa would stand when a puff of wind came along, and hold his face against the wind and let the wind play with his white whiskers. I thought maybe his face was hot under his beard and he was letting the wind cool his face. When he reached the hog pen he called the hogs down to the fence. They came running and grunting to Grandpa just like they were talking to him. I knew that Grandpa couldn't hear them trying to talk to him but he could see their mouths working and he knew they were trying to say something. He leaned his cane against the hog pen, reached over the fence, and patted the hogs' heads. Grandpa didn't miss patting one of our seven hogs.

As he toddled up the little path alongside the hog pen he stopped under a blooming dogwood. He pulled a white blossom from a bough that swayed over the path above his head, and he leaned his big bundled body against the dogwood while he tore each petal from the blossom and examined it carefully. There wasn't anything his dim blue eyes missed. He stopped under a redbud tree before he reached the garden to break a tiny spray of redbud blossoms. He took each blossom from the spray and examined it carefully.

"Gee, it's funny to watch Grandpa," I said to Mom, then I laughed.

"Poor Pap," Mom said, "he's seen a lot of Aprils come and go. He's seen more Aprils than he will ever see again."

I don't think Grandpa missed a thing on the little circle he took before he reached the house. He played with a bumblebee that was bending a windflower blossom that grew near our corncrib beside a big bluff. But Grandpa didn't try to catch the bumblebee in his big bare hand. I wondered if he would and if the bumblebee would sting him, and if he would holler. Grandpa even pulled a butterfly cocoon from a blackberry briar that grew beside his path. I saw him try to tear it into shreds but he couldn't. There wasn't any butterfly in it, for I'd seen it before. I wondered if the butterfly with the polka-dot wings, that Grandpa waved his cane at when he first left the house, had come from his cocoon. I laughed when Grandpa couldn't tear the cocoon apart.

"I'll bet I can tear that cocoon apart for Grandpa if you'd let me go help him," I said to Mom.

"You leave your Grandpa alone," Mom said. "Let 'im enjoy April."

Then I knew that this was the first time Mom had let Grandpa out of the house all winter. I knew that Grandpa loved the sunshine

and the fresh April air that blew from the redbud and dogwood blossoms. He loved the bumblebees, the hogs, the pine cones, and pine needles. Grandpa didn't miss a thing along his walk. And every day from now on until just before frost Grandpa would take his little walk. He'd stop along and look at everything as he had done summers before. But each year he didn't take as long a walk as he had taken the year before. Now this spring he didn't go down to the lower end of the hog pen as he had done last year. And when I could first remember Grandpa going on his walks he used to go out of sight. He'd go all over the farm. And he'd come to the house and take me on his knee and tell me about all what he had seen. Now Grandpa wasn't getting out of sight. I could see him from the window along all of his walk.

Grandpa didn't come back into the house at the front door. He tottled around back of the house toward the smokehouse and I ran through the living room to the dining room so I could look out at the window and watch him.

"Where's Grandpa goin'?" I asked Mom.

"Now never mind," Mom said. "Leave your Grandpa alone. Don't go out there and disturb him."

"I won't bother 'im, Mom," I said. "I just want to watch 'im."

"All right," Mom said.

But Mom wanted to be sure that I didn't bother him so she followed me into the dining room. Maybe she wanted to see what Grandpa was going to do. She stood by the window and we watched Grandpa as he walked down beside our smokehouse where a tall sassafras tree's thin leaves fluttered in the blue April wind. Above the smokehouse and the tall sassafras was a blue April sky—so high you couldn't see the sky-roof. It was just blue space and little white clouds floated upon this blue.

When Grandpa reached the smokehouse he leaned his cane against the sassafras tree. He let himself down slowly to his knees as he looked carefully at the ground. Grandpa was looking at something and I wondered what it was. I just didn't think or I would have known.

"There you are, my good old friend," Grandpa said.

"Who is his friend, Mom?" I asked.

Mom didn't say anything. Then I saw.

"He's playin' with that old terrapin, Mom," I said.

"I know he is," Mom said.

"The terrapin doesn't mind if Grandpa strokes his head with his hand," I said.

"I know it," Mom said.

"But the old terrapin won't let me do it," I said. "Why does he let Grandpa?"

"The terrapin knows your Grandpa."

"He ought to know me," I said, "but when I try to stroke his head with my hand, he closes up in his shell."

Mom didn't say anything. She stood by the window watching Grandpa and listening to Grandpa talk to the terrapin.

"My old friend, how do you like the sunshine?" Grandpa asked the terrapin.

The terrapin turned his fleshless face to one side like a hen does when she looks at you in the sunlight. He was trying to talk to Grandpa; maybe the terrapin could understand what Grandpa was saying.

"Old fellow, it's been a hard winter," Grandpa said. "How have you fared under the smokehouse floor?"

"Does the terrapin know what Grandpa is sayin'?" I asked Mom.

"I don't know," she said.

"I'm awfully glad to see you, old fellow," Grandpa said.

He didn't offer to bite Grandpa's big soft hand as he stroked his head.

"Looks like the terrapin would bite Grandpa," I said.

"That terrapin has spent the winters under that smokehouse for fifteen years," Mom said. "Pap has been acquainted with him for eleven years. He's been talkin' to that terrapin every spring."

"How does Grandpa know the terrapin is old?" I asked Mom.

"It's got 1847 cut on its shell," Mom said. "We know he's ninety-five years old. He"s older than that. We don't know how old he was when that date was cut on his back."

"Who cut 1847 on his back, Mom?"

"I don't know, child," she said, "but I'd say whoever cut that date on his back has long been under the ground."

Then I wondered how a terrapin could get that old and what kind of a looking person he was who cut the date on the terrapin's back. I wondered where it happened—if it happened near where our house stood. I wondered who lived here on this land then, what kind of a house they lived in, and if they had a sassafras with tiny thin April leaves on its top growing in their yard, and if the person that cut the date on the terrapin's back was buried at Plum Grove, if he had farmed these hills where we lived today and cut timber like Grandpa had—and if he had seen the Aprils pass like Grandpa had seen them and if he enjoyed them like Grandpa was enjoying this April. I

wondered if he had looked at the dogwood blossoms, the redbud blossoms, and talked to this same terrapin.

"Are you well, old fellow?" Grandpa asked the terrapin. The terrapin just looked at Grandpa.

"I'm well as common for a man of my age," Grandpa said.

"Did the terrapin ask Grandpa if he was well?" I asked Mom.

"I don't know," Mom said. "I can't talk to a terrapin."

"But Grandpa can."

"Yes."

"Wait until tomatoes get ripe and we'll go to the garden together," Grandpa said.

"Does a terrapin eat tomatoes?" I asked Mom.

"Yes, that terrapin has been eatin' tomatoes from our garden for fifteen years," Mom said. "When Mick was tossin' the terrapins out of the tomato patch, he picked up this one and found the date cut on his back. He put him back in the patch and told him to help himself. He lives from our garden every year. We don't bother him and don't allow anybody else to bother him. He spends his winters under our smokehouse floor buried in the dry ground."

"Gee, Grandpa looks like the terrapin," I said.

Mom didn't say anything; tears came to her eyes. She wiped them from her eyes with the corner of her apron.

"I'll be back to see you," Grandpa said. "I'm a-gettin' a little chilly; I'll be gettin' back to the house."

The terrapin twisted his wrinkled neck without moving his big body, poking his head deeper into the April wind as Grandpa pulled his bundled body up by holding to the sassafras tree trunk.

"Good-by, old friend!"

The terrapin poked his head deeper into the wind, holding one eye on Grandpa, for I could see his eye shining in the sinking sunlight.

Grandpa got his cane that was leaned against the sassafras tree trunk and hobbled slowly toward the house. The terrapin looked at him with first one eye and then the other.

DISCUSSION

The theme of "Another April" is one of the oldest and most persistent in our literature. The Riddle of the Sphinx, which Oedipus answered, states this theme in one ancient traditional form. It appears, with infinite variations, in Elizabethan lyric poetry—for example, in Shakespeare's sonnet which begins—

When I do count the clock that tells the time
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night.

The emphasis in the sonnet is on the relentless action of time. In Shakespeare's song, "O mistress mine," the theme is differently stated—

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter.
What's to come is still unsure.

Whether, in the confrontation of youth and age, the emphasis falls on "present mirth" or on the less romantic "hereafter," the images of time and mortality are inescapable. For time and mortality must be reckoned with.

In Jesse Stuart's subtle and touching story the theme is skillfully dramatized. There is nowhere any explicit generalization or direct admonition on the part of the author. The course of human life is nevertheless epitomized in the three characters of the story, who represent three generations, and in the terrapin, who has outlived several generations of humanity and may outlive still more.

The story is "told" (written as if told) from the point of view of the boy, to whom "another April" as yet carries little realization of the movement of time. Characteristically, the boy sees the world of spring in terms of tangible, physical pleasures. But the boy's point of view is enriched by the view of "Mom," whose knowledge reaches farther in time and space. Mr. Stuart, using this double vision, brings "Grandpa" into focus as the leading character (and "protagonist") of the story. Although the action is slight, consisting as it does only of Grandpa's circular journey through the yard, the reader can hardly fail to note that both in Mom's account of Grandpa's past and in what the boy now sees, the emphasis is on vitality rather than decay. Grandpa, as a *physical* creature, has followed the circle of time until he must once more be "babied" against April weather with heavy wool coat, sweater, cap, and gloves; but the *spiritual* man (the real man) is unconquered. Grandpa can laugh "a coarse laugh like a March wind." And he can talk to a terrapin.

Make a study of the following elements in the story:

1. The alternation between present and past. Note that the present is *directly* related (in dramatic form); it constitutes the "action" of the story. The past is "reported," partly in Mom's recitals of Grand-

pa's exploits, partly in subjective summary as the boy remembers and wonders. To what extent does this alternation between present and past determine the "divisions" or "scenes" of the story?

2. The story does not have a "plot" in the usual meaning of the term. Does it then have a "pattern"? If so, what is the "pattern"? To what extent do temporal, spatial, and symbolic elements unite to form a pattern? What is the function of the terrapin? Trace out all the correspondences or contrasts that you can discover—as, for example, the laughter in which both Grandpa and Grandson engage at the outset.

3. Is the story "sentimental"? Or does it avoid sentimentality by its subtle balance of varied elements and by its simplicity and restraint? Note that tears come to Mom's eyes; but Grandson does not weep; he observes, though with tenderness. Apply a similar group of test questions to James Joyce's "Araby." Of the two stories, which is the more "objective" in its treatment? Is one story "colder" or "warmer" in tone than the other?

4. Does the diction of Mr. Stuart's story fit the theme and tone? What excesses of diction is Mr. Stuart careful to avoid? Do you find the language of the story "picturesque," "corny," "regional," "homely"? Or is it on the whole simple, firm, unaffected American-English?

ARABY[1]

By James Joyce

North Richmond Street, being blind, was a quiet street except at the hour when the Christian Brothers' School set the boys free. An uninhabited house of two stories stood at the blind end, detached from its neighbors in a square ground. The other houses of the street, conscious of decent lives within them, gazed at one another with brown imperturbable faces.

The former tenant of our house, a priest, had died in the back drawing room. Air, musty from having been long enclosed, hung in all the rooms, and the waste room behind the kitchen was littered with old useless papers. Among these I found a few paper-covered books, the pages of which were curled and damp: *The Abbot,* by

[1]From *Dubliners,* included in *The Portable James Joyce.* Copyright, 1946, 1947, by The Viking Press. Reprinted by permission of The Viking Press, Inc., New York.

by Walter Scott, *The Devout Communicant,* and *The Memoirs of Vidocq.* I liked the last best because its leaves were yellow. The wild garden behind the house contained a central apple tree and a few straggling bushes under one of which I found the late tenant's rusty bicycle pump. He had been a very charitable priest; in his will he had left all his money to institutions and the furniture of his house to his sister.

When the short days of winter came dusk fell before we had well eaten our dinners. When we met in the street the houses had grown somber. The space of sky above us was the color of ever-changing violet and towards it the lamps of the street lifted their feeble lanterns. The cold air stung us and we played till our bodies glowed. Our shouts echoed in the silent street. The career of our play brought us through the dark muddy lanes behind the houses where we ran the gauntlet of the rough tribes from the cottages, to the back doors of the dark dripping gardens where odors arose from the ashpits, to the dark odorous stables where a coachman smoothed and combed the horse or shook music from the buckled harness. When we returned to the street, light from the kitchen windows had filled the areas. If my uncle was seen turning the corner we hid in the shadow until we had seen him safely housed. Or if Mangan's sister came out on the doorstep to call her brother in to his tea we watched her from our shadow peer up and down the street. We waited to see whether she would remain or go in and, if she remained, we left our shadow and walked up to Mangan's steps resignedly. She was waiting for us, her figure defined by the light from the half-opened door. Her brother always teased her before he obeyed and I stood by the railings looking at her. Her dress swung as she moved her body and the soft rope of her hair tossed from side to side.

Every morning I lay on the floor in the front parlor watching her door. The blind was pulled down to within an inch of the sash so that I could not be seen. When she came out on the doorstep my heart leaped. I ran to the hall, seized my books and followed her. I kept her brown figure always in my eye and, when we came near the point at which our ways diverged, I quickened my pace and passed her. This happened morning after morning. I had never spoken to her, except for a few casual words, and yet her name was like a summons to all my foolish blood.

Her image accompanied me even in places the most hostile to romance. On Saturday evenings when my aunt went marketing I had to go to carry some of the parcels. We walked through the flaring streets, jostled by drunken men and bargaining women, amid

the curses of laborers, the shrill litanies of shop boys who stood on guard by the barrels of pigs' cheeks, the nasal chanting of street singers, who sang a *come-all-you* about O'Donovan Rossa, or a ballad about the troubles in our native land. These noises converged in a single sensation of life for me: I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes. Her name sprang to my lips at moments in strange prayers and praises which I myself did not understand. My eyes were often full of tears (I could not tell why) and at times a flood from my heart seemed to pour itself out into my bosom. I thought little of the future. I did not know whether I would ever speak to her or not or, if I spoke to her, how I could tell her of my confused adoration. But my body was like a harp and her words and gestures were like fingers running upon the wires.

One evening I went into the back drawing room in which the priest had died. It was a dark rainy evening and there was no sound in the house. Through one of the broken panes I heard the rain impinge upon the earth, the fine incessant needles of water playing in the sodden beds. Some distant lamp or lighted window gleamed below me. I was thankful that I could see so little. All my senses seemed to desire to veil themselves and, feeling that I was about to slip from them, I pressed the palms of my hands together until they trembled, murmuring: "O love! O love!" many times.

At last she spoke to me. When she addressed the first words to me I was so confused that I did not know what to answer. She asked me was I going to *Araby*. I forgot whether I answered yes or no. It would be a splendid bazaar, she said; she would love to go.

"And why can't you?" I asked.

While she spoke she turned a silver bracelet round and round her wrist. She could not go, she said, because there would be a retreat that week in her convent. Her brother and two other boys were fighting for their caps and I was alone at the railings. She held one of the spikes, bowing her head towards me. The light from the lamp opposite our door caught the white curve of her neck, lit up her hair that rested there and, falling, lit up the hand upon the railing. It fell over one side of her dress and caught the white border of a petticoat, just visible as she stood at ease.

"It's well for you," she said.

"If I go," I said, "I will bring you something."

What innumerable follies laid waste my waking and sleeping thoughts after that evening! I wished to annihilate the tedious intervening days. I chafed against the work of school. At night in my bedroom and by day in the classroom her image came between me and

the page I strove to read. The syllables of the word *Araby* were called to me through the silence in which my soul luxuriated and cast an Eastern enchantment over me. I asked for leave to go to the bazaar on Saturday night. My aunt was surprised and hoped it was not some Freemason affair. I answered few questions in class. I watched my master's face pass from amiability to sternness; he hoped I was not beginning to idle. I could not call my wandering thoughts together. I had hardly any patience with the serious work of life which, now that it stood between me and my desire, seemed to me child's play, ugly monotonous child's play.

On Saturday morning I reminded my uncle that I wished to go to the bazaar in the evening. He was fussing at the hall stand, looking for the hat brush, and answered me curtly:

"Yes, boy, I know."

As he was in the hall I could not go into the front parlor and lie at the window. I left the house in bad humor and walked slowly towards the school. The air was pitilessly raw and already my heart misgave me.

When I came home to dinner my uncle had not yet been home. Still it was early. I sat staring at the clock for some time and, when its ticking began to irritate me, I left the room. I mounted the staircase and gained the upper part of the house. The high cold empty gloomy rooms liberated me and I went from room to room singing. From the front window I saw my companions playing below in the street. Their cries reached me weakened and indistinct and, leaning my forehead against the cool glass, I looked over at the dark house where she lived. I may have stood there for an hour, seeing nothing but the brown-clad figure cast by my imagination, touched discreetly by the lamplight at the curved neck, at the hand upon the railings and at the border below the dress.

When I came downstairs again I found Mrs. Mercer sitting at the fire. She was an old garrulous woman, a pawnbroker's widow, who collected used stamps for some pious purpose. I had to endure the gossip of the tea table. The meal was prolonged beyond an hour and still my uncle did not come. Mrs. Mercer stood up to go: she was sorry she couldn't wait any longer, but it was after eight o'clock and she did not like to be out late, as the night air was bad for her. When she had gone I began to walk up and down the room, clenching my fists. My aunt said:

"I'm afraid you may put off your bazaar for this night of Our Lord."

At nine o'clock I heard my uncle's latchkey in the hall door. I

heard him talking to himself and heard the hall stand rocking when it had received the weight of his overcoat. I could interpret these signs. When he was midway through his dinner I asked him to give me the money to go to the bazaar. He had forgotten.

"The people are in bed and after their first sleep now," he said.

I did not smile. My aunt said to him energetically:

"Can't you give him the money and let him go? You've kept him late enough as it is."

My uncle said he was very sorry he had forgotten. He said he believed in the old saying: "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." He asked me where I was going and, when I had told him a second time he asked me did I know *The Arab's Farewell to His Steed.* When I left the kitchen he was about to recite the opening lines of the piece to my aunt.

I held a florin tightly in my hand as I strode down Buckingham Street towards the station. The sight of the streets thronged with buyers and glaring with gas recalled to me the purpose of my journey. I took my seat in a third-class carriage of a deserted train. After an intolerable delay the train moved out of the station slowly. It crept onward among ruinous houses and over the twinkling river. At Westland Row Station a crowd of people pressed to the carriage doors; but the porters moved them back, saying that it was a special train for the bazaar. I remained alone in the bare carriage. In a few minutes the train drew up beside an improvised wooden platform. I passed out on to the road and saw by the lighted dial of a clock that it was ten minutes to ten. In front of me was a large building which displayed the magical name.

I could not find any sixpenny entrance and, fearing that the bazaar would be closed, I passed in quickly through a turnstile, handing a shilling to a weary-looking man. I found myself in a big hall girdled at half its height by a gallery. Nearly all the stalls were closed and the greater part of the hall was in darkness. I recognized a silence like that which pervades a church after a service. I walked into the center of the bazaar timidly. A few people were gathered about the stalls which were still open. Before a curtain, over which the words *Cafe Chantant* were written in colored lamps, two men were counting money on a salver. I listened to the fall of the coins.

Remembering with difficulty why I had come I went over to one of the stalls and examined porcelain vases and flowered tea sets. At the door of the stall a young lady was talking and laughing with two young gentlemen. I remarked their English accents and listened vaguely to their conversation.

"O, I never said such a thing!"
"O, but you did!"
"O, but I didn't!"
"Didn't she say that?"
"Yes. I heard her."
"O, there's a . . . fib!"

Observing me, the young lady came over and asked me did I wish to buy anything. The tone of her voice was not encouraging; she seemed to have spoken to me out of a sense of duty. I looked humbly at the great jars that stood like eastern guards at either side of the dark entrance to the stall and murmured:

"No, thank you."

The young lady changed the position of one of the vases and went back to the two young men. They began to talk of the same subject. Once or twice the young lady glanced at me over her shoulder.

I lingered before her stall, though I knew my stay was useless, to make my interest in her wares seem the more real. Then I turned away slowly and walked down the middle of the bazaar. I allowed the two pennies to fall against the sixpence in my pocket. I heard a voice call from one end of the gallery that the light was out. The upper part of the hall was now completely dark.

Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger.

DISCUSSION

"Araby" may seem like a mere autobiographical reminiscence rather than a "story"; and it may, in fact, carry actual personal reminiscences of James Joyce's boyhood in Dublin. But we should not yield to the temptation of identifying the unnamed "I" who is the "narrator" and chief character of the story with James Joyce the author. He is a boy—any boy, even though he is here a fairly particular boy—at the stage of early romantic experience when the "sensation of life" leads him to imagine that he bears his "chalice safely through a throng of foes." And he is in love with a girl older than himself—the elder sister of his schoolmate Mangan. She too is nameless. Like "Another April," it is a story of characters without names.

Whose story is it, then? And *what is it about?* The answer to such questions, particularly the second one, is more difficult than the seeming simplicity of the story may invite one to think.

In your critical study, you might do well to begin by comparing "Araby" with "Another April"—for in each story an author has placed a boy in a situation where he must confront one of life's sorrows—a sorrow strangely intermingled with joy and a sense of life. The boy in "Another April" sees unrolled before him, in his grandfather's journey around the yard, the inevitable course of life from youth to age. What comparable experience of reality does the boy in "Araby" have to face? Define the "situation" in which this boy is placed and work out the pattern by which Joyce develops the situation to its conclusion. Of the two stories, which is more subjective in method? In what does the "action" of "Araby" consist? Which of the two boys is the more isolated? To what extent does Joyce depend on dialogue? To what extent upon recorded sensations? How does Joyce's method influence the character of his prose?

Suggestions for Reading

I. Description and Narration Combined

Allen, Hervey. "Pendergasses'," in *Bedford Village.*

Brown, Dee, and Schmitt, Martin. "The Great Blizzard of 1886," in *Trail Driving Days.*

Cather, Willa. "The Rock," in *Death Comes for the Archbishop,* p. 95.

De Mille, Agnes. "The Great Decision," in *Dance to the Piper,* p. 91.

De Voto, Bernard. *Across the Wide Missouri* (for various western scenes and episodes—see especially pp. 35–40; 80–87; 160–166).

Dickens, Charles. "The Cratchits' Christmas Dinner," in *A Christmas Carol.*

Faulkner, William. "Dilsey Gets Breakfast," in *The Sound and the Fury,* p. 330.

Lawrence, D. H. "The Hopi Snake Dance," in *Mornings in Mexico.*

Mills, Enos A. "Besieged by Bears," in *Wild Life in the Rockies,* p. 215.

Woolf, Virginia. "Time Passes," in *To the Lighthouse.*

II. Collections of Stories by Individual Writers

Anderson, Sherwood. *Horses and Men.*

Chekhov, Anton. *The Bishop and Other Stories.*

Conrad, Joseph. *Tales of Unrest.*
Coppard, A. E. *The Black Dog and Other Stories.*
Faulkner, William. *The Short Stories.*
Galsworthy, John. *Caravan.*
Gordon, Caroline. *The Forest of the South.*
Hardy, Thomas. *Wessex Tales.*
Haun, Mildred. *The Hawk's Done Gone.*
Hemingway, Ernest. *The Fifth Column and the First Forty-nine Stories.*
Henry, O. *The Four Million.*
Joyce, James. *Dubliners.*
Kipling, Rudyard. *Soldiers Three.*
Lardner, Ring. *Roundup.*
Mansfield, Katherine. *The Garden Party.*
Page, Thomas Nelson. *In Old Virginia.*
Porter, Katherine Anne. *Flowering Judas.*
Saroyan, William. *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze.*
Simms, William Gilmore. *The Wigwam and the Cabin.*
Stuart, Jesse. *Tales from the Plum Grove Hills.*
Welty, Eudora. *A Curtain of Green.*

III. INDIVIDUAL STORIES

Anderson, Sherwood. "I'm a Fool."
Benét, Stephen Vincent. "The Devil and Daniel Webster."
Chekhov, Anton. "The Darling."
Faulkner, William. "A Rose for Emily."
Gordon, Caroline. "The Captive."
Hardy, Thomas. "The Three Strangers."
James, Henry. "The Liar."
Joyce, James. "The Dead."
Kipling, Rudyard. "The Man Who Was."
Lytle, Andrew. "Jericho, Jericho, Jericho."
Mansfield, Katherine. "The Doll House."
Marquand, John P. "You Can't Do That."
Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Tell-tale Heart."
Scott, Sir Walter. "Wandering Willie's Tale" (in *Redgauntlet*).
Warren, Robert Penn. "When the Light Gets Green."
Welty, Eudora. "A Piece of News."

Chapter VIII

FURTHER PROBLEMS OF EXPOSITORY WRITING

IN DESCRIPTIVE and narrative writing the student is concerned with telling what he hears, sees, feels, remembers, or imagines. He is an observer and reporter and aims at conveying impressions, sensations, images rather than ideas. But the average student at college has comparatively little opportunity for this pleasurable kind of writing. His daily routine, in fact the general process of his education, continually demands another type of expression. He must do systematic thinking about the subjects that he is supposed to master; and he must express himself about those subjects, either in a regular course paper or in reports and examinations. The study of composition will be of very little account if it stops with words, sentences, paragraphs, and methods of organizing and presenting thought. These are but the means by which the intellectual process takes on a clear and orderly form. It is time to consider the substance of which the form is an expression and without which it may be abstract and frivolous.

There are two important kinds of thought in which sooner or later we find ourselves involved. In one we are called upon to state and explain the nature of things and ideas. We are expected to set forth their meaning, and no more than their meaning, and to do so without bothering overmuch about their truth or falsity, without, indeed, offering opinions or taking sides. It is of the highest importance that this kind of thinking be *disinterested*. It should not be colored with personal opinions but should be concentrated upon the task of clear, non-partisan, impersonal explanation.

In the other kind of thinking we are called upon to exercise judgment. We are asked not only to state and explain the nature of things and ideas but also to declare their degree of truth or falsity,

or to distinguish between truth and falsity, and, if necessary, to take sides and argue a case. Writing which uses this kind of thought is argumentative and critical. It is *interested* to the extent that we constitute ourselves judges and uphold a definite position for or against something. But it should never be *interested* to the point of being unfair. The disinterested temper of the expository writing must carry over into the argumentative writing if the latter is to seem firmly grounded and not merely an effusion of personal opinion—though there is a place, as we shall see, for sheer expression of personal opinion.

There are two ways in which we may think disinterestedly about a subject. First, we may seek to disengage it from all other ideas or things from which it is different but with which, despite differences, it may be confused, as, for example, we might distinguish chattel slavery from serfdom, which is like slavery in some respects. Such a distinction leads to, and in fact is, a process of definition; and after definition comes a further, still more intensive exploration of the idea or thing under discussion.

Second, we may follow an opposite, or perhaps a complementary procedure. We put the emphasis on the class in which the idea or thing belongs and make a study of likenesses and differences within that class. The exploration may then be either intensive or extensive. It builds up divisions and classifications. This is the process of analysis. It may be applied, for example, to the problem of farm tenancy. When we endeavor to establish and describe the degrees and types of farm tenancy and undertake to study the causes and results of farm tenancy, we are engaging in analysis.

Definition and analysis are the foundation of good thinking, and a study of definition and analysis is the best practical preparation for the complex problems of the research paper, the critical essay, and the article of opinion.

1. *DEFINITION*

In its formal and literal sense, definition is a process of limitation. Given a term to define—the amateur spirit, circle, osmosis, Platonism, high standard of living—we draw a boundary line. Within the line is everything to which the term can logically be applied. Outside the line is everything to which the term cannot

be applied. A logical definition begins by placing the term to be defined in the class, or *genus,* to which it belongs, and then states the characteristics, or *differentia,* which distinguish it from other objects of the same class.

An axe may be defined by placing it in the class of tools. Next, it must be distinguished from other tools, such as chisels, saws, hammers, files. If we say, "An axe is a tool used for cutting," we have not distinguished the axe from the pocket-knife. If we say, "An axe is a tool used for cutting down trees," we have not distinguished the axe from the saw. We can come close to logical exactness only by elaborating the *differentia:* for example, "An axe is a tool which has a shape like a hammer and a cutting edge, single or double; and which is fitted with a helve so as to adapt it specially to cutting, chopping, hewing, or splitting wood."

The difficulties of composing a perfectly logical definition within the limits of a sentence are plainly very great. We feel at once the need of explaining some of the terms used in the definition, such as "helve" or "hewing." We may feel impelled to note that while most axes are made of steel, they can be made, and were once made, of flint. We may also be mindful of a time when men fought with axes and used them for splitting heads.

Probably the only really satisfactory one-sentence definitions are those found in the exact sciences. The following are some examples:

Term	*Genus*	*Differentia*
A rectangle	is a quadrilateral	which has four right angles.
A circle	is a plane figure	contained by one line everywhere equally distant from a point within called the center.
Osmosis	is the diffusion	which takes place between two miscible fluids separated by a permeable partition, as in an animal membrane (*Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*).

The following one-sentence definitions, although not quite so exact as scientific definitions, are in the form of logical definitions and probably would meet the tests of logic:

1. Language is the agent or medium by which men communicate their thoughts to one another.—Stuart Robertson, *The Development of Modern English.*

2. Metaphor is the synthesis of several units of observation into one commanding image.—Herbert Read, *English Prose Style.*

The one-sentence logical definition is in itself a useful exercise. It is a salutary check upon one's thinking simply to define the terms that have been floating familiarly, but often far too vaguely, in one's mind. We can also test the thinking of others through logical definition. Writers easily fall into the vice of not defining their terms or of defining them loosely; or sometimes they imply a definition without really making it. In such instances we may use the resources of logical definition and ask whether the idea as set forth will fit the *genus* and *differentia* given or implied.

In composing logical definitions, observe the following rules:

1. In assigning the term to a class, or *genus,* choose the smallest class to which the term can conveniently be assigned. An axe can be assigned to the class of *things,* but not much is gained when that is done. *Instrument* is a further narrowing of class, but that class is still too large. *Tool* is probably as narrow a class as should be chosen.

2. The definition, when stated, must include everything that properly belongs to the term defined. If you define a boat as a vessel equipped with sails or steam-engine and intended for traveling upon water, you have failed to allow for rowboats and boats moved by electric power or (as canal boats) by horse power.

3. The definition must exclude everything that does not properly belong to the term defined. If you define a bicycle as a two-wheeled vehicle, you must take care to state your definition so as to exclude carts, racing sulkies, and other two-wheeled vehicles.

4. The language of the definition should meet certain requirements. Use simple and familiar language as far as possible. Even if the definition is highly technical, try to simplify the language. The language must at any rate be of a less complex order than the term defined. Do not use a synonym or a derivative of the term that you are defining. A synonym or derivative is only a repetition of the original term in another form. You must not think in circles.

Formal and Informal Definition. Both formal and informal definition are extensions of logical definition. Each has, as its core of thought, a logical definition. This will generally stand at the beginning of the discussion, as a topic statement which is to be expanded. Each will make use of the devices common in all explanations: illustration, comparison and contrast, amplification through details, elimination, discussion of origin, cause, effect.

The difference between the two kinds of definition is in the manner of treatment. The formal definition continues, in extended form, the precise method of the strict logical definition. It is economical in language and chary of literary effects. Its sole aim is to set forth its explanation clearly and exactly. It does not attempt to awaken the reader's interest or to stir his feelings. Its concern is with facts, not with how the facts may affect the reader. Formal definition is used in textbooks, encyclopedias, and in all writing where the aim is serious instruction.

Informal definition aims to give the reader pleasure as well as instruction. It attempts to attract his interest as well as meet the demands of his intellectual curiosity. Although it must rest upon a logical basis, it is not written with the severity of purely logical definition. Its tone is easier and often is personal.

The student will be called upon to write informal definition more often than formal definition, but he should remember, even though he is writing in a relaxed manner, that the laws of logic cannot be relaxed. Pleasantry must not take the place of thought. He must strive for disinterestedness, he must look steadily at his subject, he must never offer opinions and prejudices as substitutes for genuine definition.

Example of a Formal Definition.

A Spenserian stanza is a group of nine verse lines organized as a structural unit. The lines are rhymed in the following pattern: a-b-a-b-b-c-b-c-c. The first eight lines are written in iambic pentameter: that is, each line consists of five iambic feet. The last line, which is called an Alexandrine, after the French line which it resembles, has six feet. The stanza was invented by the Elizabethan poet, Edmund Spenser, who is thought by scholars to have adapted the stanza from the Italian *canzone*. Spenser used the stanza in his epic poem, *The Faerie Queene*. In his hands, the stanza has an

easy melodic flow, largely because of the system of link rhymes used to join the first and second quatrains, and the second quatrain with the last line. Because of the fact that only three rhymes are used within nine lines, the stanza is difficult to write, but since Spenser's time it has been used by Byron, Shelley, Keats, and other English poets.

Example of an Informal Definition.

Democracy, like liberty or science or progress, is a word with which we are all so familiar that we rarely take the trouble to ask what we mean by it. It is a term, as the devotees of semantics say, which has no "referent"—there is no precise or palpable thing or object which we all think of when the word is pronounced. On the contrary, it is a word which connotes different things to different people, a kind of conceptual Gladstone bag which, with a little manipulation, can be made to accommodate almost any collection of social facts we may wish to carry about in it. In it we can as easily pack a dictatorship as any other form of government. We have only to stretch the concept to include any form of government supported by a majority of the people, for whatever reasons and by whatever means of expressing assent, and before we know it the empire of Napoleon, the Soviet regime of Stalin, and the fascist systems of Mussolini and Hitler are all safely in the bag. But if this is what we mean by democracy, then virtually all forms of government are democratic, since virtually all governments, except in times of revolution, rest upon the explicit or implicit consent of the people. In order to discuss democracy intelligently it will be necessary, therefore, to define it, to attach to the word a sufficiently precise meaning to avoid the confusion which is not infrequently the chief result of such discussions.

All human institutions, we are told, have their ideal forms laid away in heaven, and we do not need to be told that the actual institutions conform but indifferently to these counterparts. It would be possible then to define democracy either in terms of the ideal or in terms of the real form—to define it as government of the people, by the people, for the people; or to define it as government of the people, by the politicians, for whatever pressure groups can get their interests taken care of. But as a historian I am naturally disposed to be satisfied with the meaning which, in the history of politics, men have commonly attributed to the word—a meaning, needless to say, which derives partly from the experience and partly from the aspirations of mankind. So regarded, the term democracy

refers primarily to a form of government by the many as opposed to government by the one—government by the people as opposed to government by a tyrant, a dictator, or an absolute monarch. This is the most general meaning of the word as men have commonly understood it.

In this antithesis there are, however, certain implications, always tacitly understood, which give a more precise meaning to the term. Peisistratus, for example, was supported by a majority of the people, but his government was never regarded as a democracy for all that. Cæsar's power derived from a popular mandate, conveyed through established republican forms, but that did not make his government any the less a dictatorship. Napoleon called his government a democratic empire, but no one, least of all Napoleon himself, doubted that he had destroyed the last vestiges of the democratic republic. Since the Greeks first used the term, the essential test of democratic government has always been this: the source of political authority must be and remain in the people and not in the ruler. A democratic government has always meant one in which the citizens, or a sufficient number of them to represent more or less effectively the common will, freely act from time to time, and according to established forms, to appoint or recall the magistrates and to enact or revoke the laws by which the community is governed. This I take to be the meaning which history has impressed upon the term democracy as a form of government.—Carl Becker, *Modern Democracy*.[1]

Methods of Definition. Choice of a method of definition will depend largely upon the nature of the term to be defined. If the term is an abstract concept, perhaps difficult to understand, it is advisable to use some familiar illustration. Thomas Henry Huxley, in defining the inductive method of reasoning, uses the illustrative method.

Suppose you go into a fruiterer's shop, wanting an apple—you take up one, and, on biting it, you find it sour; you look at it, and see that it is hard and green. You take up another one, and that too is hard, green, and sour. The shopman offers you a third; but, before biting it, you examine it, and find that it is hard and green, and you immediately say that you will not have it, as it must be sour, like those you have already tried.

Nothing can be more simple than that, you think; but if you

[1]Reprinted by permission of the publisher, Yale University Press.

will take the trouble to analyze and trace out into its logical elements what has been done by the mind, you will be greatly surprised. In the first place, you have performed the operation of Induction. You found that, in two experiences, hardness and greenness in apples went together with sourness. It was so in the first case, and it was confirmed by the second. True, it is a very small basis, but still it is enough to make an induction from; you generalize the facts, and you expect to find sourness in apples where you get hardness and greenness. You found upon that a general law, that all hard and green apples are sour; and that, so far as it goes, is a perfect induction. Well, having got your natural law in this way, when you are offered another apple which you find is hard and green, you say, "All hard and green apples are sour; this apple is hard and green, therefore this apple is sour." That train of reasoning is what logicians call a syllogism, and has all its various parts and terms—its major premise, its minor premise, and its conclusion.—Thomas Henry Huxley, "The Method of Scientific Investigation," in *The Method of Discovery.*

Comparison and contrast will obviously be suggested when you are dealing with a term which in certain respects is like another term, and yet has differences. If you are defining wit, you may say that wit is like humor, is indeed a kind of humor, in so far as it is a capacity for not taking the world too seriously, for provoking laughter, for making persons and things seem ridiculous. But, you go on to say, wit is narrower than humor; it is more intellectual and less emotional; it may show brilliance of mind but seldom generosity of mind.

In the following paragraphs this method of definition is followed out, but emphasis is placed on the contrast between wit and humor.

I am quite positive that of the two, humor is the more comfortable and more livable quality. Humorous persons, if their gift is genuine and not a mere shine upon the surface, are always agreeable companions and they sit through the evening best. They have pleasant mouths turned up at the corners. To these corners the great Master of marionettes has fixed the strings, and he holds them in his nimblest fingers to twitch them at the slightest jest. But the mouth of a witty man is hard and sour until the moment of its discharge. Nor is the flash from a witty man always com-

forting, whereas a humorous man radiates a general pleasure and is like another candle in the room.

I admire wit, but I have no real liking for it. It has been too often employed against me, whereas humor is always an ally. It never points an impertinent finger into my defects. Humorous persons do not sit like explosives on a fuse. They are safe and easy comrades. But a wit's tongue is as sharp as a donkey driver's stick. I may gallop the faster for its prodding, yet the touch behind is too persuasive for any comfort.

Wit is a lean creature with sharp inquiring nose, whereas humor has a kindly eye and comfortable girth. Wit, if it be necessary, uses malice to score a point—like a cat it is quick to jump—but humor keeps the peace in an easy chair. Wit has a better voice in a solo, but humor comes into the chorus best. Wit is sharp as a stroke of lightning, whereas humor is diffuse like sunlight. Wit keeps the season's fashions and is precise in the phrases and judgments of the day, but humor is concerned with homely eternal things. Wit wears silk, but humor in homespun endures the wind. Wit sets a snare, whereas humor goes off whistling without a victim in its mind. Wit is sharper company at table, but humor serves best in mischance and in the rain. When it tumbles, wit is sour, but humor goes uncomplainingly without its dinner. Humor laughs at another's jest and holds its sides, while wit sits wrapped in study for a lively answer. But it is a workaday world in which we live, where we get mud upon our boots and come weary to the twilight —it is a world that grieves and suffers from many wounds in these years of war: and therefore as I think of my acquaintance, it is those who are humorous in its best and truest meaning rather than those who are witty who give the most comfortable companionship.—Charles S. Brooks, in *Chimney-Pot Papers.*[1]

The method of comparison and contrast is especially useful when it becomes necessary to distinguish the real meaning of a term from erroneous meanings. Thus used, it often appears in combination with the method of negation: that is, defining a term by stating what it is not. When thus combining methods, be sure to follow your negative statements with a well-reasoned affirmative. The following definition employs the two methods in combination:

What is conservatism in politics? If we are to believe what the young men at Washington have been saying, conservatism is noth-

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ing less than Toryism. And Toryism is simply a blind refusal to accept social and political changes, however inevitable they may seem. Toryism is also a greedy holding-on to established institutions to the great profit of the Tories who manage the institutions. Toryism is privilege—"entrenched privilege," as the orators say. We remember the Tories of our own American Revolution, who held on thus, and were destroyed, and the Tories of eighteenth-century France and nineteenth-century England—all of them gentlemen who were pillars of state, proponents of rank and class, and always a little too selfishly, always with their stubborn heads set against the current of the times. But conservatism, though it respects the established order and often looks with suspicion on quick upheavals, is not Toryism. It is especially unlike Toryism, in that it does not necessarily have any flavor of rank, class, or privilege. In America the poorest bootblack and the most disinherited sharecropper may be, and in fact often are, essentially conservative in temper and habit.

Nor is conservatism, in any true sense of the word, social and political lethargy. The conservative thinker is not an idle-headed mossback, a stick-in-the-mud obstacle to progress, who stands out against change because of his own inertia and stupidity. We have Americans who are lethargic and stupid and inert, but they are not all conservatives. There is a kind of radical, or liberal, or progressive laziness as well as a conservative laziness. Sometimes the most loud-voiced progressives are progressives simply because they do not take the trouble to think.

Conservatism is not any of these things. It must be defined, not by its opposition to change itself, but by opposition to sudden and subversive change. Conservatism accepts change, when change is necessary, but it wishes to move slowly, it asks for deliberation and public debate, it is ready to be persuaded but will not be bullied into change. It defends existing institutions because of the obvious benefits that these institutions have conferred in the past; it is ready to mend them if it is convinced that mending is in order; but it does not wish to destroy utterly the established institutions in the blind hope that some quick and perfect substitute can be got up, to replace in a moment what is the outgrowth of a long process of trial and error.—Anonymous.

The nature of a thing can often best be stated if we define it with reference to its origin or cause, and a consideration of cause will frequently lead to a study of effects. Many words can be

defined according to their etymology, and the etymological definition (which is a definition by origins) will suggest a definition made in terms of the social or historical context in which the word first arose. The word *tithe* means "a tenth part"; and the custom of "tithing," or the giving of a tenth part of one's income to the church, arose during the Middle Ages. A definition of *tithe* would therefore naturally be built up out of these circumstances. Such words as *dictator, romance, lyric, ballad, republic, philosophy,* may be defined in terms of their etymological origins and remote historical associations. *Guild socialism, feudalism, the plantation system, Puritanism,* may be defined in terms of the social and economic causes that produced them.

Certain cautions are necessary. The etymology and ancient history of such terms as *romance* and *plantation* are interesting and revealing but do not shed a great deal of light upon the meaning of those terms today. Definition in terms of origins and causes is most useful when the thing or idea defined represents an ancient rather than a present usage, or when the history of the term actually clarifies its present meaning. Some new words, like *racketeering* and *hitch-hiking,* can readily be defined in terms of the conditions that caused racketeering and hitch-hiking to spring up.

In the following series of definitions, Mark Sullivan shows how the growing materialism of America in the years from 1909 to 1914 brought about a change in the meanings of the words *sell, publicity,* and *propaganda.*

The emphasis on material things in the new words that came into the language has unmistakable meaning. Equally significant is a new meaning that was acquired by an old word.

The verb "sell" in "Webster's Dictionary" for 1929 was still defined as to transfer goods for a price. But in universal practice, to an extent that the dictionary must soon record, "sell" and the process it connotes, had enlarged its domain. To the material world that had been the word's habitat since Christ said, "Go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor," and in a direction different from Christ's admonition, "sell" had invaded the spiritual and intellectual world. To convert a man to a new conviction or point of view was to "sell him the idea." To impress yourself favorably upon another's attention was to "sell yourself to him." The missionary who a generation before would have described his function as to convert

unbelievers, might now have described it, or certainly it would have been so described in the common idiom, as to "sell religion to the heathen." A political leader who in the time of Abraham Lincoln would "go to the people" on the question of abolition, or in 1896 would "educate the people" on the gold standard, would at a later date "sell the League of Nations to the country" or the World Court, or the high tariff or the low tariff. And he would have expressed success in the transaction by saying, in terms of conclusion of a deal, that he had "put it over."

If a commercial interest wished professional aid in "putting over" a new idea, it could find paid practitioners of the art, who called themselves "public relations counsel." That euphemism was successor to "publicity agent"—the substitution being achieved as a commercial adaptation of Talleyrand's epigram, "The chief business of statesmen is to find new terms for institutions which, under their old names, have become odious to the public."

The word "publicity" had passed through a transition similar to that of "sell," but in the reverse direction. As late as the time of Theodore Roosevelt, "publicity" meant letting in the light. Usually it was used in a sense of disinfection, of destroying something undesirable by making the people see and understand it—Woodrow Wilson thought that "pitiless publicity" would cure many of the ills of government. Almost at once "publicity" was annexed by the material world as part of its jargon for acquiring advantage in the world of the mind. "Publicity" was now mainly an art for causing the world to take notice of, and think well of, goods; or of policies which the makers of goods wished to make popular. The word was coming to be synonymous with advertising.

A word that suffered even greater demeaning was "propaganda." In the 1890's it meant, generically, any institution or faith propagating a doctrine; specifically, it was most familiar as the name for an institution in the Catholic Church, the College of Propaganda, founded at Rome in 1622 for the oversight of foreign missions and the education of missionary priests. During almost three hundred years the word retained that sacred connotation without taint from the secular world. During the Great War it came to be used for indoctrinating enemy troops or civilians behind the enemy line with ideas designed to undermine their morale—in plain English, to disseminate deceit artfully. Then it came to be used, with "reverse English," so to speak, as a word for disseminating a different sort of falsehood among the home peoples, with the design of stiffening their morale, or stirring them to greater exertions, or to more bitter

hatred of the enemy. From its military use, the word during the 1920's passed into political use. Propaganda became, to each side of a controversy, a word used to describe ideas expressing the other's point of view. Soon the business world annexed it as in part a new synonym for "publicity."—Mark Sullivan, "New Words," in *Our Times,* Vol. IV.[1]

The following selection, "Two Points of a Joke," by Bernard DeVoto, illustrates the use of informal definition in an expository discussion which, though argumentative and "breezy" in tone, nevertheless confronts illogical assumptions about the West with an array of hard facts that are gradually shaped into a reasonable pattern. In defining—and also in interpreting—the "real West", Mr. DeVoto must first clear the ground by refuting false generalizations about the climate, people, and history of the West. Thus he establishes a basis for his explanation of the distinguishing characteristics of the West, which are to be found, he believes, in the attitude of Westerners toward their environment rather than in the mere statistical facts of their environment. His illustrations are drawn from sources that reveal the Western attitude—folk lore, humor, literature, and "sub-literature."

TWO POINTS OF A JOKE[2]

By Bernard DeVoto

We devoutly believe many things about the American sections and the people who live in them that mean nothing in particular. What is "a real Southerner" or "a typical Middle Westerner"? Everybody knows, everybody specifies in detail, and for the most part everybody is just talking. There must be differences or at least differentiations, but they are hard to isolate and harder to define. An old cliché, not often heard any more, held that Boston was a state of mind. It was probably true: the differences are to be found, if anywhere, in the habit of thought. But they must originate in faint shadings or colorations, and probably they exist rather below

[1]Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936.

[2]Foreword by Bernard DeVoto from *A Treasury of Western Folklore,* edited by B. A. Botkin. Copyright, 1951, by B. A. Botkin. Used by permission of Crown Publishers, Inc.

thought than in its conscious processes. Though minute, they must be complex, for they are products of many forces. A good place to look for them may be the stories people tell about themselves.

Everybody knows that the West is the Land of Little Rain, the arid country, where land will not grow crops unless it is irrigated, where water has exactly the value of blood. So the West begins where the annual rainfall drops below 20 inches, roughly the 100th meridian. East of 100 is something else but west of it is assuredly West. Well, North Platte, Nebraska, and Pierre, South Dakota, are both west of that line; they get about the same amount of rain and ship about the same number of steers. But Pierre is West and North Platte isn't. A large area of Washington gets 80 inches of rain, some of it gets 120 inches, but it would be injudicious to tell the people who live there that they are not Westerners. What about the western slope of California, that fascinating state of mind which tries so diligently to be an improved Texas? San Francisco gets 30 inches of rain: are its people Westerners? All Montana, whose people certainly are, shouts "No!" in concert. But, aware that many favors of providence set it apart from other towns, San Francisco nevertheless counts as foremost among them the fact that it is West. It is thinking accurately. For, stranger, San Francisco is West as all hell.

The West is the largest and the youngest of the sections—and the most paradoxical. Like this: Mount Whitney is the highest place in the United States and from its tip you can look down into Death Valley, the lowest place. Or take that adjective "youngest." To any candid mind New Mexico is not only younger than, say, Pennsylvania, it is younger than Oregon or Colorado. Yet it has a continuity of more than three hundred years; it was traversed by white men long before Cape Ann was, it was both massacring and Christianizing Indians long before the Plymouth Company ever saw one, and it was producing scholars and old families long before Virginia ever bred up a single one. Or this: the South is not the section most imprisoned in its own history, the West is, and yet it has less history than any other section.

Such as it has is pretty violent. History is a social expression of geography and Western geography is violent. The West has all the deserts in the United States and most of the mountain ranges, all the big ones. They are all mixed together. Snow-capped peaks rise from alkali or greasewood plains, an hour's climb will take you from lizards to lichens, an hour's drive from sunstroke to a blizzard. Or look at it the other way: an irrigation canal runs along

a hillside and fifty feet above it you are in cactus and fifty feet below it is an orchard growing better peaches than Georgia ever knew. It follows that the climate is violent. All the places in the United States where temperatures below minus-60° have been recorded are in Montana; all those where temperatures above 120° have been recorded are in Arizona. It is a country of blizzards, cloudbursts, northers, chinooks, every kind of sudden storm, of floods, of landslides, of mudflows, even of earthquakes, and the U. S. volcano is Western. Watch out when you cross a dry gulch. You may be fifty miles from a spring with the sun drying the marrow from your bones, but the arroyo may be about to bury you under an advancing wall of water thirty feet high, from a storm so far away you didn't hear any thunder. On the north side of this valley, carefully inspect your body for ticks; on the south side never mind, the ticks don't carry Rocky Mountain fever.

From the beginning the American pioneer was an adaptable person—he had to be—but till he got to the West he had never had to meet such contrasts and intensities as these. "Hardship" is a subjective word, and it had not been fun to die of starvation at Roanoke or of "the milk sick" at New Salem. But the West was the hardest country to bring in. It was actively, not passively, hostile to men. To trust it was always foolish and usually fatal. One fixed condition of life there was the constant threat of destruction by natural cataclysm. You certainly could love such a country, but you were bound to hate it too—and the splits in the Western soul begin right here. With finding water before we can camp tonight. With a blizzard getting the herd and a freeze getting the apples. With corn ceasing to grow at twelve inches because there has been no rain since April 28. With billions of crickets coming down out of the foothills and settling on the wheat.

Moreover, it was a long time before anyone got into the West who intended to stay there. If it was a violent country, it was treated violently. It was raped more brutally than any other section. Clean out the beaver and go back to the States. Clear-cut the timber and move on. When the grass here is gone, there'll be plenty somewhere else. Beaver, timber, grass were all wealth and seemed inexhaustible. So it was a bonanza country, so it was a boom country, so it was always a country going broke. The true Western stampede is not the thundering herd but the placer miners—frenzied, dreambound, and nightmare-led, herd-minded, violent, and at the end of the grubstake. You might make a strike—so take a chance, back your hunch, shoot the moon . . . Hell will be more beautiful and more

productive than the valley of a stream that has been placer-mined. So a dredge comes in and makes it worse.

The boom-or-bust psychology is not specifically the miner's; it is Western. Beef is down and you're in hock to the bank (till a few years ago 12 per cent was the usual interest on loans, 20 per cent not uncommon); but next year beef will be up; so slap on another mortgage and buy yearlings. This drought can't last forever; so raise a loan somehow and plant more wheat; and next year we'll be riding in Cadillacs. Back your hunch, you'll be able to get out before the bust—and a Western proverb remarks that it takes three bankruptcies to make a farm. A drought makes the Dust Bowl out of wheat farms that would have been cattle ranges, and everybody goes broke. The East bails out the West, the Soil Conservation Service teaches the farmers how to stay solvent through the next drought, everybody gets religion—and when the wet half of the cycle coincides with the war boom in farm products, the Soil Conservation Districts get voted out of existence and everybody backslides and plants wheat. That's Western, pardner, but not so Western as the satchel-farmer who under the same stimulus plowed ranges that never had been plowed, knowing that the unstable soil so loosened would soon blow away but counting on getting out before another Dust Bowl formed.

All men find out they are fools. In the West, necessarily, they made that discovery with the dramatic violence inherent in the country. The by now tired symbol is the covered wagon that heads west lettered "Pike's Peak or Bust" and comes back lettered "Busted, by God." But make the white top an emigrant wagon and see it stalled in some stretch of red-rock desert, the wheels buckled, the tongue snapped off, and two of the three ox teams bloated and dying from alkali water. Or transpose it into the crumbling shacks of a ghost town where the last dust has been washed from Bonanza Bar and a few veterans too broke to move on are panning the worthless gravel once more. Or think of Pete, Jens, or Emil with nothing but a foreclosure-notice in his wallet watching one more set of false rain clouds pile up above the peak before loading the kids in a borrowed wagon and driving off down the road. An indigenous Western idiom is an expletive, "Well, I'll be go to hell!" We arrive at one of those faint colorations: part of the Western consciousness is the self-derision of a man who has shot the moon and missed.

Presently that exasperation got a second edge, for the West turned out to belong to the East. The Westerner had been so intent on chasing his mirage, on filling his straight and cashing in, that more

realistic people had jumped his claim. Westerners were just hired hands, principals in a gaudy drama that might be called "The Rapers Raped." They were in hock not only to the bank but to the railroad, the grain elevator, the water company, and a lot of shrewd gents who borrowed Eastern money at 3 or 4 per cent, lent it to them at 12 or 15, and took over. They were cutting a corporation's timber, running a corporation's herd, mining a corporation's ore, harvesting a corporation's wheat. Eastern corporations, which piped the West's wealth east and thereby earned the nation's applause as Empire Builders. Already aware that he had missed the moon, the Westerner now understood that he had shot at it with a blank cartridge. What recourse has a doubly self-exposed sucker got? He can make himself the butt of his own sardonic joke, and he can seek compensation in acting out gaudy dramas in which he plays a heroic role. With the first he can immunize himself against the laughter of others, and though the second will not take in the local residents maybe strangers will fall for it.

The pulp stories mass-produced just off Broadway, in which the cowpoke shoots it out with someone, have nothing to do with the West but are right in one respect: gunfire is violent. In the stories which the West has always told itself, the shading or coloration that makes them Western is usually twofold. Usually there is an element of violence, which may be not overt but latent or perhaps only conceptual, and usually there is an element of fantasy, which may be apparent at first glance but is just as likely to be hidden deep down at the roots. The Western story tends to depersonalize man, and why not?—drought, blizzards, scalping do, the vast and empty Western landscape does. Or it tends to cut him down to size—quite a way down. It tends to be a joke on the protagonist, though there is no requirement that the joke be funny. The Westerner lives in the West, and a man seen making his way across a sagebrush desert rimmed by mile-high peaks lacks stature. If he can't see himself in scale the story-teller can and has been there himself. A tragic figure, this thirsty, sun-baked wanderer in barren space? No, not tragic; on so small a scale there can't be tragedy.

Humor is a good index. In the humor of all other sections one basic situation is the sly yokel outwitting the city slicker who had taken him for a simpleton. For generations this fable has caressed the self-esteem of rural populations, but it does not often turn up in the West. There are no Western yokels—I should have said earlier that this is also the most sophisticated section—and if there were they would still be Westerners—that is, men who have found

out that both nature and the United States sold them a salted claim. Western humor is thus self-depreciatory. It is also extreme, bizarre, grotesque—or understated, oblique, ironical, and paradoxical. But violent and out of fantasy. The liquor that was called forty-rod farther east is tarantula juice or Taos lightning here—extreme, from nature's hostility, with a tinge of remorselessness. Or take the judge's sentence at the end of a traditional yarn that is four-sevenths historical fact: "Alfred Packer, you black-hearted Republican cannibal, stand up. I sentence you to be hanged by the neck till you are dead. Why, you man-eating enemy of society, there was only six Democrats in Hinsdale County and, by God, you've et five of them." It has impact and it ought to, for it originates in murder and cannibalism. But observe that the punishment is for political activity.

Both strains were strengthened by the inheritance from the Indians. They were the earliest Westerners, and the first-comers from the East, setting the pattern, treated them in precisely the way they themselves were to be treated by the East when their time came. They took the country away from the ones who had thought they owned it, with more bloodshed than the East was to inflict on them but hardly with greater violence, and felt superior to the suckers they had displaced. There is much cruelty in the Indian's stories, cruelty as a force of nature and the condition of life. And an Indian story is always fantasy: dream and reality are the same substance, no distinction can be made between them, for no difference exists. That is perfectly harmonious with the Western setting—vindictive toward mankind and, if beautiful, so fantastic, so improbable, that it may well be dream.

See this literature and sub-literature, then, as the discharge or resolution of strains so great that they can only just be borne. Feeling his personality shrunk to miniature size by the enormousness in which it must exist, surviving his country's hostility only in a battle that may be a tie to date but goes on under constant threat of annihilation, aware that all the con-men in the United States have sold him gold-bricks and all the note-shavers have defrauded him, aware that he will never lick his inborn compulsion to pursue mirages which he knows are false but just this once may be the real bonanza—the Westerner has shaped his literature to a therapeutic purpose. In outline it is confession by avoidance, and usually it is self-derisive. If any of it appears to be simple, do not be deceived. The consciousness it expresses is complex, the basic pattern is intricate, the symbols are convoluted. The violence cannot be

separated out from the fantasy, nor either of them from the inner derision. No doubt it is an admission of defeat but what literature is not? And the self-scorn with which the admission is made is at the opposite pole from self-pity. A man who is laughing at himself is secure against the cruder indecencies of fate, and if he is not a tragic figure, he has dignity.

And there remains a satisfaction very solacing to Westerners, who have paid high to become connoisseurs of the doublecross. Presumably Texans would not consider it ridiculous but only their just due if the United States at large were to accept at par their tireless advertising of their own virility. They miss the second point of a joke that the West greatly relishes. Of the symbols of American experience that are heavily charged with emotion and capable of instantly arousing it, a disproportionate number are Western. List some of them: the trapper (the West's variant of the man in buckskin), the Forty-Niner, the prospector, the cowboy—always and especially the cowboy. That Hollywood has sentimentalized them is unimportant—but serious literature has romanticized them. It has made them stand for innumerable magnificences which the West knows all too sardonically never existed. They do not fail to rouse emotion in the Western soul, but it is an emotion associated with a desperately hard way of making a living.

Those batwing chaps (seldom worn now since we don't run steers and when we do, use a Ford) were just a pretty good means of protecting your legs from brush, but if the dudes want to believe them symbolic of the gallant caballero's adventurous life, well, I'll be go to hell!

It reverses the joke. In addition it creates an opportunity to cash in, to get back some of the money that was so efficiently funneled east. (Irrigating is desperately hard work too, but if a billion-dollar dam symbolizes American Achievement to dudes willing to pay for it, we sure Achieve Miracles out West.) But most of all, the dude's eagerness to romanticize Western trades and businesses is emancipating. It sanctions the Westerner to act out his dramatic fantasy not only artfully, not only derisively, but with the heady knowledge that he is getting away with it. He can put on his picturesque costumes, get out in front of his improbable backdrop, and be admired as the gallant caballero while he knows in his heart that he is just a hired man. For the duration of the drama, or at least of the dude's illusion, he can carry Sam Colt's equalizer on his hip, swagger as one ready to spit in any man's eye, and bid you smile, stranger, when you say that. As a rule you can't talk that way to a stranger

who owns your horse and batwing chaps and holds a chattel mortgage on the equalizer, but if he succumbs to your private fantasy, shoot the moon.

Exercises and Suggestions for Themes

1. What methods of definition are used in Bernard DeVoto's "Two Points of a Joke"? Write a more formal definition, entitled "The West of Bernard DeVoto," in which you express, in a less colloquial and belligerent style, what you consider to be the substantial core of Mr. DeVoto's very expansive definition.

2. Give a brief definition, as strictly logical as you can make it, of each term in *one* of the following groups of terms:

Admiration, respect, reverence, awe
Atheism, infidelity, skepticism, paganism
Religion, ethics, sanctimony
Grand opera, light opera, folk opera, musical comedy
Street, road, highway, alley, lane
Bouquet, corsage, flower arrangement
Shotgun, rifle, carbine, tommy-gun
River, creek, branch, brook, estuary

3. Make a study of some term that has changed in meaning during recent times and write a definition in which you trace the successive changes. Use the general method employed by Mark Sullivan (p. 409 ff.). Some suggestions:

Drive	Contact
Security	Quiz
Custom-made	Racket
Transcription	Screen
Brief	Angle

4. Write an informal definition of one of the following pairs of terms. Use comparison and contrast.

Vocational guidance and fatherly advice
A winning team and a good team
Good politics and statesmanship
Economy and parsimony
A sinful act and a criminal act
A partnership and a corporation
A ballad and a folk song
A "Cadillac farmer" and a "dirt farmer"

5. Write an informal definition of one of the following terms:

A "hot-rod" driver
A "rabble rouser"
A summer resort
Lobbying
Pressure politics
A parkway
Contour plowing
An aria
A retreat (in the religious sense)
A crusade

6. Does the use of figurative language in Brooks' definition of wit and humor (p. 406) render the definition logically invalid? Test the validity of Brooks' definition by reducing it, if possible, to a logical form in which you avoid the use of figures of speech.

7. What methods of definition are used in Carl Becker's discussion of democracy (p. 404)? Write a definition in which you follow Becker's method. Suggested subjects:

The republican form of government
Matrimony as a sacrament
The family size farm
Athletic scholarships
Military discipline

8. Define one of the following terms. Use the "historical method." That is, refer, as far as may be necessary, to remote origin, etymology, historical development.

Jury
Eminent domain
Quit rent
Corral
Ranch house
Journeyman
Speaker (of a legislative body)
Penthouse
Gamut
Bank (commercial)
Posthaste

2. *ANALYSIS*

Instead of defining the axe as a tool we may be called on to discuss axes in general and to declare how many kinds of axes there are, and what they are like. Axes, we may discover, may be divided into groups according to the use to which they are put: wood-axes, meat-axes, battle-axes, and so on. Each of these three

kinds of axes may, in turn, be subdivided, according to the material out of which they are made, or their weight, or the kind of handle or blade with which they are fitted. If we pursue the search to the end, until we have drawn up a scheme which includes all conceivable varieties of axes, we have then made an analysis of axes by the method of classification.

On the other hand, suppose that we consider the axe itself, any typical axe, and proceed to break it down into its essential parts. An axe consists of two main parts, a head and a handle (or helve). The head is wedge-shaped. Generally it has a blunt side which tapers to a cutting edge, but sometimes it has a cutting edge on each side. The head is pierced with a hole, oval in shape, in which the handle is fitted. It is generally made of tempered steel. The handle is made of wood. It is fitted to the head in such a way as to give a proper leverage for chopping and hewing. It is curved a little at the upper end and smoothed and narrowed so as to fit a chopper's hand. When we have carried such an examination of the parts of an axe down to the last essential detail, through all the necessary divisions and subdivisions, we have made an analysis of an axe, by the method of partition.

Analysis is this process of logical division. The logical division of a group of individual objects or ideas is analysis by *classification*. The logical division of a single object or idea into its parts is analysis by *partition*. If the classification or partition is complete and consistent, so that all possible classes or all essential parts are identified and put in a systematic arrangement, then the analysis is a strict logical analysis.

Formal Analysis. Just as logical definition is the basis of formal definition, so logical analysis is the basis of formal analysis. Formal analysis must observe two absolutely rigid requirements: (1) the division must be complete; (2) the analysis must follow, throughout its process of division, one consistent principle of classification or partition.

Completeness of analysis means that everything must be accounted for. If you are classifying typewriters, your classification must include all kinds of typewriters without exception. Or if you are making an analysis, by partition, of an individual typewriter, you must not omit the tabular stop or the back space key.

Consistency of principle is particularly important in analysis by classification. You must choose the principle of division which will bring the subject analyzed into the best logical order, and, having chosen that principle, you must adhere to it. You violate the rules of logical analysis and throw your explanation into confusion if, for example, you begin to classify trees according to the hardness of their wood and then, finding your analysis difficult to carry through, shift your base and classify trees according to leaf-shape, or bark, or size. Do not mix your principles of classification, but, if you find one basis of classification is not working out satisfactorily, discard it and try another.

The principles of logical analysis are the basis of scientific procedure. Scientific research is essentially analysis. Equipped with a working hypothesis, at which he has arrived by experiment and observation, the scientist proceeds to classify metals, or animals, or bacilli, or plants, according to their properties; and he is forever attempting, as he tests and examines object after object, to make his classification complete and correct. Or, making the process of division intensive rather than extensive, he analyzes a rock, a living tissue, a flower into its component parts.

Analysis is as pertinent and useful in other fields of knowledge as in physical science. Through analysis we bring our knowledge into order and make our reasoning powers work accurately. Analysis is most useful, of course, where knowledge must be treated on a large scale: as in the historian's study of social movements and their causes, the anthropologist's study of man's racial and cultural characteristics, the political scientist's examination of governmental institutions, the ecologist's consideration of the relationship between the forms of plant and animal life and the environment in which they are found. In its everyday practical use, it appears in the form of corporation reports, business surveys, architects' estimates, housing plans, government reports. For that matter, bookkeeping and accounting are systems of analysis. The weather report which you see in your newspaper is based upon careful scientific analysis.

The student will not have immediate occasion to engage in analysis on such a large scale, but there is hardly a task set for him in his college work which does not in some way or other call for an analytical procedure. His early work in chemistry is qualitative

analysis. His mathematics problems, his course paper in history or political science, his study of poetry or drama or philosophy—all require him to make logical analysis the habit of his mind. Without this discipline his thinking will be weak and inaccurate, and his writing, on all serious subjects, will be shallow and impressionistic.

In the earlier stages of composition work, you were urged to look steadily at the subject, to break it up into its main divisions and subdivisions, to see the relation of the parts to the whole. You were required, perhaps, to make an outline showing such divisions. All this was analysis; and you should now see that the service performed by an outline is to compel you to analyze the subject. A good outline is an analytical scheme of a subject. That is its chief purpose and its only merit.

Practice in formal analysis is valuable in steadying your thinking and in making it accurate and conclusive. Like practice in definition, it is also valuable in so far as it demands scrupulous honesty and impersonality on the part of the writer. Your personal views of the subject which you are analyzing are of no immediate importance and must be set aside. Your object is to ascertain the truth and to set forth the truth, and your private opinions, strong and well-justified though they may be, must not be allowed to color your analysis. The biologist, when he studies the anatomy of the frog, is not permitted to have an opinion, good or bad, of frogs. The physician, diagnosing his patient's ailments, must not allow his good or bad opinion of his patient to interfere with his diagnosis. The purpose of formal analysis is to train you in this rational discipline and to make it carry over into your writing.

Certain principles should be emphasized.

First, *choose carefully the basis of division of the subject.* A two-part division (called a dichotomy) is the simplest, but the least trustworthy. Hats, for example, may be classified into hats that fit the wearer and hats that do not fit; but that classification does not tell us much about hats. A woman will probably classify hats according to the occasion for which the hat is to be worn, or according to the color schemes in the wardrobe she is planning. A man, possibly, will classify hats according to their durability. The hat-maker will have a series of classifications, according to material, price, and style. Whatever principle of division you choose, be sure that it

can be carried through so as to reveal something important about hats—or whatever you are discussing.

Second, *follow through with utmost consistency your principle of division.* A division of literature into prose, poetry, history, detective stories, and propaganda would be absurd. The first two divisions would be made on the basis of literary form; the last three touch variously upon subject-matter and intention. In large-scale analyses, such as government reports or sociological surveys, the authors may use several different systems of classification, but they are then engaging in a series of analyses rather than in one analysis.

Third, *do not allow your divisions or subdivisions to overlap or repeat.* The main divisions must be mutually exclusive, and the subdivisions, taken within their groups, must be mutually exclusive.

Fourth, *be sure your analysis is complete.* In order to test for completeness, use the following check: The sum of the main divisions should equal the whole; and the sum of each group of subdivisions should equal the main division of which they are a part. Thus, the instruments of a symphony orchestra are divided into the following main groups: (1) strings; (2) brasses; (3) wood-winds; (4) percussion instruments. These four groups together add up to make the whole orchestra. And division 1, the strings, includes the following: violins, violas, cellos, bass viols, harp, piano (which add up to make the complete division).

Informal Analysis. Informal analysis, sometimes called "literary analysis," differs from formal analysis in being less complete in its division of the subject. It does not seek to give all the classes or parts into which the subject may be divided, but only those which are significant for purposes of discussion. It concentrates upon those aspects of the subject which will best illuminate and interpret it. Informal analysis often acknowledges its lack of completeness by some statement of the limits within which it works; but within those limits, generally, it proposes to be complete.

Since informal analysis is interpretative in its aims, it is naturally less severe in manner than formal analysis. It may therefore use freely the devices common in literary interpretation: figures of speech, analogies, a literary vocabulary. It may be humorous,

sprightly, pugnacious. It may have an intimate, colloquial, personal flavor. But it must not take this direction at the expense of truth. It may not be logically complete, in the formal sense, but it must not be illogical. It must not do violence to facts, it cannot afford to be merely fanciful, it must not make a parade of jocularity, ill temper, prejudice, affectation.

A good newspaper editorial on the advisability of building a power dam at a certain site may be based upon the formal analysis of engineers and other experts, but from their reports it will select those points which are of the greatest interest and the greatest importance. The editorial is limited by requirements of space and by the necessity of appealing to a general, not an expert, audience; and it will therefore be an informal analysis. A geologist's report on the advisability of boring for oil must omit no relevant factor; it will be formal analysis. A student's paper on the oil industry, or on overproduction in the oil fields, or on the place of oil in American life will be an informal analysis because it will be selective, not exhaustive.

An informal analysis may indeed simplify its analysis so far as to concentrate upon one extremely significant aspect of the subject —one which is central in interpretation and can be taken as suggesting or symbolizing all that needs to be remembered for the specific purposes of the written piece. Thus Napoleon may be studied as the incarnation of the spirit of the French Revolution; or Tennyson as the voice of Victorian England; or the New Deal (in the phrase of one person who has discussed it) as "the first presidential administration with a social conscience." Such a centralization, of course, brings us once more to the old question of the guiding purpose in composition. The guiding purpose, for informal analysis, does exactly what the principle of division does for formal analysis: it gives the writer a standard for judging his own consistency and relative completeness in treating his subject.

Methods of Informal Analysis. The three methods most useful in informal analysis are (1) enumeration, (2) statement of root principle, and (3) statement of the problem. These three methods lead to the kind of division typical of analysis, but they make their approach in different ways.

A. ENUMERATION

Without trying to be complete as to facts, the writer sets forth, in order, the points of his analysis. Thus the appeal of Sir Walter Scott's poetry to young people may be attributed to four qualities of that poetry: romantic subject-matter, simplicity of style, emphasis on action rather than on motive, and Scott's own contagious enthusiasm. In *Ends and Means,* Aldous Huxley considers the causes of war, and finds that people "wish it to exist for a variety of reasons." The phrase, "variety of reasons," implies that Huxley does not propose to give all the reasons, as would be necessary in formal analysis. He does, however, give nine reasons, which are set forth under the following heads:

1. "Many people like war because they find their peace-time occupations either positively humiliating and frustrating, or just negatively boring. . . .
2. "A principal cause of war is nationalism, and nationalism is immensely popular because it is psychologically satisfying to individual nationalists. . . .
3. "That first of the political causes of war is war itself. . . .
4. "Wars may be made for the purpose of furthering a religious or political creed. . . .
5. "In the past, many wars were fought for the sake of the 'glory' resulting from victory. . . .
6. "Glory is generally regarded as the perquisite of the general or king; but not always or exclusively. In a country whose people are moved by strong nationalistic feelings, glory can be thought of as pertaining in some degree to every member of the community. . . .
7. "Of the economic causes of war the first in historical importance is the desire of one nation to possess itself of fertile territory belonging to another nation. . . . In modern times wars have been fought . . . for the possession or control of raw materials indispensable to industry. . . .
8. "Under capitalism, all highly industrialized countries need foreign markets. . . .
9. "This brings us to an extremely important cause of war—the pursuit by politically powerful minorities within each nation of their own private interest."—Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means.*

But an analysis by enumeration need not tabulate its points in a strict one, two, three order. The following selection offers examples of informal analysis by the enumerative method, although it contains no numeral indicators whatever:

A COMPARISON OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF CANADA AND NEW ENGLAND[1]

By Francis Parkman

Not institutions alone, but geographical position, climate, and many other conditions unite to form the educational influences that, acting through successive generations, shape the character of nations and communities.

It is easy to see the nature of the education, past and present, which wrought on the Canadians and made them what they were. An ignorant population, sprung from a brave and active race, but trained to subjection and dependence through centuries of feudal and monarchical despotism, was planted in the wilderness by the hand of authority, and told to grow and flourish. Artificial stimulants were applied, but freedom was withheld. Perpetual intervention of government, regulations, restrictions, encouragements sometimes more mischieveous than restrictions, a constant uncertainty what the authorities would do next, the fate of each man resting less with himself than with another, volition enfeebled, self-reliance paralyzed,—the condition, in short, of a child held always under the rule of a father, in the main well-meaning and kind, sometimes generous, sometimes neglectful, often capricious, and rarely very wise,—such were the influences under which Canada grew up. If she had prospered, it would have been sheer miracle. A man, to be a man, must feel that he holds his fate, in some good measure, in his own hands.

But this was not all. Against absolute authority there was a counter influence, rudely and wildly antagonistic. Canada was at the very portal of the great interior wilderness. The St. Lawrence and the Lakes were the highway to that domain of savage freedom; and thither the disfranchised, half-starved seignior, and the discouraged *habitant* who could find no market for his produce, naturally enough betook themselves. Their lesson of savagery was well

[1]From *The Old Regime in Canada.*

learned, and for many a year a boundless license and a stiff-handed authority battled for the control of Canada. Nor, to the last, were church and state fairly masters of the field. The French rule was drawing towards its close when the intendant complained that though twenty-eight companies of regular troops were quartered in the colony, there were not soldiers enough to keep the people in order. One cannot but remember that in a neighboring colony, far more populous, perfect order prevailed, with no other guardians than a few constables chosen by the people themselves.

Whence arose this difference, and other differences equally striking, between the rival colonies? It is easy to ascribe them to a difference of political and religious institutions; but the explanation does not cover the ground. The institutions of New England were utterly inapplicable to the population of New France, and the attempt to apply them would have wrought nothing but mischief. There are no political panaceas, except in the imagination of political quacks. To each degree and each variety of public development there are corresponding institutions, best answering the public needs; and what is meat to one is poison to another. Freedom is for those who are fit for it. The rest will lose it, or turn it to corruption. Church and state were right in exercising authority over a people which had not learned the first rudiments of self-government. Their fault was not that they exercised authority, but that they exercised too much of it, and, instead of weaning the child to go alone, kept him in perpetual leading-strings, making him, if possible, more and more dependent, and less and less fit for freedom.

In the building up of colonies, England succeeded and France failed. The cause lies chiefly in the vast advantage drawn by England from the historical training of her people in habits of reflection, forecast, industry, and self-reliance,—a training which enabled them to adopt and maintain an invigorating system of self-rule, totally inapplicable to their rivals.

The New England colonists were far less fugitives from oppression than voluntary exiles seeking the realization of an idea. They were neither peasants nor soldiers, but a substantial Puritan yeomanry, led by Puritan gentlemen and divines in thorough sympathy with them. They were neither sent out by the king, governed by him, nor helped by him. They grew up in utter neglect, and continued neglect was the only boon they asked. Till their increasing strength roused the jealousy of the Crown, they were virtually inde-

pendent; a republic, but by no means a democracy. They chose their governor and all their rulers from among themselves, made their own government and paid for it, supported their own clergy, defended themselves, and educated themselves. Under the hard and repellent surface of New England society lay the true foundations of a stable freedom,—conscience, reflection, faith, patience, and public spirit. The cement of common interests, hopes, and duties compacted the whole people like a rock of conglomerate; while the people of New France remained in a state of political segregation, like a basket of pebbles held together by the enclosure that surrounds them.

It may be that the difference of historical antecedents would alone explain the difference of character between the rival colonies; but there are deeper causes, the influence of which went far to determine the antecedents themselves. The Germanic race, and especially the Anglo-Saxon branch of it, is peculiarly masculine, and, therefore, peculiarly fitted for self-government. It submits its action habitually to the guidance of reason, and has the judicial faculty of seeing both sides of a question. The French Celt is cast in a different mould. He sees the end distinctly, and reasons about it with an admirable clearness; but his own impulses and passions continually turn him away from it. Opposition excites him; he is impatient of delay, is impelled always to extremes, and does not readily sacrifice a present inclination to an ultimate good. He delights in abstractions and generalizations, cuts loose from unpleasing facts, and roams through an ocean of desires and theories.

While New England prospered and Canada did not prosper, the French system had at least one great advantage. It favored military efficiency. The Canadian population sprang in great part from soldiers, and was to the last systematically reinforced by disbanded soldiers. Its chief occupation was a continual training for the forest war; it had little or nothing to lose, and little to do but fight and range the woods. This was not all. The Canadian government was essentially military. At its head was a soldier nobleman, often an old and able commander, and those beneath him caught his spirit and emulated his example. In spite of its political nothingness, in spite of poverty and hardship, and in spite even of trade, the upper stratum of Canadian society was animated by the pride and fire of that gallant *noblesse* which held war as its only worthy calling, and prized honor more than life. As for the *habitant,* the forest, lake, and river were his true school; and here, at least, he was an apt

scholar. A skilful woodsman, a bold and adroit canoe-man, a willing fighter in time of need, often serving without pay, and receiving from government only his provisions and his canoe, he was more than ready at any time for any hardy enterprise; and in the forest warfare of skirmish and surprise there were few to match him. An absolute government used him at will, and experienced leaders guided his rugged valor to the best account.

The New England man was precisely the material with which Cromwell formed his invincible "Ironsides"; but he had very little forest experience. His geographical position cut him off completely from the great wilderness of the interior. The sea was his field of action. Without the aid of government, and in spite of its restrictions, he built up a prosperous commerce, and enriched himself by distant fisheries, neglected by the rivals before whose doors they lay. He knew every ocean from Greenland to Cape Horn, and the whales of the north and of the south had no more dangerous foe. But he was too busy to fight without good cause, and when he turned his hand to soldiering it was only to meet some pressing need of the hour. The New England troops in the early wars were bands of raw fishermen and farmers, led by civilians decorated with military titles, and subject to the slow and uncertain action of legislative bodies. The officers had not learned to command, nor the men to obey. The remarkable exploit of the capture of Louisburg, the strongest fortress in America, was the result of mere audacity and hardihood, backed by the rarest good luck.

B. STATEMENT OF ROOT PRINCIPLE

In an analysis organized upon a statement of root principle, the writer attempts, before making any division, to express the meaning of his subject as a whole. He sums it up in a word. He concentrates his gaze upon the one feature of his subject that is the key to all the rest. In short, he gets at the root of the matter. After doing this he may give the evidence that supports his centralized analysis, or using his root principle as an aid to division, he proceeds by the method of partition or classification.

In "The Road of Rails," Robert Selph Henry reduces the principle of the railroad to one thing: "the track." He then proceeds mainly by the method of partition, to apply this root principle.

THE ROAD OF RAILS[1]

By Robert Selph Henry

The essential and unique thing about a railroad is the track. There were tracks long before there were locomotive steam engines, or even stationary steam engines, and no matter what may be the locomotive power of the future, still there will be tracks.

Rails joined together in track are, in effect, continuous girders of great strength and carry capacity. Upon these girders, these two narrow strips of steel out of the whole width of the track structure, there is concentrated the load. By them, the load is distributed through the broader area of the timber ties and the still greater area of the ballast to the earth grade or the supporting structure beneath. That is the first job of track—to support the load.

Its second job is to furnish a smooth surface upon which a minimum of engine horsepower can do a maximum of transportation work. To drive a transport plane through the air requires, speaking in rough and general averages, about 100 engine horsepower for each ton of weight. Passenger automobiles have some sixty horsepower per ton, ordinarily, but passenger trains on rails are pulled at fast schedules by three or four horsepower per ton.

Speaking again in rough and general figures, the freight truck operating on the highway requires about fifteen horsepower per ton of weight. Maintaining similar speeds under ordinary operating conditions as to grades and curves, a freight train on tracks requires less than two horsepower per ton.

Even on the water the same sort of comparison as to expenditure of mechanical energy in doing transportation work holds good. Loads are moved in ships and barges with ease because the surface on which they are moved, water, is level. On level railroad track, the same amount of power moves the same loads at greater speed, just as a man can run faster and with less effort than he can swim.

Other surfaces can be, and are, built to perform the first two functions of track—furnishing a surface that is both smooth and supporting for the rolling wheel—but in its third job, guiding the wheels for whole trains of cars "tracking" behind an engine at speed, the road of rails is unique among all constructions on the surface of the earth.

[1]From *This Fascinating Railroad Business*, by Robert S. Henry. Copyright, 1942, 1943. Used by permission of the publishers, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

C. STATEMENT OF A PROBLEM

The informal analysis which is based upon the statement of a problem—with its subsequent solution worked out—is probably one of the most difficult of logical exercises, and it is also one of the most important of all the applications of logic. The statement of a problem calls for analysis because it requires the thinker or writer to separate relevant matters from irrelevant matters, important things from unimportant things, significant factors from insignificant or misleading factors. We may lay it down as an axiom, almost, that most of the problems put before us go unsolved, or are solved badly, because the nature of the problems themselves is not clearly perceived and is even less often clearly stated.

A judge's charge to a jury is a statement of the problem before the jury, considered in the light of the law. An architect who is employed to design a building of a certain type, meeting certain specifications as to cost and size, and located on a certain terrain, must state his problem and see it clearly before he can give an estimate of what the building will cost or draw the plans or sign a contract. A student who is asked to write a paper on the nature of the tragedy in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* must first ask himself what is the nature of the tragic conflict that involves the leading character—he must state the problem of the play, which is also the problem of Hamlet's character.

In composition, the statement of a problem is almost the same thing as the correct delimitation of the subject. The writer states, but sets aside, any factors which may obscure a clear view of what the real problem is; then he goes on to state and discuss the problem itself.

In the following selection, David Daiches first *states* the problem that a writer of a boys' adventure story must face: that is, how to depict a sufficiently picturesque "villain," and so to develop a really interesting conflict between vice and virtue, without making the villain too much of a "hero" and so doing injury to the cause of virtue. By way of illustration, Mr. Daiches presents an inferior type of solution of this problem. He then goes on to the much superior solution achieved by Robert Louis Stevenson in *Treasure Island.*

THE PROBLEM OF WRITING AN ADVENTURE STORY[1]

By David Daiches

The problem to be faced by any writer of a boys' adventure story of this kind [*Treasure Island*] is that, while the struggle has to be essentially between the good and the bad, the real romantic interest tends to lie with the bad. Picturesque villainy is naturally more appealing in such a context than everyday virtue, and the author's task is to enlist the sympathies of the reader at the same time on the side of virtue and of the picturesque. This can be done, as it has been done in recent American popular boys' fiction and films, by substituting the G-man for the gangster and insisting that to live virtuously is often to live picturesquely and dangerously at the same time, but it makes for a much richer narrative texture if the problem is faced by shading the gradations of virtue and vice from the completely unsympathetic villain (like Israel Hands) to the complete hero (like Dr. Livesey) and by keeping in the centre of the picture a character like Long John who, though villainous in intention, is often admirable in action. It becomes important, when such a technique is employed, to detach this half-way character from the side of evil, to which he originally belongs, and, by some development of the plot, to put him in a relation with the other side which none of his companions can achieve. Stevenson has managed all this very deftly, and the part played by Silver in the latter part of the book is sufficient to arouse the reader's admiration for certain aspects of his character unmixed with any approval of villainy as such. The non-committal end of Silver—neither full fortune, like Jim and his friends, nor full misfortune, like the other pirates—lays the final emphasis on his special function in the plot.

The following selections give further opportunity for observing the use of analytical methods by experienced and able writers. Richard M. Weaver distinguishes "three levels of conscious reflection" as a preliminary to his book-length examination of the plight of our culture; Charles and William Beard classify, in a thoroughgoing logical way, the "pressures" brought to bear upon members of Congress; and Graham Hutton, using a more informal procedure,

[1]From *Robert Louis Stevenson*, by David Daiches. Reprinted by permission of the publisher, New Directions.

selects for comment those features of Chicago which, in his opinion, set it off from other cities.

THREE LEVELS OF THOUGHT[1]

By Richard M. Weaver

Every man participating in a culture has three levels of conscious reflection: his specific ideas about things, his general beliefs or convictions, and his metaphysical dream of the world.

The first of these are the thoughts he employs in the activity of daily living; they direct his disposition of immediate matters and, so, constitute his worldliness. One can exist on this level alone for limited periods, though pure worldliness must eventually bring disharmony and conflict.

Above this lies his body of beliefs, some of which may be heritages simply, but others of which he will have acquired in the ordinary course of his reflection. Even the simplest souls define a few rudimentary conceptions about the world, which they repeatedly apply as choices present themselves. These, too, however, rest on something more general.

Surmounting all is an intuitive feeling about the immanent nature of reality, and this is the sanction to which both ideas and beliefs are ultimately referred for verification. Without the metaphysical dream it is impossible to think of men living together harmoniously over an extent of time. The dream carries with it an evaluation, which is the bond of spiritual community.

PRESSURE GROUPS[2]

By Charles A. and William Beard

So far we have spoken of Congress as if it were merely a determinate body of representatives working at a given spot—the national capitol. In reality this is an illusion. Congress is a part of the living

[1]From *Ideas Have Consequences*, by Richard M. Weaver. Copyright, 1948. Reprinted by permission of the author and of The University of Chicago Press, publisher.

[2]From *The American Leviathan: The Republic in the Machine Age*, by Charles Beard and William Beard, 1930. By permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.

organism of American society—united with that society not only on election day but throughout the whole course of its proceedings. Each of the 531 Senators and Representatives is a personality, with a cultural heritage of his own, possessing immediate associations, including economic affiliations, with his constituents. In the process of winning his seat he has made commitments and formed ties which bind him as a legislator. After he arrives at Washington, perhaps even before, he comes under wider influences. Indeed he may owe his election largely to funds furnished by the congressional campaign committee of his party—funds derived from sources outside of his district. Once in Washington he forms connections with his party in Congress, with an organization having national responsibilities and subject to forces operating on a national scale.

In the discharge of his duties the member of Congress is, therefore, under pressure from two directions—his constituents at home, particularly the local party leaders, and individuals and associations operating in Washington. And it must be remembered that various elements in his double constituency are themselves united by innumerable ties. The farmers, manufacturers, and trade unionists of his district have national affiliations, and national associations in their turn have local branches. All of them are welded into solid bodies by the post-office, the telegraph, and the radio. Theoretically the member of Congress represents free and equal heads—all animated by a common aspiration—the public good. In reality he is under constant surveillance by powerful groups linked in chains throughout the country.

Considered according to type those groups may be marshalled in four classes—economic, professional, reform, and religious. To the first belong the industrial and trade associations, organized on a national basis, numbering about one thousand, and including all important divisions such as railways, oil, steel, retail stores, and public utilities. To this class also belong the farmers' organizations —the National Grange, the Farm Bureau Federation and the Farmers Union. Under this head comes organized labor, directed by the American Federation of Labor and the Railway Brotherhoods. Functioning both coöperatively and independently is the Federal Employees Union, concerned especially with the hours, wages, and conditions of work in the government service. Likewise partly economic in character, various professional bodies—lawyers, engineers, and architects for example—offer advice and counsel in technical matters. Not wholly disassociated from economic considerations is the American Legion, speaking for the veterans of the World War;

for, besides its other activities, it is constantly concerned with appropriations for hospitals and pensions, conveying benefits to its members.

Acting as reform organizations not seeking economic legislation as such, at least directly, are literally scores of societies, large and small. Some of them lobby for bigger appropriations for the Army and Navy in the name of patriotism—the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Navy League, the Reserve Officers Association, and the American Legion. Incidentally munition makers and shipbuilders rejoice in their activities. On the other side are several peace societies—which are usually branded with socialism, anarchy, and Bolshevism by their critics. In the reforming class may be placed the National Popular Government League and the People's Lobby interested in developing popular government and in exposing the operation of powerful economic interests in politics. Militant in its views, the National Woman's Party demands a federal amendment putting women on a strict legal equality with men. Less feminist in its outlook and non-partisan is the League of Women Voters, which encourages the study of government and sponsors selected measures of legislation from time to time.

The fourth class includes numerous religious organizations—the Board of Temperance, Prohibition, and Public Morals; the National Catholic Welfare Council, and the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. Although they deal primarily with religious and ethical questions, such associations occasionally take a stand on issues in other fields.

CHICAGO[1]

By Graham Hutton

The tempo of life in Chicago has to be experienced to be believed. It is much faster than that of New York. I am sure midwesterners work harder and more furiously than any other people. They relax harder, too. One reason for that is the restless curiosity and experience-hunting of the midwesterner, which is greater than that of the more sophisticated easterner, which in turn is greater than that of the European. Another reason is the extraordinary gregariousness of all midwesterners, which is part of their sense of community. The Chicagoan is a home-lover, and there he really

[1]From *Midwest at Noon*, by Graham Hutton, 1946. By permission of the University of Chicago Press.

relaxes. But when he is "on the job," whether it is work or "fun," he (or she) never relaxes. Organized and communal relaxation is a business, like American games; "in earnest." The world is the midwesterner's oyster, which has to be opened at sword's point and then quickly swallowed, before he looks round anew for "those of the largest size." In New York, Philadelphia, Boston, there are many different groups in the social or intellectual life of the city. You can join any of them, but not all. Chicago's social and intellectual life is confined to a thinner layer, and whether it is in social affairs, intellectual pursuits, or gay diversions you meet the same people.

In this it is true that Chicago seems still "an overgrown small town"; but that remark is not as unkind as it sounds. The life of the small town rests on more solid social foundations than that of a metropolis. Social and intellectual leaders in such conditions must be prepared to live in the public eye. Thus the great mass of Chicagoans are free to live as anonymously or as publicly as they like, but there is little anonymity for the few hundred social "families" or "big names" of Chicago. They may not want anonymity. Certainly most of them cannot get it; and those who do are thought "snooty." That, in turn, means that life is a very hectic business, somewhat like that of royalty. Like the Red Queen in *Alice Through the Looking-Glass,* you have to run as fast as you can to stay in the same relationship to people and events. To a smaller extent this is also true of social life in the other big cities and larger towns of the Midwest. It is not so much a question, as many observers think, of "keeping up with the Joneses"; it is rather a question of just "keeping up"—period. This gives to the surface of things in Chicago an impression of perpetual motion, like the surface of the sea. The analogy is good because in Chicago things happen, and people seem to think, and even move, in waves: waves of thousands or little waves of friends, but always waves. To get an individual alone you have almost to get into an office, bedroom, or bathroom.

Few cities in the world dominate as vast a region as Chicago. London dominates England and, as Cobbett pointed out over a century ago, it has not been altogether for England's good. Moscow dominates a large region of Russia. Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and Madrid do not dominate their countries to that extent. Chicago is still the "big town" to millions of midwesterners; but millions do not like it because of its bigness, vigor, initiative, enterprise, and economic dominance. The other big cities and the larger towns are jealous of it. The farmers distrust it. All of them prefer it to New York; but, for them, that is like preferring the devil you know to

the devil you don't. To many midwesterners Chicago seems, and seemed long ago, like an octopus whose tentacles could not stop growing, extending, reaching out, sucking in. By the same token, Chicagoans have a chip on their shoulder about the entire East, which the East helps to keep there. They also tend to decry the importance, qualities, or achievements of other Midwest cities; somewhat as if they were the New Yorkers, Bostonians, or Philadelphians of the Midwest. Their natural self-assertion and contrariness are thereby heightened.

The oldness of Chicago, the old town, has disappeared with the people who made it. The city is always putting on a new dress —but not always changing its underlinen. It is always on the go, going places, seeking "some new thing." If ever anyone tries to build a bridge out of wedding cake in the shape of the letter S, I am sure it will be a Chicagoan—and I am sure the experiment will succeed.

EXERCISES IN FORMAL AND INFORMAL ANALYSIS

1. Make classification in skeleton form of any one of the following or of a similar group:

   a. Flowering shrubs suitable for city lawns
   b. Men's or women's footwear
   c. Books suitable for the library of a summer home
   d. Safety devices used on modern highways
   e. Methods of transportation by water
   f. Stringed instruments of the guitar type
   g. Cameras
   h. Fishing rods
   i. Breakfast hour radio entertainments
   j. Roadside eating places

2. Write a formal or informal analysis in which you make use of the classification that you have worked out for Exercise 1.

3. Write an analysis, by partition, of one of the following:

   a. The life cycle of a wasp, moth, locust, or other insect
   b. The prosodical and literary features of a sonnet or other lyric form
   c. The structural features of a sonata or other musical form
   d. The attitude of the "average American" on some matter of public interest

e. Your own feeling about an experience, or person, or issue that may have brought about in you a complex reaction

4. What would be the most reasonable and useful basis for classifying the following:

a. Radio (or television) "commercials"
b. "Jukebox" song hits
c. Wallpaper designs
d. Roofing materials
e. Courses offered in a liberal arts college
f. Costume jewelry
g. Outdoor recreations
h. Systems of government
i. Lawn grasses
j. Dance music

After classifying one of the above groups (or some other group that may suggest itself to you), use your principle of classification to establish, in a logical way, the main divisions and subdivisions of a complete analytical scheme. Then write a theme in which you use this analytical study as a guide.

5. What "root principle" should be used as the basis of an explanation of the following:

An electric dishwasher	An auger
An electric vacuum cleaner	A water-mill
A milking machine	A lady's dressing table
An air-conditioning system	The Community Chest
A "skyline" driveway	The "blood bank"

After you have determined to your satisfaction the root principle which will serve as a basis of clear explanation, write a theme of the kind represented in Robert S. Henry's "The Road of Rails" (p. 430).

6. Write a theme in which you begin by "stating the problem" involved in a discussion of the topic that you have chosen. Some suggested topics:

The Freedom of the Press
Should Movies (or Television) Be Censored by State or Municipal Authority?
Federal Control of Immigration
Should We Abandon the "Two Party" System?
Should Small Farms be "Mechanized"?
Is Universal Military Training Desirable?

Should Education Be Under State Control?
The Problem of Choosing a Career
General Education *vs.* Vocational Education
The problem of appreciating some difficult or obscure writer, musician, or painter

SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

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3. *THE RESEARCH PAPER*

The research paper—sometimes called the investigative paper, the course paper, or the term paper—is a long expository essay or article which presents the results of systematic inquiry into facts. The term, "research paper," may seem ambitious, since genuine research implies an original contribution to human knowledge in science or

scholarship, and the average college student may feel himself far from ready to make such a contribution. Nevertheless, the tasks assigned in his various courses require from the very beginning an acquaintance with the *methods* of research. His instructors are certain to ask him to investigate a subject in the library and to write a paper on what he finds out.

This is research, or at least quasi-research, on a modest scale. Although his production may not at the moment seem to have much influence on the course of human events, the training in methods given by such assignments looks ultimately toward precisely that end. The methods of the research paper are the methods generally used in most of his assigned course papers. Later, if he undertakes graduate studies, the same methods will be in order for his master's thesis or his doctoral dissertation; and they are the prescribed methods for preparing learned papers, technical studies, surveys, and reports, and for books that present the results of research.

Inevitably, the research paper employs the principles that have been emphasized throughout this book as of prime importance in expository writing. It must be clear, orderly, accurate, and substantial, as all expository writing must be. The research paper is a real test of a student's power to gather material and organize it coherently. It is also a trial of mettle. Can he tackle a fairly complex subject, find out what the facts are, separate the relevant facts from the irrelevant facts, the up-to-date from the out-of-date, the true from the false, and then present his findings intelligently and effectively? If he can, then he may have the satisfaction of knowing that his study of composition is really bearing fruit.

Because of the special character of the research paper, strong emphasis must be put on the words *accurate* and *substantial*. The research paper is an answer to two questions: (1) What are the facts? (2) What do the facts mean? These two questions, when properly understood, fuse into one question: What is the truth? For facts, rightly interpreted, are the truth. When not interpreted, they are merely facts, and may not even make sense. When badly interpreted, they are distortions of fact and may readily become falsehood. The writer of the research paper must therefore come to his work in an impartial frame of mind. He seeks only the truth. In the interest of truth he puts aside his own preconceptions and opinions. Until his investigation is complete, he has no right to an

opinion and should forbear to make an interpretation. In short, he must be at all times objective. The research paper demands of him, first, careful and diligent inquiry into the facts; second, accurate recording and reporting of the facts; third, inclusion of enough facts to make his discussion complete within its limits; fourth, honesty and clarity in interpretation of the facts.

THE INVESTIGATION

Since the success of the research paper depends primarily upon the authenticity of the information it conveys, special attention must be given to the procedure by which such information is obtained.

When information is obtained at first hand, it is said to come from *primary sources*. It can be obtained at first hand if the subject permits direct investigation by the writer himself, and if he is skillful and experienced enough to do a good job of investigating.

A paper dealing with the study habits of college students could be prepared by anyone with proper facilities for observing students actually at work and with patience and intelligence enough to organize his findings. He could find out—by visiting, by getting answers to questionnaires, by personal interviews—what time of day or night they study; whether they work with the radio on or the radio off; whether they smoke, chew gum, eat candy, or gnaw pencils while engaged with their books; what positions they assume —sitting, prone, half-reclining, upright; whether they bite their lips, twirl their fingers, scratch their heads, drum on the table, whistle, sing, hum, or nervously pace the room at intervals; whether they pursue their studies in solitude locked and muffled away from noisy intrusions, or sociably, in pairs, gangs, or loquacious communal groups.

Enough of such facts, when compiled and classified, would represent genuine research into first-hand material and might lead to interesting and valuable conclusions. Psychologists and sociologists, when they investigate human habits, go thus to the human subject itself, using, of course, the technique they have evolved to guide and check their investigations. The historian goes to his manuscripts, first-hand accounts, statistics—these are his primary sources. The geologist goes to his rocks, his fossils, his earth. The Shakespeare scholar goes to Elizabethan prompt books, the Quartos, the

First Folio. The chemist, physicist, and biologist go to the materials in their laboratories. Genuine research is based upon such primary sources.

During his college course a student may at times use the census reports or other compilations of statistical information. Or he may consult maps, original manuscripts, or facsimiles of manuscripts. Or if he is making a literary study, he may go to the established text of Shakespeare or the letters and journals of Thoreau, as distinguished from the voluminous and sometimes misleading commentaries upon such authors. In all such instances he will be using primary sources.

But he will probably not have much occasion to use primary sources. Ordinarily he will be expected to use *secondary sources.* The secondary sources are the literature of his chosen subject as set forth by accepted authorities. If he is writing about the theory of evolution, he will not be able to make first-hand scientific studies, as Darwin did; but he can read Darwin's *Origin of Species* and other books which explain and criticize Darwin's theories. These are his proper secondary sources. If his subject is "New Types of Motor Highways," he cannot make his study as a highway engineer would do it, but he can read what highway engineers have to say, and what others who have studied that subject have written.

For his information, then, he must go to the library. The library is his laboratory, his testing-ground, his substitute for a field trip. If he is to go about his investigation properly, he must know how to find the information that the library has to offer, and how to use it when he finds it. He must know what arrangements the modern library has made to serve him in his quest for information. And he must have an efficient and intelligent method of investigation. The following is the normal course of investigation for a research paper.

(1) Consult a general work of reference, such as *The Encyclopædia Britannica,* and read the article or articles that bear on the subject. If the subject is not discussed in a separate article, search the index of the encyclopedia for references and follow up these references. The encyclopedia will give a condensed and authoritative survey of the subject and prepare you for later intensive study. At the end of an encyclopedia article there will generally be a list of important books and articles that discuss the subject fully. Note these titles for future use.

For a historical subject it is a good plan to do preliminary reading in a standard history. For literary subjects consult the Cambridge histories of English and American literature, or similar works. For biographical studies, consult the *Dictionary of National Biography* (English) and the *Dictionary of American Biography*. A selected list of reference books is given below (pp. 444–445).

(2) After you have acquired a background of general information, prepare a *working bibliography* of your subject. Make a tentative list of books and articles that deal with your subject. (See page 448 for a description of the method to be followed in preparing this list.) If you have secured a brief bibliography from an encyclopedia article, begin with that as your basis. Consult the card catalogue of the library (looking under subject-headings) to find other items and to see what titles are available in the library (see page 446). Consult the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* for lists of articles in magazines. Early in your investigation it is advisable to scan the table of contents and even the text of some of the more promising books and articles, in order to see whether they offer what you want. Look also for the special bibliographies that generally appear in authoritative works. If your subject, for example, is "Cotton Culture," you will find that Rupert Vance's *Human Factors in Cotton Culture* contains an extensive bibliography of books and articles dealing with the subject. Such bibliographies will save time for you and give you authoritative guidance.

(3) When you have located your material and prepared a working bibliography, narrow your search to those books and articles which seem pertinent and up-to-date. You are now ready to begin your research proper.

(4) Read, and take notes on your reading. Keep a record, with complete bibliographical data, of all your reference sources.

(5) Organize your material and write your paper.

USE OF THE LIBRARY

Since your investigation depends in large measure upon your ability to use the library properly, you should lose no opportunity to familiarize yourself with its arrangements. Take this book to the library with you and use it as a guide. You cannot memorize the information given in the pages following, but by carrying out

instructions as here set forth you will gradually become familiar with the ordinary sources of information and the right procedure in consulting them.

General Reference Books. Every library has a group of general reference books, called a *reference collection*. These books cannot be taken from the library, but they are generally placed upon open shelves in the reference room, where they can be easily consulted. Those listed below are some of the most important. They constitute, however, but a small part of the average reference collection.

ENCYCLOPEDIAS

Encyclopædia Britannica
The New International Encyclopedia
Encyclopedia Americana

DICTIONARIES

1. Unabridged:

New English Dictionary on Historical Principles (generally known as the *Oxford Dictionary*)
Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language
Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary
New Century Dictionary
Dictionary of American English (Craigie)

2. Special dictionaries:

Allen's *Synonyms and Antonyms*
Crabb's *English Synonyms*
Fowler's *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage*
Roget's *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases*

BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARIES AND REFERENCE BOOKS

Dictionary of National Biography (English)
Dictionary of American Biography
Who's Who (English)
Who's Who in America

YEARBOOKS

New International Yearbook
Statesman's Yearbook
World Almanac (contains miscellaneous information, especially about New York City and the United States)

REFERENCE WORKS COVERING SPECIAL FIELDS

A. Literature:

Cambridge History of English Literature
Cambridge History of American Literature
Manly, Rickert, and Millett, *Contemporary American Literature*
Manly, Rickert, and Millett, *Contemporary British Literature*

B. History:

Yale Chronicle Series (American)
Cambridge Ancient History
Cambridge Medieval History
Cambridge Modern History

C. Classics:

Harper's *Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities*
The Loeb Translations of Latin and Greek Classics

D. Business and Commerce:

American Business Encyclopedia

E. Agriculture:

Bailey's *Cyclopedia of American Agriculture*

F. Architecture:

Sturgis's *Dictionary of Architecture and Building*

G. Labor:

American Labor Year Book

H. Political Science:

McLaughlin and Hart's *Cyclopedia of American Government*

I. Social Sciences:

Encyclopedia of Social Sciences (Seligman, ed.)

ATLASES AND GAZETTEERS

Rand McNally Commercial Atlas (published yearly)
Lippincott's Gazetteer
Shepherd's Historical Atlas

INDEXES TO PERIODICALS

Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature

Indexes the leading non-technical periodicals from 1900 to the present. Note, however, that some recent magazines of importance,

especially the literary quarterlies and some of the lesser monthlies, are not indexed in the *Readers' Guide*.

Look up articles under subject-headings, unless you know the author. Subject-headings are standard classifications under which articles appearing in a current year may be grouped: architecture, automobiles, housing, sports, and the like. Articles on prominent persons—Henry Ford, for example—will be listed under the names of those persons.

When using the *Readers' Guide,* familiarize yourself with its list of abbreviations. Otherwise you will be unable to follow up its references.

Poole's Index

Indexes American and English periodicals, from 1802 to 1907

International Index

Technical, scientific, and foreign periodicals

Industrial Arts Index

Engineering, business, trade

Public Affairs Information Service Bulletin

A guide to government documents and to other information about public affairs

Annual Magazine Subject Index

BOOK LISTS AND CATALOGUES

United States Catalog
Cumulative Book Index

Use of the Card Catalogue. The library card catalogue is a complete list, printed on cards and arranged alphabetically, of all the books in the library. Most of the books are catalogued by author and title. Many are also catalogued by subject.

If you have already made up a working bibliography, your business with the card catalogue is simple and brief. Look up the titles of the books you want, make note of their call numbers, authors, and titles on the call slips furnished by the library, and secure at the library desk those books that are available.

If you wish to use the card catalogue to extend your bibliography, begin your search by looking for your subject. If your subject is

"Mayan Pyramids," look for *Mayan*. In all likelihood some titles beginning with that word will be listed. Perhaps there will be a "subject card," and, after that card, a number of titles dealing with Mayan culture. But do not stop there. The Mayan pyramid and the culture that produced it will be discussed in books on American archæology and in books dealing with Mexico and Central America. Continue your search, then, under the headings: Archæology, Mexico, Central America. Use also the system of cross-reference (the "see cards") provided in the catalogue. If you do not find what you want, consult other subject headings.

The cards of the card catalogue have other uses. Each card contains the following information: (1) the call number, which shows the classification of the book according to the Dewey Decimal (or other) system and, through a group of numerical symbols and letters, the place where the book is "shelved" in the stacks of the library;[1] (2) the author's name; (3) the title and edition; (4) the place of publication, publisher, and date; (5) other technical information, such as the number of pages and the format; and

[1]The "call number" may look a little mysterious. It is for librarians rather than for students. Ordinarily you will need to do no more than copy the number accurately in order to get the book you want. Many libraries use the Dewey Decimal system in classifying and numbering their books. In libraries that have "open stacks," the key to the system is posted in a prominent place, and the stacks are clearly marked with guide labels. The Dewey system is a complex arrangement for keeping the books of a library always in a definite place and always in a precise order, so that any book can be had upon call. Numbers in the 700's are devoted to the fine arts; in the 800's to literature; in the 900's to history, and so on. The system has many minute ramifications and refinements.

The call number for Collingwood and Myres's *Roman Britain* is:

942.01
C71r

The numeral 900 puts the book in the category of history; the other numerals refer to the category of early British history. The numeral C71r is the shelf number. The shelf number indicates the exact place on the shelves where that individual volume must stand. It must be in that place and in no other place. If by mistake it gets into another place, it is for the time being *lost*—just as effectively lost as if it had been dropped into the bushes. To prevent such errors, libraries ask readers not to return books to the stacks, or else close the stacks and reserve the fetching and carrying of books as a duty of their trained personnel.

(6) sometimes a condensed description of the contents of the book.

The *date of publication* may be of considerable importance to you. If you are looking up Modern Housing, you may be sure that books published from 1920 to 1953, say, are of special importance to you, and that a book published before 1920 is probably of no importance. The *condensed description* of the contents will help you by indicating whether or not a particular book touches your subject.

THE WORKING BIBLIOGRAPHY

As you make your investigation of available material, list every book and article that is pertinent to your subject. This list is your working bibliography. It is best to make the list on cards. Use a separate card for each individual item. (Do not take notes on bibliography cards.)

Every bibliography card should contain the following information:

FOR A BOOK

1. Author's name. Put the last name first, and use the full name as printed on the title-page of the book. Record the editor's name in the same way if there is an editor rather than an author.
2. Title of the book—as given on the title-page. Volume number, if needed.
3. Place of publication, publisher, date of publication. Other relevant information—such as edition, number of volumes, title of series (if the book is one of a series) and the like—should be entered. Use the examples given below for guidance as to the form of entry.

Examples

Hutton, Graham. *Midwest at Noon.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946.

Brooks, Cleanth, and Warren, Robert Penn. *Understanding Fiction.* New York: F. S. Crofts & Company, 1943.

Arber, Edward, ed. *Tottel's Miscellany (English Reprints).* Westminster: A. Constable and Co., 1895.

Koch, Hal. *Grundtvig.* Translated from the Danish with Introduction and Notes, by Llewellyn Jones. Yellow Springs, Ohio: The Antioch Press, 1952.

Beazley, Sir John Davidson. *The Development of Attic Black-Figure.* Sather Classical Lectures, No. 24. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951.

Simms, William Gilmore. *Guy Rivers: A Tale of Georgia.* 2 vols. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1834.

SPECIMEN BIBLIOGRAPHY CARD—FOR A BOOK

Crawley, Ernest. The Mystic Rose.
London: Methuen and Co., Ltd.,
1927. Revised edition by
Theodore Besterman. 2 vols.

FOR A PERIODICAL

1. Author's name. Put the last name first, and use the full name as printed.
2. Title of the article.
3. Title of the periodical, volume number, date of issue, page references.

Examples

Ellis, A. B., "Survivals from Marriage by Capture." *The Popular Science Monthly,* Vol. 34 (June, 1891), pp. 207–222.

Twe, Dihdwo, "Liberia: An American Responsibility." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* Vol. 282 (July, 1952), pp. 104–107.

McCormick, Anne O'Hare, "The Grim Century of the Homeless Man," New York *Times,* August 6, 1952, p. 20.

SPECIMEN BIBLIOGRAPHY CARD—FOR A PERIODICAL

George, Amelia. "The Bride Saw Red."
Good Housekeeping, Vol. 54
(April, 1950), pp. 54; 88-89.

To the purely bibliographical matter illustrated above, you may wish to add, for your own guidance, some brief notation as to the character and usefulness of the item that you are recording. For example, if you have recorded Arber's edition of *Tottel's Miscellany* on your card and later notice that a larger, more recent edition has been published, you will put down on the Arber card a notation like the following: "Compare with Hyder E. Rollins' 2-volume edition, Harvard University Press, 1939."

The working bibliography will serve you during the process of gathering material. Be careful to make *complete and accurate* bibliographical notations, since you may wish to avoid looking up the item a second time when you prepare your final bibliography. During the course of your study you should find other items to add to your working bibliography. These items, of course, should be entered in exactly the same way. When you have written your paper, your final bibliography—which must be appended to your paper—will be made up from the working bibliography, *but it will consist only of the items from which you have actually drawn material.*

NOTE-TAKING

When you have found the information you want, your next step is to read and to take notes on your reading.

Your notes must be accurate and discriminating. Unless you have made clear and adequate notes, you will be confused and handicapped when you come to the actual writing of your paper.

It is necessary to follow a carefully planned system of note-taking if you are to avoid loss of time and waste of energy.

For note-taking use cards of uniform size, preferably 3 by 5 inches or 4 by 6 inches. Note paper may of course be used, but cards are much more convenient because they can be more easily filed, grouped, arranged, and rearranged in any order you may wish. Use a separate card for each separate note. Limit the information recorded on each card to some important detail, point, or subtopic of your paper. Each note card should contain the following items:

(1) In the upper left-hand corner, a guide-word, key-phrase, or topic which identifies the material recorded on that card. When your notes are assembled, these key-phrases or guide-words will help you to organize your paper.

(2) Bibliographical identification: the precise source of the information recorded—that is, the author's name, the title of his work, the facts of publication (publisher or periodical, date, place of publication), and page references for the material used. But if your instructor requires you to keep separate bibliography cards, you do not need to repeat on the note card itself the full bibliographical information. Nevertheless you must enter identifying bibliographical references on the note cards—for example, the author's name and the title of his work: Webb, *The Great Plains,* pp. 256–260. If you are not making out separate bibliography cards, record the complete bibliographical information on your note cards, or on at least one of the note cards referring to the source.

It is of the highest importance to make this exact record *at the time when you take your notes.* Otherwise you will have to look up your sources a second time when you are ready to write your paper.

(3) The note itself. Do not make random jottings and hasty scribbles which you yourself may not be able to understand when you assemble your notes. Limit each note to a single important point. The content of the note may be either a summary of what the author consulted says or an exact quotation. If you use an exact quotation, preface it by a few words of summary or interpretation to indicate the bearing of the quotation upon your subject. You may of course wish to add comments of your own from time to time, which will serve to guide you in the construction of your paper.

SPECIMEN NOTE CARDS

Survivals of capture
customs . General
destructive horseplay.

George "The Bride
Saw Red"

At the Bachelor's dinner the groom was fed liquor until he passed out. Friends set right arm in plaster cast; next morning showed him false x-rays as proof of broken arm. Believed them and was married and went on honeymoon with arm in cast. (p. 54.)

Marriage by capture
–hostile capture–

Crawley
The Mystic Rose

"'Capture' proper, that is, hostile capture from another tribe, has never been, and could never be, a mode of marriage—it is only a method of obtaining a wife. . . ." p. 97.

If you use a direct quotation, record it *exactly* as it stands in the original—in the spelling and punctuation of the original—and en-

close it in quotation marks. Only by such care can you be accurate. You must later be able to distinguish your own ideas from the facts and opinions that you have gathered. Be especially careful to make accurate note of important dates and of the spelling of proper names. If you omit nonessential parts of a quoted sentence or passage, indicate the omission by ellipses. (Use three periods to indicate ellipsis within a sentence; four, at the end of a sentence. See Section 53 D.)

Skill in note-taking can be gained only by practice. The following procedure will help you to acquire this skill.

Read through pertinent chapters of books (or other material) *before* taking notes. While reading, jot down on a card or a piece of paper the page numbers of passages to which you will want to go back. Do *not* attempt to outline everything you read, but look for information that is exactly relevant to your subject. The preliminary reading will be useful in itself, as a means of building up general information. When you have finished this reading, go back and take your notes.

If you are compiling statistics, you have only the problem of finding the figures you need and recording them accurately. But generally the problem is not so simple. In reading, you must constantly be on your guard to distinguish between genuine fact and mere opinion. You may need to compare different opinions and different interpretations when authorities disagree. Be sure to note such disagreements—in short, be alert to make comparisons.

STUDENT A'S NOTE

Skill in Horsemanship — Webb, *The Great Plains,* pp. 60–61.

The mastery of horsemanship by the Plains Indians made them one of the most effective obstacles to Western advance. "The Indian, the horse, and the weapon formed a perfect unit. They were adapted to each other and, taken together, made a formidable fighting unit." (p. 60) The horse was wealth, transportation and, in an emergency, food. (p. 61) Indians had horses both for chase and for war.

STUDENT B'S NOTE

Indian Riding Methods — Webb, *The Great Plains*, p. 61.

Did the cowboys learn riding methods from the Plains Indians? Webb's description of the Indians' horsemanship is practically a description of the "Western style" of riding. His description of the Indian "buffalo horse" is a description of a cowboy's pony. "The buffalo horse was merely a trained cow pony. . . . He had to be alert, intelligent, willing to follow the game and press close to the side of the running animal, yet able to swerve from it so as not to become entangled, and all with no more guidance than the Indian exerted by pressure of his knees."

What you finally put down should depend upon your guiding purpose in the study that you are undertaking. Two students consulting the same source will take different notes if they have different subjects or different guiding purposes. In the examples which follow, Student A had as his subject "Obstacles to American Settlement of the Great Plains Region." Student B's subject was "Our Debt to the Plains Indians." The two specimen note cards show how students may differ in taking notes on the same material.

FOOTNOTES

Every direct quotation used in your paper, every fact derived from a source that you have consulted, every opinion and interpretation not your own, whether quoted or briefed, must be properly credited to the source from which it was derived.[1] Such crediting not only gives your reader assurance of the substantial basis upon which your discussion is founded and serves as a guarantee of your good faith; it also enables your reader to consult, if he wishes, the sources of information that you have used.

In themes and in ordinary "course papers" it is permissible, and sometimes desirable, to give such credit by direct reference within

[1]An exception may be made for common proverbs and familiar quotations.

the text itself of your discussion. This method is appropriate if the occasions for such authentication are few and isolated. For example, you may write:

> Apparently the English Renaissance, despite its literary triumphs, was responsible for a good deal of unnecessary cultural devastation and disintegration. In his *Early Tudor Poetry* (New York, 1920), p. 324, John Berdan writes: "In England the destruction of ecclesiastical architecture went on at an appalling rate. Of the great monastic establishments on the Thames, Westminster alone survives through the accident that it had been chosen for royal burial."

But, in general, modern practice prefers footnootes to the parenthetical form of annotation; and in the research paper, which may require a series of fairly elaborate annotations, footnotes have become the accepted procedure. Footnotes are, of course, the authenticating references which stand at the bottom of the page and bear numerals corresponding to the numerals inserted in the text.

A footnote should contain—

1. The author's name—but *not* in inverted form as on the bibliography card; the name of the editor, if an editor rather than an author is to be cited; or, in some instances, names of both author and editor.

2. The title of the reference cited. Underline (to indicate italics) the titles of books and periodicals; use quotation marks for titles of articles or of poems (or of other parts of a larger work).

3. Page numerals; also volume numerals when needed; chapter, section, or line numerals when needed. Do not use page referances, however, to works arranged in alphabetical order, like encyclopedias and biographical dictionaries. Do not use line references to short poems.

Every footnote must be headed by a numeral which corresponds to the numeral used in the text above. Footnotes are generally numbered in order from beginning to end of the paper. The reference numeral used in the text is placed *at the end* of the passage which it authenticates: that is, at the end of the sentence containing the subject-matter referred to, if the passage consists of only one sentence; at the end of the last sentence of the passage, if it covers

several sentences. The reference numeral should stand slightly above and to the right of the closing word or terminal punctuation mark of the passage. Reference numerals may be inserted *within* a sentence when one or more items, mentioned by title, require a supporting footnote. (See page 468 for examples.)

Footnotes should be separated from the text by a ruled line. Some writers prefer to place all annotations together at the end of a paper; they are then "notes," not "footnotes." This practice, although it is favored by some periodicals, is not generally followed in college papers.

THE FORM OF FOOTNOTES

In the *first footnote reference* to any item—whether book or periodical—you should give *all* the information prescribed above (author, title, page reference, etc.). In *succeeding references* to the same item you should use the system of abbreviated reference customary in papers that require documentation. Under "Examples," below, the customary methods of abbreviated reference are used. The examples, if used as models, will give you more satisfactory guidance than generalized instructions; but by way of brief explanation we may here assume that your first footnote reference to a certain item is as follows:

[1] Eric Partridge and John W. Clark, *British and American English Since 1900,* p. 55.

If, in your *next succeeding footnote,* you wish to refer to the same source, but to a different page, your footnote will be as follows:

[2] *Ibid.,* p. 103.

But if, after referring to other items in intervening footnotes, you again refer to the book cited above, your footnote will read as follows:

[10] Partridge and Clark, *op. cit.,* 236.

(The expression *ibid.* means "the same"; it is an abbreviation of the Latin word *ibidem.* The expression *op. cit.* is an abbreviation of the Latin words *opere citato* and means "in the work cited.")

Some scholars and teachers are inclined to think the use of Latin abbreviations, like those given above, unnecessarily pedantic and

clumsy. For Footnotes 2 and 10, above, they might prefer a form like the following:

[2] Partridge and Clark, 103.
[10] Partridge and Clark, 236.

If, however, such a method of "shortened reference" is used, it becomes necessary for the writer to indicate definitely what his "style" of reference is; and if it involves abbreviations, he must give a "key" to those abbreviations. In the first footnote reference the writer may add, for example, "hereinafter referred to as Partridge and Clark"—meaning, by that designation, to refer to the author-title item recorded in the first footnote reference.

Always remember that clarity and exactness, as well as compactness, are the qualities desired in footnotes. Avoid, therefore, any abbreviation or affectation that would cause confusion or inexactness. If an *"op. cit."* reference will not serve the purpose of clarity and exactness—as may happen if it is some pages removed from the original "first footnote reference"—do not hesitate to repeat the title of the book or other source.

For a newspaper or periodical, the method is the same as for a book. Your first footnote reference may read as follows:

[5] Thornton Wilder, "Toward an American Language," *Atlantic Monthly,* Vol. 190 (July, 1952), p. 31.

For your succeeding references to this item you may use *"Ibid."* and "Wilder, *op. cit.*" in the manner indicated for the Partridge and Clark item.

OTHER MATERIAL INCLUDED IN FOOTNOTES

Observe that footnotes are not used *only* for purposes of authenticating source material. They may also be used, and frequently are used, (1) for brief comments or explanations which the writer does not wish to include in the text of his discussion and (2) for "see" or "compare" references in which the writer directs attention to parts of his own discussion or to items that have some relevance to his discussion but that are not specifically considered in his discussion.

EXAMPLES OF FOOTNOTES[1]

The following examples illustrate the form used by scholars in footnotes of various types:

GROUP I*

[1] Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture,* translated by Gilbert Highet, Vol. 1, p. 55.

[2] *Iliad* I, 54.

[3] *Ibid.* I, 79.

[4] Lewis H. Morgan, *Ancient Society, or Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization,* p. 254 ff.

[5] *Iliad* IV, 258; XII, 412 *et passim.*

[6] Morgan, *op. cit.,* p. 150.

[7] For a more detailed comparison see A. Feldman, "Indians and the *Iliad*," *Classical Journal* (October, 1947).

[1]The "Examples of Footnotes" are selected (and for obvious reasons are somewhat condensed and adapted) from annotations used in the following published material: Group I, from "Homer and Democracy," by Abraham B. Feldman, *Classical Journal,* Vol. 47 (May, 1952), pp. 342–343; Group II, from "Constitutional Limitations on Reeligibility of National and State Chief Executives," by Joseph E. Kallenbach, *The American Political Science Review,* Vol. 46 (June, 1952), pp. 441–447; Group III, from Manfred F. Bukofzer's "Introduction" to *Rules How to Compose,* by Giovanni Coperario (Los Angeles: Ernest E. Gottlieb, 1952). The three sets of examples display a sufficient—though of course not an absolute—degree of standardization of form of footnotes in three different fields of research. The Modern Language Association has proposed a standardized form of reference (see "The MLA Style Sheet," *Publications of the Modern Language Association,* Vol. 66, April, 1951) which will be enforced upon contributors to PMLA and which also seems to be recommended by the Association for more general use. A textbook of composition and rhetoric, however, cannot, in exclusive rigor, recommend any *one* "style" of reference; it can only illustrate the basic similarity of all styles of reference. The "MLA Style Sheet," with its refinements that are no doubt quite suitable for papers written in advanced English courses, will not necessarily give perfect guidance in other fields of research. History, law, physical science, political science, music, and so on, will have their own "style sheets," with different refinements, though the basic principles of annotation are everywhere the same and have not changed for centuries.

* Examples quoted by permission of *The Classical Journal.*

[Note that in the above citations Roman numerals are used to refer to *books* of the *Iliad;* Arabic numerals, to *lines.*]

GROUP II**

[1] Herman V. Ames, *The Proposed Amendments to the Constitution of the United States During the First Century of Its History,* 54th Cong., 2nd sess., H. Doc. No. 353, pt. 2 (Ser. 3550, 1897), pp. 124–125. On the first occasion the proposal was passed by a vote of 36 to 3 in the Senate; the second time it was favored by a 32 to 7 majority.

[2] *Ibid.,* p. 127.

[3] Ames, p. 127. [This footnote appears on the page following the two preceding footnotes.]

[4] Constitution of Delaware, Art. 3, Sec. 9.

[5] *Fitzpatrick v. McAlister,* 121 Okla. 83, 248 Pac. 569 (1926).

[6] Cf. V. O. Key, Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation,* especially Part I.

GROUP III***

[1] E. H. Meyer, *English Chamber Music,* p. 149.

[2] Roger North, *The Musicall Grammarian,* ed. Hilda Andrews, p. 10. North revised and enlarged his text later in his *Memoires of Musick,* ed. E. F. Rimbault, 1846.

[3] Jeffrey Pulver, "Giovanni Coperario alias John Cooper," in *The Monthly Musical Record,* 57, p. 101.

[4] Jeffrey Pulver, *A Biographical Dictionary of Old English Music.*

[5] British Museum, Add. MS 10444.

[6] Walter Lincoln Woodfill, *Music in English Social History, c. 1535–* c. *1640,* University of California, Berkeley, Ph.D. Dissertation (typewritten), p. 196.

[7] See the cautious remark by Willa McClung Evans, *Henry Lawes, Musician and Friend of Poets,* p. 24, note 15.

[8] The *Rules* have been discussed previously only in Evans, *op. cit.,* p. 24, and Bukofzer, *Music in the Baroque Era,* p. 383.

** Examples quoted by permission of the *American Political Science Review.*

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ABBREVIATIONS

A key to some of the common abbreviations used in footnotes is given below.

cf. "Compare."
f. "And the following page."
ff. "And the following pages."
Ibid. "In the same place" (Latin, *ibidem*). Used to avoid unnecessary repetition of author and title, when a new page reference to the same author and title follows immediately.
l. "Line" (as, a line of verse).
ll. "Lines." But in footnotes it is more often customary not to use *l.* and *ll.* Thus "*Odyssey* I, 395–396" means "Homer's *Odyssey*, Book I, lines 395–396."
loc. cit. "In the place cited" (Latin, *loco citato*).
op. cit. "In the work cited" (Latin, *opere citato*). Used if there is occasion to make repeated reference to a given author and title when the references are separated by footnotes pertaining to other items.
p. "Page."
pp. "Pages."
passim "Here and there" in the text or passage referred to.
q. v. "Which see" (Latin, *quod vide*).
sic "Thus." Used to signify that a given text is exactly reproduced. Generally it will appear in quoted matter after a misspelling or other error. It is enclosed in brackets.
tr. "Translator."
Vol. "Volume."
Vols. "Volumes."

FINAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

The final bibliography should appear at the end of the research paper. (See p. 460.) As has already been explained, it should contain only the items which have actually been used for reference in the paper. The bibliography should be arranged in alphabetical order, by authors, with last names first. The form of each entry follows the form prescribed for entries on the bibliography cards. (See p. 448.) When a bibliography is extensive, and covers much periodical

literature as well as books, it may be advisable to place books and articles in two separate lists. Scholarly dissertations frequently distinguish between primary and secondary sources or make other divisions, such as may be required by the nature of the material used in research.

THE COMPLETED PAPER

In the preceding sections, many technical details have been discussed. Do not allow this discussion, important though it may be for guidance, to give you an exaggerated notion of the intrinsic importance of footnotes, bibliography, methods of note-taking, and the like. All these things are only means to an end—the writing of a clear and well-authenticated exposition of your subject. Profusion of footnotes, however correct in form, and an extensive bibliography, no matter how impressive-looking, do not in themselves make a good research paper. The research paper must be, in itself, a good piece of writing, which embodies the results of your investigation and represents your own independent and mature interpretation of a subject.

OH, THIS IS FOUL, FOUL PLAY*

WITH THE possible exception of Hallowe'en, no occasion, in the present-day United States at least, is more marked by sanctioned hoodlumism than is a wedding. The incongruity between the decorum of the pre-wedding and ceremonial events and the boisterous post-nuptial revelry is often shocking. To many people it is no doubt inexplicable.

Let us look for a moment at the whole complex of affairs. A young couple announce their intention to marry. The declaration is made in proper religious and social fashion—solemnly, in church; less solemnly, and yet formally, in the Sunday newspaper. Then follows a round of social performances, also characterized by relentless dignity and propriety. The bride is entertained at teas, showers, and luncheons; the couple is feted at formal dinners and dances.

*A specimen paper prepared for the Third Edition of *American Composition and Rhetoric* and used by permission of the author.

About three weeks before the wedding day formal invitations are sent to relatives and friends—

Mr. and Mrs. John H. Black
Request the Honor of Your Presence
at the Marriage of Their Daughter
Catherine Ann
to
Mr. Charles Cameron Duff III
on Tuesday, the Fifth of June
at Eight O'clock in the Evening
St. George's Chapel
Arcadia, Kentucky

The simple engraved invitation forecasts the sedateness of the ceremony which follows.[1] The organist preludes the ritual with "O Promise Me"; the groom quietly—if somewhat nervously—awaits the coming of his bride, who, stately in her gown of white, marches slowly toward him down the aisle on the arm of her father; in hushed tones, the couple exchange vows; and the minister solemnly proclaims Charles Cameron and Catherine Ann man and wife.

Then, almost before one knows it—indeed, before the bride and groom are out of the church—sedateness has vanished. The triumphant note of the recessional seems to transform solemnity into hilarity—as if Mendelssohn's wedding march were deliberately chosen to announce the sudden ascendancy of the pagan element restrained till this moment. What may seem only gaiety at the still somewhat formal wedding reception soon becomes horseplay. The wedding party—still in their formal attire which has become their license to commit acts of vandalism—are honor-bound, by custom, to plot ways and means of harassing the bride and groom. Mocking signs are placed on the honeymoon car. Uncouth objects are slipped into the wedding couple's baggage. Actual damage to automobile and baggage and extreme humiliation to bride and

[1]One pre-wedding function which breaks into this propriety is the bachelor's dinner, held the evening before the wedding and devoted to the hazing of the groom. The friends of one bridegroom plied him with liquor until he "passed out." They then set his arm in a plaster cast and next morning showed him false X-rays to convince him that his arm was broken. In this condition he was married and went on his honeymoon. Amelia George, "The Bride Saw Red," *Good Housekeeping*, Vol. LIV (April, 1950), p. 54.

groom are not uncommon. At one wedding in Detroit the "best man" had agreed to lend his car to the groom for the wedding trip. But the couple had no sooner started than they were stopped by the police, taken to the precinct station, and the groom was charged with automobile theft and placed in jail overnight.[2] The clothing of the bridal couple, in spite of the care and expense taken in furnishing the new wardrobes, is smeared with rouge; or garlic or ripe cheese is put in among the nicer garments; and the groom's trousers may be cut to knee-length. As an appropriate climax of their efforts, the wedding vandals carve "Just Married" on all the new luggage, or indeed sometimes confiscate it entirely.[3] The bride and groom, whether or not they are aware of this vandalism, must, according to custom, at least appear to be unaware and if their attention is forced upon it, must accept such harassment with good nature, even to the point of joining into the "game" of the final chase as they depart upon their wedding journey, pursued by revelers ringing cowbells, blowing horns, and attempting to follow the couple on their wedding trip. The bridal couple's contribution to the custom of the chase is to divulge to no one, save perhaps a trusted friend or relative, the destination of their wedding journey. In this way, the pursuers are at last baffled and defeated, and the bride and groom have won their right to marital privacy.

Thus has a solemn ritual been turned into a full-blown Roman holiday, propriety having given way to profanation. Acts such as the puncturing of a tire and the mutilation of clothing constitute a kind of vandalism which, under ordinary circumstances, would culminate in damage suits or arrest but which, within the context of a wedding celebration, go unnoticed as far as the law is concerned. It is logical to question why the riotous conduct of the wedding party is allowed to remain outside the law; why such violence is not only tolerated but expected; or, more important still, how it came to be an integral part of an otherwise sacred and sober ceremony. Since the vandalism centers around the actual departure of the bride and groom from their family and friends, perhaps an investigation of the custom of "bride stealing" would suggest an explanation for the incongruous nature of the modern wedding.

The sociological phenomenon of "marriage by capture" has been discussed at length by numerous students of folkways. A distinction has been made by sociologists between hostile capture and a

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] One groomsman forged a cowbell on the bride's dressing case and it could be removed only with a blow torch. *Ibid.*, p. 188.

ceremonial or ritualistic capture, which was a customary part of the wedding ceremony of many primitive peoples. The theory of the cause of "marriage by capture," by which is meant hostile capture, rests on the custom of female infanticide among early tribes and the ultimate need to steal wives from another tribe.[4] But certain scholars, notably Westermarck and Crawley, believe that "marriage by capture" never existed as a mode of marriage. As Westermarck puts it:

> . . . the prevalence of marriage by capture has undoubtedly been much exaggerated by some other writers. It has been represented as being at one time the normal mode of contracting a marriage among uncivilized peoples. But there is no evidence whatever that it was so.[5]

Crawley accepts Westermarck's findings and with him concludes that—

> The theory, then, that mankind in general, or even any particular section of mankind, ever in normal circumstances were accustomed to obtain their wives by capture from other tribes, may be regarded as exploded. There have been, of course, and still are, sporadic cases of capture of wives from hostile tribes or others, but such cannot prove a rule. . . . "Capture" proper, that is, hostile capture from another tribe, has never been, and could never be, a mode of marriage—it is only a method of obtaining a wife.[6]

If this were the case, a ceremony of marriage based on "marriage by capture" would have little reason for developing. And yet the custom of "ceremonial capture" in the wedding ceremony is commonly known to exist.

Ceremonial capture, although it often involved "sham fighting between the bridegroom or his party and the bride's family, or some other kind of resistance made by the latter . . ."[7] is consid-

[4]For discussion of exogamy consult John Ferguson M'Lennan, *Studies in Ancient History*, pp. 57 ff. Also see A. B. Ellis, "Survivals from Marriage by Capture," *The Popular Science Monthly*, Vol. XXXIX (June, 1891), pp. 207–22.

[5]Edward Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage*, Vol. II, p. 254. For details of his discussion consult pp. 240–277.

[6]Ernest Crawley, *The Mystic Rose*, Vol. II, p. 97. For details of his discussion consult pp. 77–100.

[7]Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 254.

ered by Westermarck to be in no way related to "marriage by capture," or hostile capture. As explained, the custom had its origin in the natural reluctance of the bride to be wived, in her innate hesitation to surrender her personal isolation.[8] Thus, as both Crawley and Westermarck note, the struggle was sometimes between the bride and her women on the one side and the groom and his men on the other—a battle of the sexes.[9] More often, however, the fighting was between the male friends and relations of the opposed families. The fight itself, though "sham," seemed real enough at times. Rocks, sticks and swords were used, and the desire for victory was often whetted by the possibility of an increase in the dowry of the bride if the groom's party should win.[10]

From the studies of Westermarck and Crawley, some generalizations about the custom of "bride stealing" can be made, generalizations valid historically if not sociologically. Marriage by capture, whether hostile or amiable capture, was a widespread primitive custom. Whether the bride had to be captured from her parents or from herself, whether the fight was real or sham, the woman had to be "captured," and violence was a necessary outcome of the act. It was the act, ceremonial or real, with all its accompanying fury which apparently left its vestiges in the ceremony of the wedding as that ceremony has come down through the ages.

However, one can leave the realm of the sociologist, that place of perplexing particularization and dissection, and seek a place where the particular will have meaning within the structure of a whole society. Man has always transmitted to man in song and story those deeds and customs which are his civilization; and, if such a custom as bride stealing were ever a prevalent one, the great body of folk literature, especially the ballad, would reflect not only the custom itself but also the way in which it existed as a part of the whole society. Bride stealing was sung about by the folk, and folksongs make possible an understanding and an appreciation of it in its present day setting.

Among those ballads which have bride stealing as a significant

[8]Crawley, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 77. It would seem, however, that although the explanation given by him is a sound and acceptable one, there could also be a historical explanation behind the growth of the ritualistic feud affected in amiable capture.

[9]Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 275–76; Crawley, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 78 ff.

[10]Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 255–56.

motive "Earl Brand"[11] is probably the most widely known. Earl Brand, or "Earl o Bran" as the ballad calls him, captured "the queen's daughter o the southlan" and the couple was secure from discovery until coming upon "ald Carl Hood." The lady, knowing the treacherous nature of the old man and fearing that he would betray their escape, begged her lover to "kill Carl Hood an gar him die"; but Earl Brand refused to kill "ane that wore grey hair." As it turned out, the lady's fears were well grounded. Carl reported the runaway lovers to the girl's family, and the irate father "with all his men" was soon in hot pursuit.

> Some rode wie sticks, an some wie rungs,
> An a' to get the Earl o Bran slain.

Earl Brand bravely stood them off "ane by ane" and "smashed them doun a' bone by bone." Then, having vanquished his enemies, he sat down on the cool grass to rest;

> But ald Carl Hood came him behind
> An I wat he gae him a deadly wound.

"Ald Carl Hood" had his vengeance, and Earl Brand, having com mitted his stolen bride to the care of his mother, succumbed to his "deadly wound."

In "The Douglas Tragedy,"[12] another version of Earl Brand, the bride-capturing motive is given a little different treatment. The initial situation in both versions of the ballad is virtually the same, except that in "The Douglas Tragedy" the method of dramatic presentation is different. The ballad begins by someone's awaking Lord Douglas with the news that his daughter is gone—"was married to a lord under night." Douglas, in turn, awakens his seven

[11]Helen Child Sargent and George Lyman Kittredge, eds., *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 7A*, pp. 11–12. For a discussion of the popularity of this ballad among western European and other cultures, see the definitive work of which the Sargent-Kittredge edition is a one-volume condensation: Francis James Child, ed., *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 88–99. Child also has several other Scottish and English versions which are of interest. See *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 99–100. All subsequent citations will refer to Child's definitive edition, and his system of numbers for the ballads (followed by Sargent and Kittredge) will be used in citing individual ballads.

[12]*Ibid.* B, Vol. I, Pt. I, pp. 100–101.

sons and tells them the news of their sister. The ballad then goes back and picks up the story of the fleeing lovers, Lord William and Lady Douglas. They have made a safe get-away, she

> on a milk-white steed,
> And himself on a dapple grey.

Suddenly Lord William looks over his shoulder and spies his pursuers, the father and the seven brothers of the bride. The lady holds Lord William's horse while he makes his stand against her family. One by one he kills the seven brothers, and Lady Douglas "never shed one tear," but in the bloody fight between her father and her lord, she could restrain herself no longer:

> 'O hold your hand, Lord William!' she said,
> 'For your strokes they are wondrous sair;
> True lovers I can get many a ane,
> But a father I can never get mair.'

When the lady calls her lover by name he is given a deadly wound by Lord Douglas. The story ends, as in "Earl Brand," with the hero's giving over his bride to the charge of his mother.

The dominant motive in both "Earl Brand" and "The Douglas Tragedy" is not bride stealing but "dead naming," a folk belief based on the power inherent in a name.[13] However, the kidnapped bride incident furnishes the all-important framework for the story. From both versions of this ballad one could describe the custom in this way: under cover of night, the bridegroom steals his bride from her home. The bride's father, on being informed of the capture, calls his men—and in "The Douglas Tragedy" these are his seven sons—to arms and they go in search of the lovers. A bloody fight ensues when the two parties meet, but the bridegroom is victorious in that he gets to keep his bride.

"Katherine Jaffray"[14] has bride stealing as its central motive. The

[13]Lowry Charles Wimberly, *Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads*, p. 84, explains the "dead naming" motive. In both versions of this ballad the heroes forfeit their lives to those in possession of their names. In "Earl Brand" the lady addresses her lover "O guid Earl o Bran" within earshot of Carl Hood, Earl Brand's bane; in "The Douglas Tragedy" Lady Douglas' naming Lord William is coincidental with his receiving his mortal wound from Lord Douglas.

[14]Child, *op. cit.*, 221 A, B, C. Vol. IV, Pt. I, pp. 219–220.

Laird of Lauderdale, a Scotsman, woos and wins the Scottish lass, Katherine Jaffray:

> He has teld her father and mither baith,
> And a' the rest o her kin,
> And has teld the lass hersell,
> And her consent has win.[15]

In the meantime an English lord, "Laird of Lochinton,"[16] courts Katherine and, having gained consent of her parents but not of the lady herself, sets the wedding day. The Laird of Lauderdale hears of the event, and accompanied by "mony armed men,"[17] comes to the wedding. When asked why he has come, he says he wants to look at the bride,[18] or to have a drink with the bridegroom,[19] or to have a word with the bride.[20] Having gained, by pretext, access to the bride, he lifts her up on his horse and rides away. There follows a bloody fight in which,

> . . . swords flew in the skies,
> And droop and drowsie was the blood
> Ran our yon lilly braes.[21]

The ballad ends by warning Englishmen not to "come nere to Scotland to court a lass"[22] for little awaits them there but "foul, foul play."

"Lord William"[23] also centers around the incident of bride capturing. Sweet William and his love, "our gude Bailie's ae dochter," have been over-seas together, "some unco lair to learn." Of a sudden the girl's father sends for her, and when she gets home she learns that he has made arrangements for her to marry a "Southland lord." The lass agrees to submit to his will, but she does so wishing it were her burial day rather than her wedding day. Before the wedding she sends a letter to William by a herd. William comes immediately to England and arrives just as the wedding is about to begin. He enters the church, bids the minister stop the service, and charges the bridegroom to

> Stand off, stand, you braw bridegroom,
> For the bride shall join wi me.

[15] *Ibid.*
[16] *Ibid.*, 221, A, p. 219.
[17] *Ibid.*, 221, B, pp. 219–220.
[18] *Ibid.*, 221, A, p. 219.
[19] *Ibid.*, 221, B, p. 220.
[20] *Ibid.*, 221, C, p. 221.
[21] *Ibid.*, 221, B, p. 220.
[22] *Ibid.*, 221, A, p. 219.
[23] Or "Lord Lundy." See *Ibid.*, 254, A, Vol. IV, Pt. I, pp. 411–414.

The father is enraged and declares that he would shoot William if he had "pistol, powther, and lead." William, paying little attention to his future father-in-law, orders his "foremost man" to take his lady upon his horse and sends his respects to her mother.

More details of the practice of marriage by capture are to be got from these ballads. To balance the defenders of the bride, i.e., her father and seven brothers, the groom has his "mony armed men" and his "foremost man." The groom, successful in his theft of a bride and victorious in his battle to keep her, anticipates a time when all enmity shall cease between their two families. He refuses to take up the father's threat to kill him if he had the chance, and answers,

> If ye neer be shot till I shoot you,
> Ye 'se neer be shot for me.

As he leaves with his bride, he commends himself to her mother. Apparently the groom feels that after the first shock of the incident has passed, after everyone has got used to the idea of their marriage, friendly relations ultimately can be resumed.

The modern wedding does not seem so strange a mixture now. The roisterous part of the wedding ceremony is as traditional as is its religious element. The ushers and groomsmen are the groom's "mony armed men" of the old days, but in modern times they are a dissimulating lot. No sooner have they seen their friend married than they turn and become the seven outraged brothers of the bride. In their new role they call up all the violence of the past—everything from throwing shoes to having the groom put in jail. Then they give him chase as he and his bride seek some refuge from their "anger." But the groom knows—as every groom does—that once he can get his lady away for a while, they can both come home again without more "foul, foul play."

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Projects for Investigation

In the lists given below, fields of investigation, rather than specific subjects, are set before you. These are given by way of suggestion only.

1. Literary and artistic forms, their origin, growth, and character: the epic, the tall tale, the ballad, the sonata, the madrigal, landscape painting or any "school" of painting.
2. The history of famous buildings and of types of architecture.
3. The origins of superstitions, customs, festivals, folkways.
4. Local history: the development of a town, village, city, county; or important events in local history.
5. What really happened? A study of some historical event: a battle, a famous controversy, a notable trial, a shipwreck, a political victory or defeat, a commercial enterprise, a feat of engineering.
6. Background studies of modern problems. Do not enter into a partisan discussion; that is the province of argument. Instead, examine the conditions out of which problems arise.
7. Traditions of place, region, profession.
8. Studies in ancient or medieval history.
9. The history of important discoveries and inventions.
10. The causes of important social movements or changes in the past.

4. *THE CRITICAL ESSAY*

A brief review of the kind discussed in Chapter III is almost as much a descriptive summary or an interpretation as it is a criticism. The brief review first of all *presents* a book, play, story, movie;

and second, it makes a critical judgment, but without much elaboration. Its main concern is likely to be with the content or subject-matter of what is being reviewed. It becomes a critical review only as it brings judgment and opinion into the foreground.

Most of the book reviews appearing in our current periodicals—as also reviews of plays, movies, concerts, and art exhibitions—are likely to be of the first sort. The emphasis is upon subject-matter. The review is as much a news item as it is a criticism. The book reviewer and the dramatic critic are glorified reporters who "cover" new books and new plays and tell us what is going on in the world of entertainment, art, history, scholarship, science, though always, of course, with side glances of estimation. The reviews which college students are called on to make in their classes are expected to be of about the same kind—factual and informative first, with critical remarks worked in; and book reports may be only condensations or digests, made according to some plan required by an instructor.

The critical essay—or any serious critical paper—will reverse this emphasis. It is a reasoned judgment based upon facts—the facts being the significant features of whatever is under consideration, whether the subject-matter of a book, its style, its technical methods, its underlying philosophy, or its social implications.

Since criticism is a general term, by no means limited to criticism of the arts, the critical paper may have a political or historical subject. It may discuss the foreign policy of the Wilson administration, Jefferson's idea of democracy, the character of Charles I, the new plan for a student council, the policy of the university, the architecture of the new housing unit. No matter what the subject, the principle is the same: the critical essay gives a deliberate judgment, rendered after a systematic study. The purpose of the critical essay is to set forth such a judgment and to sustain it with enough evidence to justify the estimate made by the writer. Criticism of this general sort naturally develops into the article of opinion (see Chapter IX).

Here, discussion may properly center upon literary criticism, as it is found in the essay or the article, for these types offer convenient limits within which the methods of criticism may be studied and practiced.

A review of a single book may well become a critical essay. Such a critical essay will not only present the subject-matter of the book reviewed. It will also endeavor to place the book in its proper perspective and to relate it to its legitimate context. And it will generally engage in a thoroughgoing discussion of issues conceived as arising from the author's treatment of his subject, often in such a way that the critic's own ideas about the subject are brought prominently into the foreground of discussion. The review article or essay, "The Origins of Our Heroes" (pp. 484–487), is technically a review, but would more properly be classified as a critical essay, since it not only "reviews" Mr. Wecter's *American Heroes,* but also raises some general questions about recent tendencies in American thought.

More often the critical essay is a discussion of a literary or artistic topic rather than a mere review. The subject may be a single author or some aspect of his work, a study of some tendency, a critical examination of technique or style. "Poe's Idea of the Short Story," "Sinclair Lewis as a Satirist," "Coleridge's Use of the Ballad Form," "Grant Wood as a Painter of American Life," "George Gershwin's Use of Jazz" are typical subjects.

If the topic requires careful research, and if the criticism is based upon that research, then there is little difference between the critical paper and the research paper. But the critical essay, though it must be well informed, does not depend upon a mere "looking up" of a subject. A patchwork of quotations and summaries, no matter how authoritative the source, no matter how well authenticated the opinions, is not a critical essay. The critical essay is an independent form. Although it may use the facts assembled by research, it goes beyond research to make its own original and independent judgment. It is not a clutter of second-hand opinions and borrowed judgments.

On the other hand, a critical paper is not a merely personal and entirely impressionistic account of "what I like." Personal criticism can be written successfully, but only by the most experienced writers, who have undergone long discipline, cultivated their tastes, and perhaps become "persons of importance." Even then it is often opinionated and untrustworthy. The temptation to show off is sometimes irresistible, even among the great. Much personal criticism is of this clever sort—a brilliant but shallow rendering of the

vulgar bromide: "I don't know what so-and-so means but I know what I like."

But whim is not principle. The "I know what I like" criticism is acceptable only when the critic is one whose likes are worth something and have some consistent principle behind them. This does not mean, of course, that nothing can be gained from the personal element. Much can be gained by studying and recording one's own reactions to a book or picture. But the place for untrammelled spouting of personal reactions is not the critical essay, but the informal essay.

The best criticism is impersonal. The good critic tries to do justice to his subject, not to parade his personal views. Criticism is neither mere fault-finding nor fulsome praise, but a judicious attempt to estimate total worth. Whatever the nature of the criticism—whether formal or informal, whether literary or non-literary, whether student theme, course paper, magazine article, review, or essay—it should always express a reasoned judgment growing out of careful analysis. The best critical essays are really analyses.

In the review article, "The Origins of Our Heroes," the author not only analyzes Wecter's book into its significant features, but also reviews American tendencies in a similarly analytical way. In the course of the critical discussion a number of relevant comparisons are made, and these serve to place Wecter's book in perspective.

It is a good principle to combine intensive analysis and comparison in your criticism. First, study the significant features of the thing itself and select for comment whatever is distinctive. Second, make comparisons that will reveal what kind of book, play, technique, style is under consideration. Then, in the light of this twofold analysis, judge how good or bad the work is.

The soundness of any piece of criticism will depend upon how thoroughly and discriminatingly these operations are carried out. But two other special methods, familiarly known as the *historical method* and the *method of standards* may enter into the process of critical analysis. The historical method of criticism is useful, especially in the study of old masters, when it is necessary to review the causes and sources of literary attitudes and styles. If the subject is "Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* as an Interpretation of Puritanism," it is necessary to know what Puritanism was and what may have led Hawthorne to take a certain attitude toward it. The ad-

vantage of the historical method is that it is factual and impersonal. The critic "reconstructs" the mind of a past age, and his criticism becomes largely interpretation.

In using the method of standards, the critic chooses or establishes some æsthetic standard to which he thinks a book, play, or picture ought to conform, and then measures his subject by that standard. If the short stories of Ernest Hemingway are to be criticized, by what standard are they to be judged? By the classic standards of Aristotle? By the standard of the "pulp" magazines? By Victorian standards? By the standards of *Harper's* or the *Atlantic?*

The great difficulty is in knowing what standard to use. Matthew Arnold met this difficulty by saying, rather evasively, that the standard must always be the standard of the *best* literature, the *best* art in the world. But there has been endless debate about what is "best," and there will continue to be debate. No one can dictate the standard for a given piece of criticism. But when a critic is using the method of standards, he should indicate explicitly the particular standard which he proposes to apply.

THOREAU AS SAUNTERER[1]

By Reginald L. Cook

Henry Thoreau was slightly undersized and sparely built, but tough and wiry—a man of lean, concentrated energy. His hair was brown, his mouth pursed, his nose aquiline—"Emersonian" some called it—and his bluish-gray eyes were deeply set under the formidable brows of his weather-beaten face. His forehead was both high and broad; his arms long, and while talking, his hands were often vigorously clenched, indicative of intensity. His feet were big and gripped the earth, and his strong legs, as Emerson remarked, were no insignificant part of his armor. A short man, a slight man, surely, but not a puny one.

It was difficult to distinguish him from the woodlots and pastures he threaded when he wore his loose-textured suit of dark and light browns and green. In clothes that resembled a pasture covered with patches of withered sweetfern and lechea, he passed unperceived

[1]From *Passage to Walden*, by Reginald L. Cook. Copyright, 1949, by Reginald L. Cook. Reprinted by permission of and arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.

half a mile in front of a farmer's window. Wild animals, undaunted by his natural clothing, fearlessly approached him. Once a mink came within twenty feet, and he thought that it would have come even closer had he worn corduroys.

He sauntered through fields and woods, as Emerson enumerated, "with music-book under his arm, to press flowers in; with telescope in his pocket, to see the birds, and microscope to count stamens; with a diary, jack-knife, and twine; in stout shoes, and strong gray trousers, ready to brave the shrub-oaks, and smilax, and to climb the tree for a hawk's nest." His hat served as his botany box. The lining gathered in midway, made a shelf, and the darkness and the vapors arising from his head preserved the flowers through a long walk. Orchises carried all day in this improvised herbarium retained their freshness for a day or two after withdrawal. In the freezing March rains, when the north wind kept him under the shelter of the hills and woods—"along their south sides"—he wore an India-rubber coat and boots for protection. And there was his ubiquitous umbrella which prompted at least one countryman to mistake his business.

Since his shoes were a very important part of his gear, it was a matter of grave deliberation when he ventured into the bootmaker's and bought a pair of tawny cowhide boots intended for his winter walks when the mizzling rains made sloshy walking. They had to be stout. He noted that frequently the negligent bootmakers did not completely peg the heels of the boot, and dissatisfied with boots that were only wooden-pegged at the toes, he required the seller to add an extra of iron heel-pegs. With iron-pegged heels he crossed very wet and miry places dry-shod by moving rapidly on his heels. Perplexed by the untying of leather thongs, he finally hit upon a hard knot! Instead of a granny's knot (two simple knots one over the other), he tried a square knot (two running slip-nooses, called by sailors a reef-knot) to withstand the wringing and twisting he gave the leather thongs in his walks. Equipped with good stout shoes tied in a square knot, he felt like an armed man.

Essentially a lover of field and woods, life in gardens and parlors was unpalatable to him. A great part of our troubles he considered to be domestic and originated from living indoors. A house bred insanity; was, in a sense, a hospital; but in the world of nature he recovered his sanity at once. Certainly he was not, in Nietzsche's epithet, a "house-animal."

Feeling the necessity to re-ally himself with nature each day, to make root and send out some little fibre, even on a winter day,

he struck out from his doorstoop, easily walking ten, fifteen, or twenty miles, without going by any house, by following the river, then the brook, then the meadow and the woodside. A journey two hours long brought him to a strange land where an old farmhouse was a proper orientation from the vapidity and triviality of village life. Four hours in the open restored his well-being. Sun and wind thickened the cuticle over a few of his finer qualities, but he thought he gained more from "the tan and callus of experience" than he lost.

Poet-fashion, he spent his days anticipating the sunrise, trying to hear what was in the wind, watching from cliff or tree, waiting at evening on the hilltop for the sky to fall so that he might catch something. He was a self-appointed inspector of snowstorms and rainstorms, a surveyor of forest paths and all across-lot routes. Like a faithful herdsman he looked after the wild stock of the town and he kept an eye on the unfrequented nooks and corners of a farm. He watered the red huckleberry, sand cherry, nettle-tree, red pine, black ash, white grape, and yellow violet, "which might have withered else in dry seasons." It was wise to be outdoors early and late, sauntering far and earnestly, in order to re-create the whole body and to perceive the phenomena of the day. There was no way of knowing when something might turn up. When he thought his walk was profitless or a failure, it was then usually on the point of becoming a success; "for then," as he surmised, "you are in that subdued and knocking mood to which Nature never fails to open." When the day sometimes seemed a vain one, and the world appeared trivial, then, with the dropping of sun and wind, he caught its reflex. The dews purified the atmosphere and made it transparent, and the lakes and rivers acquired "a glassy stillness, reflecting the skies." He felt renewed, and he took what Keats called "the journey homeward to his habitual self." He exulted in the fact that he was at the top of his condition for perceiving beauty.

It was a shrewd Thoreauvian remark in *Walden* that if he had remembered how the same sun which ripened his beans illumined a whole system of earths, it might have prevented some mistakes. This had not been the light in which he hoed them, but he was reminded that there was a light—the light of relativity and universality—in which things might be regarded. There was, for instance, a light in which walking might be regarded. He was not, strictly speaking, a walker or a tramper or a hiker or a journeyman; he was a saunterer—"a Sainte-terrer, a Saunterer, a Holy-Lander"—who extended his sauntering to Monadnock, Wachusett, Uncannunuc, Greylock, the Catskills, Mount Washington, the Maine

Woods, and Cape Cod. Sauntering was the light in which he regarded walking. "For every walk is a sort of crusade, preached by some Peter the Hermit in us, to go forth and reconquer this Holy Land from the hands of the Infidels."

He sauntered to pine groves that were like "fleets at sea, full-rigged, with wavy boughs"; to the cedar wood beyond Flint's Pond, "where the trees, covered with hoary blue berries, spiring higher and higher, are fit to stand before Valhalla" and where creeping juniper covered the ground; to swamps where the usnea lichen hung in festoons from the black spruce trees, where toadstools—"round tables of the swamp gods"—covered the ground, where swamp pinks, dogwood, wild holly, and red alderberry, glowing "like eyes of imps," grew. He visited particular trees in pasture, woodland, swamp, and hilltop: the black birch, yellow birch, beech, bass, hornbeam, *Celtis occidentalis,* pine, or hemlock. "These were the shrines I visited both summer and winter," he declared. Frequently he tramped eight or ten miles through deep snow "to keep an appointment with a beech-tree or a yellow birch, or an old acquaintance among the pines . . ."

Surely Thoreau had a genius for sauntering, the art of which consisted not solely in exercising either legs or body, nor solely in recruiting the spirits, "but positively to exercise both body and spirit." He set out upon his walks "in the spirit of undying adventure"; they were a sort of crusade carried on through every season year after year without diminution in discovery or enthusiasm. Moreover, he responded to a subtle magnetism in nature which drew him irresistibly toward the southwest. What Thoreau felt privately ("I must walk toward Oregon, and not toward Europe"), Donald Culross Peattie sees as a national inclination. "Always Americans have turned west, body and soul," says Peattie in *The Road of a Naturalist.* "They love the national tradition of unbreathed air, and they welcome a solitude that is not lonely but free." In the force of the subtle magnetism in nature, Thoreau thought he perceived the general truth of our going eastward for history, art, literature—"retracing the steps of the race"—and our going westward—"as into the future, with a spirit of enterprise and adventure." Since the old, meandering, dry, uninhabited Marlborough road led southwest, his inward needle generally settled in that direction.

The West was synonymous with the wild. Wilderness represented the preservation of the world. "From the forest and wilderness come the tonics and barks which brace mankind," he asserted. Where

forest covered virgin soil the strength and marrow of nature lay. There man was refreshed. When the vegetable soil became exhausted, human cultures weakened. So with a characteristically exaggerated gesture, Thoreau exalted the untamed but nourishing wilderness where the Northern Indians ate raw the marrow of the Arctic reindeer, and he exulted in the wilderness where the Hottentots lived on the marrow of kudus. Once he felt a powerful impulse to seize and down a woodchuck raw, which he resisted. He would have approved of the wilderness areas now open to a highly urbanized people, areas like the Porcupine hardwood forest on the Michigan peninsula, or Hell's Canyon on the Oregon-Idaho boundary between the Devil's Range and the Wallowa Mountain, or Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia, or the High Sierra out of Carson City, Nevada, or the Grand Tetons out of Jackson, Wyoming, or the Bitterroot wilderness area out of Butte, Montana.

Thoreau sought acquaintance with nature "to know," as he said, "her moods and manners." The primitive, wild, and non-human were as essential aspects of her moods and manners as the more gentle, delicate, and elusive aspects. To study nature without the wild aspect was like attempting to study a tribe of Indians that had lost all its warriors. Others might prefer nature's tamer and more domesticated mood and manner, but in himself he found "a peculiarly wild nature," one that acknowledged a stronger kinship with the lichen on the rocks than with books. He liked best wild lands where no settler had squatted, the drearest prospect of ocean, desert, or wilderness, the darkest wood, the most dismal swamp. When he saw a redbird on his friend's string, he thought that deeper woods might reveal redder birds. He threaded woods and waded swamps, but discovered no wilder bird kindred to them. On a trip to Ktaadn in 1846, he praised the "primeval, untamed, and forever untamable Nature" in the Maine forests. It was pure nature, not the mother earth with which he was acquainted in Concord, a vast and terrific matter, and he felt there "the presence of a force not bound to be kind to man." "Talk of mysteries!" he exclaimed. "Think of our life in nature,—daily to be shown matter, to come in contact with it,—rocks, trees, wind on the cheeks! The *solid* earth! The *actual* world! The *common sense! Contact! Contact! Who* are we? *Where* are we?"

Concord excited an unsatisfied expectation of redder birds than the redbirds. He also missed "the nobler animals"—the cougar, lynx, wolverene, wolf, bear, moose, deer, beaver, panther—in Concord. Nature without these wild denizens appeared maimed and

imperfect. Bear and moose, which had once been killed on Fair Haven Hill, and wolves, which were once caught along the Assabet River, had disappeared. Only a few of the "nobler animals" survived. Otter tracks had been seen in his day near the mouth of Pole Brook (he called it Bidens Brook), and when John Adams of Carlisle caught a Canadian lynx near the north line of the town, George Melvin fetched Thoreau to see it.

So strenuous was his devotion to the doctrine of the wild, only a swamp "impervious and quaking," like Becky Stow's or Gowing's, where the dense beds of andromeda covered the quaking sphagnum, could satisfy an appetency for the marrowy soil in which the strength of nature lay. When he made an expedition to Becky Stow's swamp on a midsummer's day in 1856, he rolled up his trousers to his knees and waded about, intently examining the sphagnum, filling his pockets with cranberries, and, much to his surprise, found an anthill in the sphagnum, full of ants with their young. "It consisted of particles of sphagnum like sawdust, was a foot and a half in diameter, and my feet sunk to water all around it!" Yet it was the discovery of small black hairy huckleberries in which he particularly rejoiced, for here, not far from the centre of Concord, was a swamp where grew wild berries—insipid, inedible, tough, and hairy. Here was a manifestation of primitive and vigorous nature, still untamed, and it seemed to him that he had truly reached a *new world.* Of course there was no greater wilderness—not even in the wilds of Labrador—than he imported into Concord.

All good things were wild and free. It was the wildness in literature that chiefly appealed to him. So he praised wild fancies of serpents, griffins, flying dragons; wild strains of music; wild friends and neighbors; domestic animals that reasserted their wildness or native vigor; the "vast, savage, howling mothers of ours, Nature"; and the wild and dusky knowledge which redeems a man from cultivated precocity. "A truly good book," he thought, was "something as wildly natural and primitive, mysterious and marvellous, ambrosial and fertile, as a fungus or lichen." Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, and Shakespeare were, comparatively speaking, tame. The untamed thinking in *Hamlet* and the *Iliad* appealed to him, but he could not recall any poetry which adequately expressed his yearning for the wild. Even Robin Hood was tame. Mythology and the Oriental Scriptures more nearly represented what he liked. One book, however, which satisfied his craving for wildness was Samuel Purchas's *Purchas his Pilgrimes.* "It affected me," he said, "like looking into an impassable swamp, ten feet deep with sphag-

num, where the monarchs of the forest, covered with mosses and stretched along the ground, were making haste to become peat."

THOMAS HARDY'S STYLE[1]

By Lord David Cecil

A writer's style, his use of language, is the aspect of his art most illuminating to the critic. For in it we see the relation between inspiration and expression at their closest, most localised and, as it were, most tangible form. Personality appears in a writer's language as it does in the strokes of the painter's brush or the marks of the sculptor's chisel. This is eminently so in Hardy's work. His style is the microcosm of his talent, exhibiting all his faults and virtues in their most characteristic form. Let us examine a passage. Here is a paragraph from the scene in "A Pair of Blue Eyes" when Knight is clinging to the face of the Cliff without a Name, in imminent danger of death, and uncertain whether Elfride will be able to bring help in time to save him:

> He again looked straight downwards, the wind and the water-dashes lifting his moustache, scudding up his cheeks, under his eyelids, and into his eyes. This is what he saw down there: the surface of the sea—visually just past his toes and under his feet; actually one-eighth of a mile, or more than two hundred yards, below them. We colour according to our moods the objects we survey. The sea would have been a deep neutral blue, had happier auspices attended the gazer: it was now no otherwise than distinctly black to his vision. That narrow white border was foam, he knew well; but its boisterous tosses were so distant as to appear a pulsation only, and its plashing was barely audible. A white border to a black sea—his funeral pall and its edging.
>
> The world was to some extent turned upside down for him. Rain descended from below. Beneath his feet was aerial space and the unknown; above him was the firm, familiar ground, and upon it all that he loved best.
>
> Pitiless nature had then two voices, and two only. The nearer was the voice of the wind in his ears rising and falling as it

[1]From *Hardy the Novelist: An Essay in Criticism*, by Lord David Cecil, copyright 1946, used by special permission of the publishers, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc.

> mauled and thrust him hard or softly. The second and distant one was the moan of that unplummetted ocean below and afar—rubbing its restless flank against the Cliff without a Name.

No one could call this a piece of faultless writing. Hardy says somewhere that, in order to improve his style, he made a study of Addison, Burke, Gibbon, Lamb, Defoe—and "The Times" newspaper. Alas, the only influence I can detect in this passage is that of "The Times" newspaper. It has the heaviness, the stiltedness, the propensity to refined cliché, of serious journalism. Nor is it even an accomplished example of this ignoble mode of expression. Hardy's lack of craftsman's skill makes him an amateurish journalist. He is always getting tied up in his phrases. Do you notice how he says "visually just past his toes and under his feet" instead of "apparently just beneath his toes"? When he wants to state that the sea would have looked blue in happier circumstances, but now looked black, he can think of no better phrase than "the sea would have been a deep neutral blue, had happier auspices attended the gazer: it was now no otherwise than distinctly black to his vision." These are mild compared with some of Hardy's lapses. In "Far from the Madding Crowd" he expresses the simple fact that Bathsheba blushed in these terms: "Not a point in the milkmaid but was of the deepest rose colour." This is how, in "A Pair of Blue Eyes," he states that a young man absorbed in astronomy found the problems of personal life particularly difficult: "There is no telling what might have been the stress of such a web of perplexity upon him, a young man whose love of celestial physics was second to none." Of course, this uncouthness is partly deliberate. His Gothic taste shows itself in his choice of words as much as in his choice of subject. He has a perverse pleasure in crabbedness for its own sake—loves to employ words that most people would avoid: "domicile" for house, for example, or "congelation" for freezing, or "habiliments" for clothes. He even makes an adjective of the last and talks somewhere of a man's "habilimental" taste, meaning his taste in dress. All this is on purpose; and to criticise it simply as incompetence shows a failure to realise the bent of Hardy's fancy. Still, he was incompetent too, incompetent in the ordinary mechanics of his trade. He often cannot manage the ordinary syntax and grammar of the English language. He finds it hard to make a plain statement plainly, and he does not improve matters by decking out his misbegotten sentences with faded clichés and genteel circumlocutions.

Yet his style is capable of greater effects than those of far more competent writers. Good style is not a negative thing, dependent for its success on the absence of faults. It succeeds in so far as it gets the author's meaning fully across, in so far as it completely incarnates his conception in the medium of words. Hardy's style can do this, though not always. For one thing, it *is* a style. His strange individuality does contrive to imprint itself on his actual use of language. Even though he uses clichés, the final effect of his writing is never commonplace. His very clumsiness and roughness differentiate it from the leading article, and reveal a characteristic idiosyncrasy in the use of language. You could never mistake a paragraph by Hardy for a paragraph by anybody else. The distinguishing elements in his personality—his integrity, his naïveté, his dignity, his strangeness—are present in the turn of his phrase. And to smooth his sentences out into a polished level of perfection would involve obliterating the mark of Hardy's signature.

Further, Hardy had an acute sense of the quality of individual words and phrase. It shows in the passage I quoted to you from "A Pair of Blue Eyes": "the wind and the water-dashes, scudding up his cheeks"; "boisterous tosses of the foam"; "the moan of that unplummetted ocean rubbing its restless flank against the Cliff." In such phrases the poet in Hardy enables him to rise to a level of expressiveness which many merely competent craftsmen do not get within sight of. His words are the only words for his purpose. I cannot think of any alternative for "boisterous tosses" or "rubbing its restless flank" which would give anything like the same effect. Hardy, unexpectedly enough, at such moments has satisfied Flaubert's ideal of style. He has discovered the "mot juste," the single word which can alone express the shade of meaning he has in mind. His words do more than clothe his conception—they are its embodiment. Nor is it always an easy conception to embody in words: Hardy's conceptions are so intensely imaginative. His words do go beyond his logical meaning to suggest all the subtleties and overtones of the mood in which he regarded it. To the poet's eye he added the poet's finer sensibility to the use of language. Eustacia's "Pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries"; the bonfire casting "a kingly effulgence over Egdon"; the half-naked hill of Norcombe with its "vague still horizon"; Henchard's garden "silent, dewy and full of perfume"; the first description of Jude's son, "a ground swell from ancient years of night seemed to lift the child in this, his morning-life, when his face took a back view over some great

Atlantic of time"—in these phrases, Hardy, in the fervour of inspiration, has struck a chord which sets the reader's imagination astir like a line of Shakespeare or Donne. The same power shows itself in the movement of Hardy's prose—in its rhythm. It also is often harsh and crabbed, but it also is intensely expressive. Do you remark how the jerky, wavering sentences in "A Pair of Blue Eyes" echo the agitation in Knight's breast, his quivering suspense, the fragmentary, spasmodic movement of his thought at this moment of peril?; the movement of the wind too—"the wind in his ears, rising and falling, as it mauled and thrust him, hard or softly"? Always instinctively he modulates sound to make it correspond to the movement of the emotion it conveys:

> "Justice was done, and the President of the Immortals (in Aeschylean phrase) had ended his sport with Tess. And the d'Urberville knights and dames slept on in their tombs, unknowing. The two speechless gazers bent themselves down to the earth as if in prayer, and remained for a long time absolutely motionless; the flag continued to wave silently. As soon as they had strength, they arose, joined hands again, and went on."

Remark how the roll of the first sentence proclaims grandly, and, as it were, impersonally, the moral of the story. The frustrated rhythm of the next sentence, beginning with the same grandeur and then cut short, conveys an uprush of emotion, suddenly checked as by a violent effort of will. Then the straight narrative goes on, in toneless, abrupt cadence, as it if were the utterance of a spirit drained by sheer intensity of feeling. This is language used creatively. The truth is, that two elements go to make a good style. The first is what I may call the element of understanding: that grasp of the nature of the English language which enables an author to write it clearly, accurately, and economically. The second is the element of sensibility: that feeling for the flavour of a word and the flow of a rhythm which enables him to write it eloquently and expressively. The first element is intellectual, the child of the critical sense; the second is aesthetic and is the product of the imagination. Hardy—as one might expect—has the second in the highest degree, but is noticeably lacking in the first: with the consequence that a grotesque deficiency in craftsmanship appears in his style side by side with wonderful strokes of phrase. He writes clumsily; but he writes creatively.

THE ORIGINS OF OUR HEROES: A REVIEW[1]

The Hero in America: A Chronicle of Hero-Worship. By Dixon Wecter. Scribner's. $3.50.

MR. WECTER'S admirable study is the fruit not only of his own contemplation and sound scholarship; it is also the fruit, and might be called the epitome, of the most remarkable period of retrospect and self-examination in our national history. In the years from the publication of Beveridge's life of John Marshall (1919) to the present we have tried in hundreds of books, monographs, and literary articles to say what we think our history is; and beyond what officially passes as history, to say also what traditions we inherit; what our national and regional peculiarities are; what our folkways are, too, in particularized detail and in the large; and, as in the focus Mr. Wecter invites us to use, who are true heroes, and why.

This recovery of the American past has been both systematic and nostalgic. Undoubtedly the graduate schools have led the way and prepared the foundation. Their vast researches are supposed to be objective, but sometimes one can detect in them a passion not quite concealed, a fervor so irrepressible that it makes even *ibid.* and *op. cit.* look like partisan terms. Biographers and historians, amateur and professional, have exploited their materials and, for better authority, have aped their methods, until now we find footnotes and bibliography in the cheapest best-sellers as often as in the dusty monograph. One is surprised, indeed, not to find a scholarly apparatus appended to the historical picture strips that compete for public favor with Popeye and Joe Palooka.

In the same period, American literature and the study of it have gained enormously. The American historical novel has been triumphantly reborn—and to assure us that it is really historical, its authors frequently provide bibliographies or write separate monographs about their painstaking researches. Ballad, folk tale, folklore have been hunted out of their wilderness lairs and caged, in book and phonograph record, for the sophisticated. The arts everywhere have felt the influence of retrospection: music, drama, painting, architecture, even fashions in dress and cookery, revive the American theme.

[1]From *The Kenyon Review.*

Against this overwhelming tide, the efforts of the "debunking school" of the nineteen-twenties now seem trivial, a little pathetic. The Marxists, swept by the same flood, have shrewdly attempted to ride it; they have hoisted Lincoln's effigy to the masthead and invoked other sanctions and symbols from the American past. Their championship of the past can hardly be accepted as sincere, since, once in power, they would be the first to obliterate all traces of the past. But it is a testimony to the prestige of Lincoln's name that even the Marxists seek to invoke its magic. As never before, we are emphatically and affectionately self-conscious toward our history.

It is necessary to say all this in order to describe Mr. Wecter's book. He has evidently absorbed the works of his predecessors. Despite the limitations suggested by his title, his book is most of all summation, deft and well-balanced, of the thought of the period. His chapters on Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, Lee, and other heroes, though they hark back to earlier attitudes, are in essence reviews of what our generation has learned about the American past. One could not imagine any better book to recommend to an inquiring European who might want to find out just what kind of nation he has become involved with, under the post-war arrangements. For the American reader, the pleasure and value of Mr. Wecter's book would have to be differently described—it is old acquaintance brought to mind; and if that reader is addicted to Americana, he will marvel at Mr. Wecter's ability to make the old acquaintance new.

Mr. Wecter's main business, nevertheless, is not with historical narrative as such. His real subject is the "secular religion" of hero-worship in the United States, and how it works, and what it reveals about us as well as the heroes. In this connection arises the only quarrel that a critic could reasonably work up with him. The issue is whether the method he uses—which is essentially the method of the historical scholar—enables him to do justice to his real subject.

Like Carlyle, to whom he refers, Mr. Wecter accepts as "hero" the great man who is the type of his age and his people, who both makes the times and is made by them, and who, though embodying the ideal of a particular era, lingers on permanently as a national tradition. This definition admits the Man of Letters and the Prophet to the pantheon of heroes no less than the military chieftain or the purely mythical folk hero. Although Mr. Wecter offers us no American examples of the Hero as Man of Letters or as Prophet, he does follow the Carlylean principle to the extent of giving us the Hero

as Inventor (Edison) and as Aviator (Lindbergh), as well as the Pilgrim Fathers, the Embattled Farmers, the Frontiersman, and the like, along with Washington, Andrew Jackson, and Lee.

If hero-worship is indeed a "secular religion," then is the historian, as historian, really competent to deal with it? Is it, indeed, any of his business, if he is going to insist on remaining a researchist? Our great men, or "heroes," attract reverence not merely from the facts of their careers, which may indeed often be in conflict with legend, but from folk-interpretation of facts, or addition to facts. Mythologizing is an essential part of the hero-making process. Mr. Wecter recognizes its importance but does not quite know what to do with myths, other than to annotate them. He announces, it is true, a kind of philosophy of American hero-worship. As a nation, he says, we have too large a habitation, containing too many "interchangeable places," to find collective unity in loyalty to place-traditions. Instead, we seek our emotional center in the Flag, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution; and, most of all, in our "heroes" who have become "institutions," "talismans," "great gods of the tribe." "Our folk attitude toward our greatest heroes," he writes, "approaches the religious."

Mr. Wecter does not speak to this text systematically and convincingly. He has a divided interest, which might be stated thus: (1) in the pure myths, considered as strictly cultural data; (2) in the wider mythologizing process which treats facts selectively or, by some exaggeration, gives them the dramatic power of fiction; (3) in historical perspective in general; (4) in the crowd-responses which, in so far as they condition the careers of our "heroes" and their after-fame, suggest the nature of crowd-psychology in the American democracy.

To Mr. Wecter the myths seem always data in the study of crowd-responses. They hardly ever acquire an elevation equal, in his mind, to the recital of facts, established by historical research and set in historical perspective. Again and again he says, almost wistfully, things like this: "In the making of American legends the Puritan Fathers are often praised for contributions not very well deserved —such as religious liberalism and democracy in government—but slighted as pioneers both in State control of business and the quite different cult of idealizing the merchant prince." To Mr. Wecter myths are falsifications, exaggerations, distortions, which are interesting for the states of mind they reveal, but are otherwise a little regrettable. He is a brilliant social historian, and if it had been his

announced purpose merely to study our great men, our various beloved and popular characters, in order to determine by this means our social and political preferences, there could be no objection to his view of myths. But his subject is American heroes, American hero-worship. In the study of that subject the myth is all-important; it is indeed a truth which may tell more than facts.

Probably Mr. Wecter has stretched the term *hero,* or used it metaphorically, all the while meaning really to say *great man, statesman, popular leader.* A more serious concern with the nature of myth itself might have strengthened his book considerably. With a better understanding of myth Mr. Wecter might have improved his now inadequate chapter on the frontiersman. He might also have detected some of the curious ways in which the methods of historical research are used to uphold and rationalize historical myths, especially those of sectional origin. For example, the Lee of his book is "the Aristocrat as Hero"—a bookish creation, the product of recent biography, which has been engaged in rationalizing, by approved scholarly procedures, the "gentle" Lee of the New South myth; and this personage is emphatically not the *General* Lee to whom the unreconstructed Old South gave its fierce devotion.

In the case of Lee, as elsewhere, Mr. Wecter cites "myths" to illustrate the nature of the crowd's irrational "worship," but turns generally to "facts" in order to frame his own sober judgment of the hero's place and worth. He does not perceive, apparently, that the "facts" may be used to rationalize a myth, no less than to explode it. The Parson Weemses of our day are often enough gentlemen who, like Mr. Wecter, have spent much time in the Huntington Library and, like him, have consulted many authorities in person or by letter. One who reads his list of acknowledgments and finds the names of Thomas J. Wertenbaker, Carl Van Doren, Carl Sandburg, Ernest K. Lindley, H. L. Mencken, Howard Mumford Jones, and various others, is entitled to wonder whether he never knew that he was consulting the greatest partisans, the slickest myth-makers of our day.

5. *THE INFORMAL ESSAY*

The jester, or court Fool, of the Middle Ages could take almost any liberty with his master the King, but always on one condition: he must never be dull. The Fool might be saucy, or he might be

sharply critical, but he escaped the dungeon or the headsman's axe (as supposedly wiser people often did not) so long as his sense was made up to look like nonsense and had at least the air of a bright remark.

The informal essay gives its writer some of the privileges of the Fool. Say anything you like in an informal essay, if you can say it pleasantly, not too seriously, and above all in such a way that the expression of your sentiments, wise or foolish, is in itself a pleasure.

Everyone feels the need of this privilege at times. We get tired of being reasonable and judicious. We have opinions, wild notions, private obsessions, unreasonable likes and dislikes (less often directed at great social and political issues than at the look of a politician's nose or the manners of theater ushers); and once in a while we should like to have an occasion for venting such opinions upon the world, regardless of the consequences. We do not wish always to feel the heavy burden of being "disinterested." Will not someone lift from our shoulders the burden of writing definitively, conclusively, systematically, and tremendously about important subjects?

The informal essay gives "King's excuse" to do just those things. It is frankly, openly interested, partisan, or even mildly "rambunctious." But it is not arguing for or against a planned society. It simply wonders who designs uniforms for hotel doormen; or argues that the neon signs on Main Street would look much better if they were turned upside down, for then one could enjoy the color without having to read the words. The informal essay may be unabashedly frivolous—as when, in mock-historic vein, it traces the evolution of the show-window dummy from the expressionless wax creatures of the pre-Hoover era to the sculptured beauties of the present day.

Yet often enough frivolity may be a mask. Like the Fool, the informal essay may speak truth out of a laughing mouth, in such paradoxes as Chesterton uses in *Tremendous Trifles;* or as when Leacock, in "Education at Oxford" pokes fun at modern education. Or the informal essay may be serious, meditative, reminiscent. It notices the delight of walking a ridge on a windy day, with the sweep of sky and mountain all around; or the strange quality of

summer sounds at night; or the character of the noon hour; or it remembers old times at school, a day in Venice, the last look at the old homeplace, the voices of old companions.

For these reasons the informal essay is often called the personal essay, or the familiar essay. The writer of the informal essay is privileged to dwell upon his own experiences and views, even upon his whims, oddities, fantasies, dreams. The pronoun "I" stands in the foreground without shrinking apologies. The author of the informal essay gives us, in Alice Meynell's phrase, "the color of life" as life appears to him—and what matter if he is wearing spectacles to give it the color he loves best? Lamb begins an essay with the words, "I have an almost feminine partiality for old china." Hazlitt, in "On Going a Journey," writes: "One of the pleasantest things in the world is a journey; but I like to go by myself." Rose Macaulay calls her essays *Personal Pleasures*. H. L. Mencken calls all of his essays *Prejudices*.

But though the ego, so often suppressed, gets its chance for full expression in the informal essay, the good informal essay is never merely egotistical. A swaggering essay is bad. Cocksureness is out of place. The writer of the informal essay must look at the world with mild tolerance, even when he is most amused and piqued by it. He must have some of the detachment of Addison's "Spectator," even while he is asserting himself. He must not take himself too seriously. He is allowed opinions and prejudices, but he is not supposed to strike a fighting attitude.

The manner of the informal essay, as the name implies, is relaxed and comfortable. An essay means, literally, a trial, an attempt; and the informal essay preserves this old and original feature of the essay. It must seem unstudied—improvised rather than designed; an impromptu rather than a deliberate performance. Its tone is conversational; and hence it is sometimes called the light essay. Its sentences generally have more of the idiom and cast of common speech, or at least of good conversation, than will appear in formal prose. Addison and Steele, in *The Spectator,* were the first to give English prose this conversational cast; and it has continued to be a distinguishing mark of the informal essay.

In structure, the informal essay is sure to obey no law, indeed to make up its own laws as it goes. It is possible to write a good

informal essay which it would be all but impossible to outline. Digressions are common. If they are pleasant and entertaining, they are justified. But they must not stray too far afield or take undue liberties with tone or thematic design.

The informal essay gets its unity, or rather its harmony of effect, by observing a rule of balance, such as is suggested in Doctor Johnson's praise of Addison's style: "familiar, but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious." Its controlling element is often, as in descriptive and narrative writing, a dominant tone, a harmony of mood, a definite point of view. The manner of saying things counts for as much as what is said. Seeming artlessness may conceal art. The very irregularity of an informal essay may be a calculated thing; its planlessness is deliberate. Sometimes it may parody the structure of a more formal discourse. An informal essay may pretend to define the campus bore, or to give an analytical classification of bores in general; but it will use such formal procedures lightly and mockingly.

The range of subject-matter is of course enormous. If he chooses, the writer may follow the example of Robert Louis Stevenson, who in "Pulvis et Umbra" writes a dignified meditation on the old subject of man's mortality; or he may race to the other extreme and emulate Stevenson's "Apology for Idlers." The reverie or dream vision is common: Lamb's "Dream Children" is a good example. Many of the best informal essays are on subjects drawn from nature. For some reason, too, naturalists like John Burroughs, W. H. Hudson, William Beebe, are among the best of our essayists.

Most favored of all subjects, very likely, are the subjects that seem most trivial and commonplace. You may write an informal essay about the cracks in the sidewalk, the sparrows in the gutter, or on hats, dogs, pipes, safety pins, shoestrings, nose-drops, automatic door-closers. You may debate the comparative merits of the electric corn-popper and the old-fashioned hand popper. You may argue about the best recipe for clam chowder, or on whether sugar should be put in cornbread, or on the question of whether to eat or not to eat onions. You may take a paradoxical view of life and write on the disadvantages of being sociable or on the pleasure of failing on examination.

What you may do, and how you may do it, in fact cannot be

prescribed with utmost strictness. The good informal essay is like a color: it must be experienced if one is to know what it is. An acquaintance with essays is the first step toward writing them.

UP ATTIC[1]

By Walter Prichard Eaton

In common, no doubt, with many other old codgers of my generation I face the brave new world of plastics and prefabrication without enthusiasm. It may be the advertising men have done their work too well, and taught me to accept no substitutes; so how, then, shall I be happy with nothing but substitutes? Nor do I think it necessary to have been born with a silver spoon in your mouth in order to reject a plastic one. A plastic spoon has a curious insubstantiality about it which transfers itself to the food, and leaves you hungry. I say nothing about its incongruity beside a porcelain plate. And don't tell me that the plates will be plastic, too. I don't care if they are unbreakable, I will never consent to them on my table.

Neither do I think it necessary to have swung a cat by the tail in the living room in order to appreciate a certain spaciousness in one's dwelling. In fact, I never saw anybody swing a cat by the tail, anywhere, and would protest almost as much as the cat if I did. But I do like elbow room, I do think it has a definite effect on the human spirit, and far more than for two cars in the garage or push-button panels in the pantry, I think the American home of the future should aim for a decent spaciousness. Just the contrary, however, seems to be the trend. No doubt the economic interpretation must be applied to this bit of history, but that makes me no happier. In England 300,000 prefabricated metal houses are projected, to follow the war, which certain members of Parliament, to be sure, say are neither high enough, wide enough, nor deep enough for proper occupancy. In this country for a decade frame houses have been going up all over the land, set cheek by jowl (the jowl being the garage attachment) along rigidly gridironed streets, which after the care of the car is provided for leave precious little room for the care of the baby. Sometimes these houses are not unattractive in design, having as origin the indigenous Cape Cod cottage,

[1]Reprinted from *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, Vol. 21, Spring, 1945. By permission of the author and of *The Virginia Quarterly Review*.

in which the second-story bedrooms are under the eaves, with dormer windows to let in a modicum of air. Sometimes they are modernistic and resemble nothing familiar unless it is the superstructure of the Albany Day Boat. But in either case there are no attics. I cannot face with equanimity a future in which there are no attics. If the television cabinet has to be let down to make a bed at night I don't so much care; at least it would serve a useful purpose eight hours out of the twenty-four. But a child who grows up without a family attic overhead may very well be a child without a sense of the past, a child without roots. That way lies a trailer civilization.

It is no topsy-turvy figure of speech to say that the roots of the old American home were in the attic. There beneath the oak or chestnut rafters were stored in endless profusion—and confusion —the records of a family's life, perhaps for a century. On a bright summer day the attic was unbearably hot and buzzed with flies; in winter it chilled you with a stale cold. But on rainy days it was a fascinating place to explore by the hour while the rain made a soft, soothing roar on the roof, and sounds from the domestic world below came up smothered and unreal. The roof of the old house where my boyhood was spent was adorned with a cupola, which in turn was adorned with colored glass windows, a different color for each point of the compass. Steep stairs led up to it from the attic, and through the four windows you looked out upon four different and strange worlds. The total unreality of a world all green, or all red, or all blue, was never-to-be-too-much savored, but the all-yellow world was a little terrifying, as if some ominous storm were brewing. If Emerson's house had been equipped with such a cupola he would not have had to recommend that clumsier argument for idealism—stooping down and looking at a familiar landscape between your legs.

From the foot of the steep stairs to enchantment—or idealism—there stretched out in all directions until they vanished under the low eaves every sort of object saved from the long process of living in the house below. There were, for instance, horsehair trunks lined with old newspapers and stagecoach timetables, and filled with grandma's quaint dresses and quainter bonnets. Many a time the delighted squeals of little girls would be heard aloft, and presently there would troop down to the lawn a parade that Kate Greenaway might have painted, save that these little misses had to hold up their billowing brown skirts and their happy faces were almost enveloped in great sunbonnets. Sometimes, too, the neighbors came

and climbed up attic with mother to costume an "old folks' concert," the object of which, as I recall, was invariably to raise money for the church. How these good ladies enjoyed raising money for the church! Nor was grandfather unrepresented in the attic (which, by the way, he had undoubtedly called the garret). His tall beaver hat, as fuzzy as a startled hen, hung on a peg, and there were several boxes of his ledgers and diaries, and of his father's before him, over which my father pored when writing a history of our town. I recall, too, the delight of a neighbor when in his attic he came upon some ancient account books of a store-keeping ancestor, and therein found recorded the purchases of "Jamaica" made by the parson, a famous divine at the turn of the century, noted for his Calvinistic piety and his distinguished offspring, four of whom bulked large in the nineteenth-century life of America. Monday through Friday, week in and week out, the good dominie purchased a pint of rum, but on Saturdays he was regularly charged with two pints. Why he did not buy his rum in bulk the records did not disclose. Perhaps he could not trust the freedom of his will that far—an unworthy supposition, but there seems to be no other.

There used to be a professor at Dartmouth who declared that the greatest foe of history was the neat New England housewife who periodically cleaned her attic and threw away priceless material for research. New England housewives were neat, unquestionably, but in my experience they infrequently carried their passion for cleanliness up attic. I do recall, however, that once my mother on a rainy day decreed that the attic was to be cleared of its accumulated "rubbish," and I was to assist in the operation. We worked ruthlessly and without sentiment for a long time, dragging out trunks and boxes, fishing through cobwebs under the dusty eaves, thumbing through old books and piles of magazines, testing broken chairs, and at length accumulated a huge pile on one side of the cupola stairs marked for the discard, and on the other side a small pile of things to be saved. With a sigh of righteous satisfaction mother straightened up, adjusted the dust cloth covering her hair, and announced down the stair well that father could come up now and begin the process of removing the discards.

But before father's head appeared above the floor, I had already repented of scrapping a certain avuncular brown derby, much used in charades, and in all plays calling for a villain, and I had carried it over to the small pile. The first thing father saw, of course, was the stack of books. He immediately squatted down and began to inspect them. "What's this?" he cried. "My old geometry?—and my

Latin grammar! Amo, amare, amatus—scrap this? Never!" And over to the other pile went book after book.

Meanwhile, mother was re-examining a painted chair, or fancy chair as they were sometimes called. The rush bottom had been sat through and dangled forlornly. "That was Aunt Lizzie's chair," she was saying. "I suppose it could have a new seat. These roses on the back—I guess they're roses—are kind of pretty. And who knows, it might be in style again?"

It went over to the other side.

Father was sceptical about discarding a blue Staffordshire wash-bowl and pitcher and slop basin. But we had recently installed a bathroom, and mother was all for getting rid of any reminders of more primitive days. As I look back on those primitive days, I don't know that I blame her. But meanwhile I had become fascinated anew by the picture in the bottom of the bowl—a romantic landscape backed by a house in the best Strawberry Hill Gothic and peopled in the foreground by languid ladies bearing parasols. My plea decided the question. Over went the blue Staffordshire to the salvage group. And then grandfather's bootjack turned up, which we had found under the eaves. It meant nothing to me, and I think mother honestly thought it was nothing but an oddly cut bit of wood. But father snatched it out angrily, proclaiming it was just what he had been searching for for years, to get his congress boots off with. In fact, he carried it downstairs and put it carefully in his closet—where it remained forgotten again.

Mother was perceptibly weakening now. Old, discarded things were telling her their stories. I saw her hand lingering on the dusty back of the little rosewood sofa, the stuffing oozed from rips in the horsehair and one leg broken. Presently she called me to push it back against the chimney. So one by one the objects in the larger pile were moved to the other pile till it became the larger, and at last little was left for father to carry downstairs but a black-walnut table with a marble top so heavy that the whole table wabbled precariously if touched, a couple of broken picture frames, and some leaky rubber boots. Even the marble table top was to go no farther than the kitchen, where it later did duty as a mixing board. And mother and I descended from the attic, dirty and defeated.

It was a defeat for which mother was later grateful, I am sure, for not long after fashions did change and Aunt Lizzie's painted chair did get a new rush bottom, and the pretty little rosewood sofa was repaired, and the ladder-back chair emerged from the attic, and grandfather's Boston rocker was "done over," and even the blue

bowl and pitcher were decoratively employed. I cannot recall, however, that mother ever found a decorative use for the slop jar, and it has long since disappeared. Of these changing fashions I was but vaguely conscious at first, paying scant attention to the furniture in the attic. It was much more absorbing to thumb through the old copies of *Harper's Magazine,* or to dig out an old bullet mould with which to make ammunition for my slingshot, or to investigate the condition of the butternuts spread on the floor near the chimney to dry. But as the old furniture began to come downstairs and the Victorian black-walnut began to move up (or even sometimes out), there was no sense of strangeness in the house. I had seen all this stuff in the attic. I knew it had once occupied the places it now occupied again. It seemed to be quite at home. I came to have a great affection for the coffee-brown and satin-smooth arms of grandfather's Boston rocker, polished by his resting hands. I could remember my grandfather well, and the willow whistles he taught me to make (though never so successfully as he made them). The spread feet and comb back of a certain Windsor chair, with spindles reputed to have been whittled by grandfather from hickory, had something jaunty and almost human about them. Just so would a cocky man stand, insisting on his rights. This furniture from the attic took on a personality and charm for me that I distinctly felt, but could not possibly have put into words.

It was no surprise when father came home one day with a banjo clock under his arm, which he had purchased for what now would seem a ridiculously small sum, about one-fiftieth of its present market value. And no surprise when it went naturally on the wall above the ladder-back chair, while the black marble clock with a green bronze figure of Hamlet seated in deep dejection on top vanished from the mantel and ran down to silence under the eaves. What did surprise me was that father had to buy the banjo clock. Why had there been none in our attic?

The old house where the steep stairs led up to magic casements looking on green and red and blue and ominous yellow worlds, where dusty trunks held the costumes of a century, and old furniture told the story of domestic styles, is still extant, but the cupola has been removed and where the gate in the vanished picket fence used to be hangs a sign, "Tourists Invited." It is almost forty years since I have set foot in that house, or wanted to. It stood beside what became one of the earliest main motor highways and was rendered impossible for civilized living. But I am not without an attic, a large one, too. I have possessed it, to be sure, a mere twenty-five

years, but already it is crowded with treasures, such as a keg of handwrought nails pulled from old boards, panels rescued from tumble-down houses, broken Hitchcock chairs, the wrought iron slice grandfather used to take grandmother's pies out of the Dutch oven, a stack of framed pictures which adorned (more or less) my college room and which for reasons now hard to explain I much admired, strap hinges from old barn doors, a pile of diaries going back forty years, a box of theatre programs from the days when the human voice was directly apprehended by the listening ear and really sounded human, an elegant frock coat and skintight striped trousers carefully stored in a moth-proof chest, Gibson Girl hats with huge brims and huger feathers belonging to my wife and now and then taken out and wistfully laughed at, and I do not myself know what else. Some rainy day when there is a soft, pleasant roar on the roof I am going to take a few hours off and go up attic exploring to find out. I shall surely find something there from a forgotten past which I can bring down triumphantly and add to the domestic scene, being careful, of course, that it does not cause a domestic scene in another sense. Without the consciousness of that attic over me I should surely sleep restlessly at night. I should feel rootless and severed from my past, and the past of all my people. Oh, brave new world, indeed, that hath no attics in it!

ON GOING TO A PARTY[1]

By Charles S. Brooks

Although I usually enjoy a party when I have arrived, I seldom anticipate it with pleasure. I remain sour until I have hung my hat. I suspect that my disorder is general and that if any group of formal diners could be caught in preparation midway between their tub and overshoes, they would be found a peevish company who might be expected to snap at one another. Yet look now at their smiling faces! With what zest they crunch their food! How cheerfully they clatter on their plates! Who would suspect that yonder smiling fellow who strokes his silky chin was sullen when he fixed his tie; or that this pleasant babble comes out of mouths that lately sulked before their mirrors?

I am not sure from what cause my own crustiness proceeds. I am

[1]From *Chimney-Pot Papers*, by Charles S. Brooks. Reprinted by permission of the publisher, Yale University Press.

of no essential unsociability. Nor is it wholly the masquerade of unaccustomed clothes. I am deft with a bow-knot and patient with my collar. It may be partly a perversity of sex, inasmuch as we men are sometimes "taken" by our women folk. But chiefly it comes from an unwillingness to pledge the future, lest on the very night my own hearth appear the better choice. Here we are, with legs stretched for comfort toward the fire—easy and unbuttoned. Let the rain beat on the glass! Let chimneys topple! Let the wind whistle to its shrill companions of the North! But although I am led growling and reluctant to my host's door—with stiffened paws, as it were, against the sill—I usually enjoy myself when I am once inside. To see me across the salad smiling at my pretty neighbor, no one would know how churlish I had been on the coming of the invitation.

I have attended my share of formal dinners. I have dined with the magnificent H——s and their Roman Senator has announced me at the door; although, when he asked my name in the hall, I thought at first in my ignorance that he gave me directions about my rubbers. No one has faced more forks and knives, or has apportioned his implements with nicer discrimination among the meats. Not once have I been forced to stir my after-dinner coffee with a soup spoon. And yet I look back on these grand occasions with contentment chiefly because they are past. I am in whole agreement with Cleopatra when she spoke slightingly of her salad days—surely a fashionable afternoon affair at a castle on the river Nile—when, as she confessed, she was young and green in judgment.

It is usually a pleasure to meet distinguished persons who, as a rule, are friendly folk who sit in peace and comfort. But if they are lugged in and set up stiffly at a formal dinner they are too much an exhibition. In this circumstance they cannot be natural and at their best. And then I wonder how they endure our abject deference and flabby surrender to their opinions. Would it not destroy all interest in a game of bowling if the wretched pins fell down before the hit were made? It was lately at a dinner that our hostess held in captivity three of these celebrated lions. One of them was a famous traveler who had taken a tiger by its bristling beard. The second was a popular lecturer. The third was in distemper and crouched quietly at her plate. The first two were sharp and bright and they roared to expectation. But I do not complain when lions take possession of the cage, for it reduces the general liability of talk, and a common man, if he be industrious, may pluck his bird down to the bone in peace.

A formal reception is even worse than a dinner. One stands around with stalled machinery. Good stout legs, that can go at a trot all day, become now weak and wobbly. One hurdles dispiritedly over trailing skirts. One tries in conversation to think of the name of a play he has just seen, but it escapes him. It is, however, so nearly in his grasp, that it prevents him from turning to another topic. Benson, the essayist, also disliked formal receptions and he quotes Prince Hal in their dispraise. "Prithee, Ned," says the Prince—and I fancy that he has just led a thirsty Duchess to the punchbowl, and was now in the very act of escaping while her face was buried in the cup—"Prithee, Ned," he says, "come out of this fat room, and lend me thy hand to laugh a little!" And we can imagine these two enfranchised rogues, easy at heart, making off later to their Eastcheap tavern, and the passing of a friendly cup. But now, alas, today, all of the rooms of the house are fat and thick with people. There is a confusion of tongues as when work on the tower of Babel was broken off. There is no escape. If it were one's good luck to be a waiter, one could at least console himself that it was his livelihood.

The furniture has been removed from all the rooms in order that more persons may be more uncomfortable. Or perhaps the chairs and tables, like rats in a leaky ship, have scuttled off, as it were, now that fashion has wrecked the home. A friend of mine, J——, resents these entertainments. No sooner, recently, did he come into such a bare apartment where, in happier days his favorite chair had stood, than he hinted to the guests that the furniture had been sold to meet the expenses of the day. This sorry jest lasted him until, on whispering to a servant, he learned that the chairs had been stored in an upper hall. At this he proposed that the party reassemble above, where at least they might sit down and be comfortable. When I last saw J—— that evening he was sitting at the turn of the stairs behind an exotic shrubbery, where he had found a vagrant chair that had straggled behind the upper emigration.

The very envelope that contains a formal invitation bears a forbidding look. It is massive and costly to the eye. It is much larger than a letter, unless, perhaps, one carries on a correspondence with a giant from Brobdingnag. You turn it round and round with sad premonition. The very writing is coldly impersonal without the pinch of a more human hand. It practices a chill anonymity as if it contains a warrant for a hanging. At first you hope it may be merely an announcement from your tailor, inasmuch as commerce patterns its advertisements on these social forms. I am told that there was once a famous man—a distinguished novelist—who so

disliked formal parties but was so timid at their rejection that he took refuge in the cellar whenever one of these forbidding documents arrived, until he could forge a plausible excuse; for he believed that these colder and more barren rooms quickened his invention. The story goes that once when he was in an unusually timid state he lacked the courage to break the seal and so spent an uneasy morning upon the tubs, to the inconvenience of the laundress who thought that he fretted upon the plot. At last, on tearing off the envelope, he found to his relief that it was only a notice for a display of haberdashery at a fashionable shop. In his gratitude at his escape he at once sought his desk and conferred a blushing heiress on his hero.

But perhaps there are persons of an opposite mind who welcome an invitation. Even the preliminary rummage delights them when their clothes are sent for pressing and their choice wavers among their plumage. For such persons the superscription on the envelope now seems written in the spacious hand of hospitality.

But of informal dinners and the meeting of friends we can all approve without reserve. I recall, once upon a time, four old gentlemen who met every week for whist. Three of them were of marked eccentricity. One of them, when the game was at its pitch, reached down to the rungs of his chair and hitched it first to one side and then to the other, mussing up the rugs. The second had the infirmity of nodding his head continuously. Even if he played a trivial three spot, he sat on the decision and wagged his beard up and down like a judge. The third sucked his teeth and thereby made hissing noises. Later in the evening there would be served buttermilk or cider, and the sober party would adjourn at the gate. But there were two young rascals who practiced these eccentricities and after they had gone to bed, for the exquisite humor of it, they nodded their heads, too, and sucked their teeth with loud hissing noises.

No one entertains more pleasantly than the S—— family and no one is more informal. If you come on the minute for your dinner, it is likely that none of the family is about. After a search J—— is found in a flannel shirt in his garden with a watering-can. "Hello!" he says in surprise. "What time is it? Have you come already for dinner?"

"For God's sake," you reply—for I assume you to be of familiar and profane manners—"get up and wash yourself! Don't you know that you are giving a party?"

J—— affects to be indignant. "Who is giving this party, anyway?"

he asks. "If it's yours, you run it!" And then he leads you to the house, where you abuse each other agreeably as he dresses.

Once a year on Christmas Eve they give a general party. This has been a custom for a number of years and it is now an institution as fixed as the night itself. Invitations are not issued. At most a rumor goes abroad to the elect that nine o'clock is a proper time to come, when the children, who have peeked for Santa Claus up the chimney, have at last been put to bed. There is a great wood fire in the sitting-room and, by way of andirons, two soldiers of the Continental Army keep up their endless march across the hearth. The fireplace is encircled by a line of leather cushions that rest upon the floor, like a window-seat that has undergone amputation of all its legs.

But the center of the entertainment is a prodigious egg-nog that rises from the dining table. I do not know the composition of the drink, yet my nose is much at fault if it includes aught but eggs and whiskey. At the end of the table J—— stands with his mighty ladle. It is his jest each year—for always there is a fresh stranger who has not heard it—it is his jest that the drink would be fair and agreeable to the taste if it were not for the superfluity of eggs which dull the mixture.

No one, even of a sour prohibition, refuses his entreaty. My aunt, who speaks against the Demon, once appeared at the party. She came sniffing to the table. "Ought I to take it, John?" she asked.

"Mildest thing you ever drank," said John, and he ladled her out a cup.

My aunt smelled it suspiciously.

"It's eggs," said John.

"Eggs?" said my aunt. "What a funny smell they have!" She said this with a facial expression not unlike that of Little Red Ridinghood, when she first saw the old lady with the long nose and sharp eyes.

"Nothing bad, I hope," said John.

"N-no," said my aunt slowly, and she took a sip.

"Of course the eggs spoil it a little," said John.

"It's very good," said my aunt, as she took another sip.

Then she put down her glass, but only when it was empty. "John," she said, "you are a rogue. You would like to get me tipsy." And at this she moved out of danger. Little Red Ridinghood escaped the wolf as narrowly. But did Little Red Ridinghood escape? Dear me, how one forgets!

But in closing I must not fail to mention an old lady and gentle-

man, both beyond eighty, who have always attended these parties. They have met old age with such trust and cheerfulness, and they are so eager at a jest, that no one of all the gathering fits the occasion half so well. And to exchange a word with them is to feel a pleasant contact with all the gentleness and mirth that have lodged with them during the space of their eighty years. The old gentleman is an astronomer and until lately, when he moved to a newer quarter of the town, he had behind his house in a proper tower a telescope, through which he showed his friends the moon. But in these last few years his work has been entirely mathematical and his telescope has fallen into disorder. His work finds a quicker comment among scientists of foreign lands than on his own street.

It is likely that tonight he has been busy with the computation of the orbit of a distant star up to the very minute when his wife brought in his tie and collar. And then arm and arm they have set out for the party, where they will sit until the last guest has gone.

Alas, when the party comes this Christmas, only one of these old people will be present, for the other with a smile lately fell asleep.

AN OUTLINE OF SCIENTISTS[1]

By James Thurber

Having been laid up by a bumblebee for a couple of weeks, I ran through the few old novels there were in the cottage I had rented in Bermuda and finally was reduced to reading "The Outline of Science, a Plain Story Simply Told," in four volumes. These books were published by Putnam's fifteen years ago and were edited by J. Arthur Thomson, Regius Professor of Natural History at the University of Aberdeen. The volumes contained hundreds of articles written by various scientists and over eight hundred illustrations, forty of which, the editor bragged on the flyleaf, were in color. A plain story simply told with a lot of illustrations, many of them in color, seemed just about the right mental fare for a man who had been laid up by a bee. Human nature being what it is, I suppose the morbid reader is more interested in how I happened to be laid up by a bee than in what I found in my scientific research; so I will dismiss that unfortunate matter in a few words. The bee stung me in the foot, and I got an infection (staphylococcus, for short). It

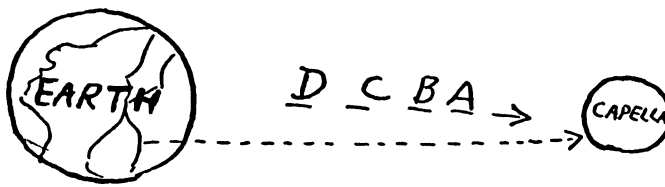
[1]By permission. Copyright 1936, James Thurber. Originally published in *The New Yorker*.

was the first time in my life that anything smaller than a turtle had ever got the best of me, and naturally I don't like to dwell on it. I prefer to go on to my studies in "The Outline of Science," if everybody is satisfied.

I happened to pick up Volume IV first, and was presently in the midst of a plain and simple explanation of the Einstein theory, a theory about which in my time I have done as much talking as the next man, although I admit now that I never understood it very clearly. I understood it even less clearly after I had tackled a little problem about a man running a hundred-yard dash and an aviator in a plane above him. Everything, from the roundness of the earth to the immortality of the soul, has been demonstrated by the figures of men in action, but here was a new proposition. It seems that if the aviator were travelling as fast as light, the stop watch held by the track judge would not, from the aviator's viewpoint, move at all. (You've got to make believe that the aviator could see the watch, which is going to be just as hard for you as it was for me.) You might think that this phenomenon of the unmoving watch hand would enable the runner to make a hundred yards in nothing flat, but, if so, you are living in a fool's paradise. To an aviator going as fast as light, the hundred-yard track would shrink to nothing at all. If the aviator were going *twice* as fast as light, the report of the track judge's gun would wake up the track judge, who would still be in bed in his pajamas, not yet having got up to go to the track meet. This last is my own private extension of the general theory, but it seems to me as sound as the rest of it.

I finally gave up the stop watch and airplane, and went deeper into the chapter till I came to the author's summary of a scientific romance called "Lumen," by the celebrated French astronomer, M. Flammarion (in my youth, the Hearst Sunday feature sections leaned heavily on M. Flammarion's discoveries). The great man's lurid little romance deals, it seems, with a man who died in 1864 and whose soul flew with the speed of thought to one of the stars in the constellation Capella. This star was so far from the earth that it took light rays seventy-two years to get there; hence the man's soul kept catching up with light rays from old historical events and passing them. Thus the man's soul was able to see the battle of Waterloo, fought backward. First the man's soul—oh, let's call him Mr. Lumen—first Mr. Lumen saw a lot of dead soldiers, and then he saw them get up and start fighting. "Two hundred thousand corpses, come to life, marched off the field in perfect order," wrote M. Flammarion. Perfect order, I should think, only backward.

I kept going over and over this section of the chapter on the Einstein theory. I even tried reading it backward, twice as fast as light, to see if I could capture Napoleon at Waterloo while he was still home in bed. If you are interested in the profound mathematical theory of the distinguished German scientist, you may care to glance at a diagram I drew for my own guidance, as follows:



Now A represents Napoleon entering the field at Waterloo, and B represents his defeat there. The dotted line is, of course, Mr. Lumen, going hell-for-leather. C and D you need pay no particular attention to; the first represents the birth of Mr. George L. Snively, an obscure American engineer, in 1819, and the second the founding of the New England Glass Company, in 1826. I put them in to give the thing roundness and verisimilitude and to suggest that Mr. Lumen passed a lot of other events besides Waterloo.

In spite of my diagram and my careful reading and rereading of the chapter on the Einstein theory, I left it in the end with a feeling that my old grip on it, as weak as it may have been, was stronger than my new grip on it, and simpler, since it had not been mixed up with aviators, stop watches, Mr. Lumen, and Napoleon. The discouraging conviction crept over me that science was too much for me, that these brooding scientists, with their bewildering problems, many of which work backward, live on an intellectual level which I, who think of a hundred-yard dash as a hundred-yard dash, could never attain to. It was with relief that I drifted on to Chapter XXXVI, "The Story of Domesticated Animals." There wouldn't be anything in that going as fast as light or faster, and it was more the kind of thing that a man who has been put to bed by a bee should read for the alleviation of his humiliation. I picked out the section on dogs, and very shortly I came to this: "There are few dogs which do not inspire affection; many crave it. But there are some which seem to repel us, like the bloodhound. True, man has made him what he is. Terrible to look at and terrible to encounter, man has raised him up to hunt down his fellowman." Accompanying

the article was a picture of a dignified and mournful-looking bloodhound, about as terrible to look at as Abraham Lincoln, about as terrible to encounter as Jimmy Durante.

Poor, frightened little scientist! I wondered who he was, this man whom Mr. J. Arthur Thomson, Regius Professor of Natural History at the University of Aberdeen, had selected to inform the world about dogs. Some of the chapters were signed, but this one wasn't, and neither was the one on the Einstein theory (you were given to understand that they had all been written by eminent scientists, however). I had the strange feeling that both of these articles had been written by the same man. I had the strange feeling that *all* scientists are the same man. Could it be possible that I had isolated there, as under a microscope, the true nature of the scientist? It pleased me to think so; it still pleases me to think so. I have never liked or trusted scientists very much, and I think now that I know why: they are afraid of bloodhounds. They must, therefore, be afraid of frogs, jack rabbits, and the larger pussy-cats. This must be the reason that most of them withdraw from the world and devote themselves to the study of the inanimate and impalpable. Out of my analysis of those few sentences on the bloodhound, one of the gentlest of all breeds of dogs, I have arrived at what I call Thurber's Law, which is that scientists don't really know anything about anything. I doubt everything they have ever discovered. I don't think light has a speed of 7,000,000 miles per second at all (or whatever the legendary speed is). Scientists just think light is going that fast, because they are afraid of it. It's so terrible to look at. I have always suspected that light just plodded along, and now I am positive of it.

I can understand how that big baby dropped the subject of bloodhounds with those few shuddering sentences, but I propose to scare him and his fellow-scientists a little more about the huge and feral creatures. Bloodhounds are sometimes put on the trail of old lost ladies or little children who have wandered away from home. When a blood hound finds an old lady or a little child, he instantly swallows the old lady or the little child whole, clothes and all. This is probably what happened to Charlie Ross, Judge Crater, Agnes Tufverson, and a man named Colonel Appel, who disappeared at the battle of Shiloh. God only knows how many thousands of people bloodhounds have swallowed. As everybody knows, the Saint Bernards, when they find travellers fainting in the snow, finish them off. Monks have notoriously little to eat, and it stands to reason they couldn't feed a lot of big, full-grown Saint Bernards; hence they sick them on the lost travellers, who never would get anywhere,

anyway. The brandy in the little kegs the dogs wear around their necks is used by the Saint Bernards in drunken orgies that follow the killings.

I guess that's all I have to say to the scientists right now, except *boo!*

TITLES AND SUBJECTS FOR INFORMAL ESSAYS

On Going to Cocktail Parties
Chapel Speakers I Have Known
The Hunting Season Opens
Tricks and Moods of the Power Lawn Mower
Drugstore Literature
Some Wild Adventures among the Parking Lots
The Seven-thirty Bus
Beauty in Blue Denim
Mother and Her Electric Dishwasher
A Bill of Rights for Freshmen
Interior Decorations of College Dormitories
Yes, I Sing in the Choir
Snackbars, Grills, and Hamburger Stands
On Visiting the Refrigerator at 1 A.M.
Politics, or This Is Where I Came In
Alone with an Orchard—and the Department of Agriculture
Sunday Dinners
At the Record Shop
Photograph Album
Some Reminiscences of My Life with Shakespeare and Other Famous Authors
Treasure Hunt
Family Arguments
Steak Fries and Other Forms of Rebellion
It Was a Fine, Frosty Morning
Piny Woods Country

Collections of Essays

Beebe, William, *The Edge of the Jungle.*
Beerbohm, Max, *The Works of Max Beerbohm.*
Belloc, Hilaire, *Hills and the Sea.*
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Brogan, D. W., *English People; Impressions and Observations.*

Brooks, Charles S., *Chimney-Pot Papers.*
Chase, Mary Ellen, *This England.*
Chesterton, G. K., *Alarms and Discursions.*
Crothers, Samuel McChord, *The Pardoner's Wallet.*
Day, Clarence, *Life with Father.*
Eaton, Walter Prichard, *In Berkshire Fields.*
Hazlitt, William, *Table Talk.*
Holmes, Oliver Wendell, *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.*
Hudson, W. H., *Idle Days in Patagonia.*
Lamb, Charles, *Essays of Elia.*
Leacock, Stephen, *Literary Lapses; My Discovery of England.*
Morley, Christopher, *Shandygaff.*
Nock, Albert Jay, *On Doing the Right Thing.*
Peattie, Donald Culross, *Journey Into America.*
Repplier, Agnes, *Essays in Miniature; Americans and Others.*
Santayana, George, *Little Essays.*
Smith, Logan Pearsall, *Trivia; More Trivia.*
Thurber, James, *My Life and Hard Times; Let Your Mind Alone.*
White, E. B., *One Man's Meat.*

Chapter IX

ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

DESPITE the activities of debating teams and public forums, we rarely have, in America today, formal argument of the sort which our forefathers relished. Our public speeches are too brief for elaborate logical development. They are statements or quips made between the courses of a luncheon. They are cut to fit a half-hour of radio time. Or they are an evening's lecture, timed for the college professor's habitual fifty minutes.

The Article of Opinion. What we do have, instead of formal argument, is the article of opinion. The article of opinion appears everywhere in our magazines, newspapers, and pamphlets. We have learned (perhaps too well) to prefer the printed to the spoken word. That preference is so overwhelming that even many speeches have the cast of magazine articles, and are read—not delivered—by the speakers. An issue of a typical monthly magazine, like *Harper's* or the *Atlantic,* will give as much as half its space to articles of opinion. In weeklies of opinion, the proportion is greater. For these reasons the subject of argumentation is treated here principally as it relates to the article of opinion.

An article of opinion has some of the characteristics of a formal essay. It takes a serious subject and treats it definitively, with greater or less formality, and greater or less literary polish, as the subject and the circumstances may demand. Generally, however, it is on the side of informality. It deals with facts and with the interpretation of facts, but with the purpose of arguing an issue and expressing an opinion. It hopes to persuade the reader to accept, or at least to entertain, the opinion which it expresses. It seeks to convince rather than merely to inform.

Generally the article of opinion will follow a rather simple plan. At the beginning, the opinion to be set forth is stated, or if

not stated directly, is implied. Then follows the substance of the argument itself—the facts, evidence, examples, reasons, which sustain the opinion and prove the argument. Then, perhaps, the argument is summarized or restated, or the opinion is again asserted in a conclusive and emphatic form. Sometimes a paragraph, or several paragraphs, may be used by way of introduction, to prepare the reader for the statement of opinion; and sometimes the conclusion may be elaborated beyond mere summary. Such additions depend upon the taste of the writer and the possibilities of the subject.

Thomas Hart Benton's "Art vs. the Mellon Gallery" (page 523) is an example of a brief article of opinion in which a definite position is taken and the supporting argument is tersely indicated without being systematically developed. Yet, despite its comparative brevity and informality, Benton's article follows the general procedure indicated above. In the first paragraph, with its sharp opening sentence, "The country is getting over-populated with museums," Benton gives his negative position. He is opposed to, or fearful of, the dominance of American art by museums, like the Mellon museum. He is frankly hostile to the notion "that culture is something that must have an exotic label." In the second paragraph he rapidly develops the positive position implied in his previous negative statements. He argues that "a culture is the outcome of a way of life and that American culture cannot be bought or borrowed." He advocates an art that will grow out of "experiences which common Americans share." In support of this thesis he points to the success of recent American artists who have drawn their subject-matter and ideas from the American scene. Through this movement "American art has been taken from the garret into the world," and it promises to become "a living thing, of interest to plain living people."

Most of Benton's lively argument consists of a contrast between the "deadness" of the art museum as an influence and the vitality of an art that rests upon "factual and poetic experience in life itself." He also develops the contrast between the "native" and the "exotic" and between the remote past and the active present. At the same time Benton is very careful to concede that art museums, as such, have a value which he as a practicing artist would not want to sacrifice and that native American art itself is still short of being perfect. After making these concessions, however, he applies his

general argument still more sharply and specifically to the field of art education, where, he feels, the influence of the large, heavily endowed art museum of the Mellon type is most dangerous to his hopes for a genuine American art. He closes with a contention, logically implied in his general thesis, that art cannot be learned through mere imitation of masterpieces and that therefore the creative artist himself, rather than the museum-conscious professor of art, should be America's teacher and cultural guide in the field of art.

A brief article of opinion, like Benton's, or other types of brief argumentation, such as the newspaper editorial, cannot hope to define its terms, develop its distinctions, and analyze and organize its evidence as elaborately as a longer article of a more formal type would be expected to do. But no piece of argumentative writing, whether brief editorial or long essay, can be considered valid unless, within the scale permitted by its limits, it observes the principles of argumentation. Definition and analysis are essential parts of argumentation, since a reasoned conclusion cannot be attained, and when attained cannot be supported, without use of these instruments of logic. Definition and analysis are also valuable for their effect upon the "tone" of an argument, because they are a guarantee of a writer's honesty of purpose with regard to the facts. By approaching the facts in an inquiring spirit rather than in a cocksure, assertive manner, a writer sets his readers' minds to work in a similar spirit of inquiry. It is far better thus to invite the reader to think than to arouse his emotions and, in so doing, perhaps to create antagonism. If a writer makes some concession to what may be our own view of the question at issue, we are disarmed and to some extent are persuaded away from blind opposition. We are influenced by a fair and calm statement of reasoned opinions, whether or not we accept them completely.

The article of opinion—and argument in general—hopes to convince if possible; but above all it seeks to awaken thoughtful consideration. If the argument is sound, and if it is well presented, it is likely to make some impression even upon those who take the other side of the argument.

Soundness of Argument. When is an argument sound? What is a good presentation? The two questions are really inseparable, but for purposes of explanation it is best to consider them in order.

1. *Soundness of argument consists first in a clear and definite statement of what is to be proved.* In formal argumentation this statement is called the *proposition* or *question*. There is no satisfaction in arguing about "woman's place," "intercollegiate football," "examinations," "the Supreme Court," if the argument is not centered upon a specific statement which permits a reasoned affirmative and negative. The matter to be argued can be put in the form of a question: "Shall married women be employed as teachers?" Or "Is intercollegiate football advantageous to higher education?" Or it may be put in the form of a statement: "Industry-wide bargaining in labor disputes should be abolished by law."

If the statement contains any terms that may be misunderstood, they should be defined. No argument can proceed intelligently unless people know what they are arguing about. Suppose the proposition is as follows: "The standard of living in the backward areas of the United States ought to be raised." In that statement are three terms which need defining. What is a "standard of living"? What are "backward areas"? What do you mean by "raised"? If you attempt to argue the proposition as stated, without defining the terms, you may find the premises of your argument attacked by your opponents or critics. Or you may find that the argument is getting nowhere because one side means, by "standard of living," ability to purchase manufactured goods, but the other side is thinking of "standard of living" as referring to moral and intellectual conditions, or even physical vigor.

Definiteness of statement means also precision in discerning and stating the issues which are to be argued. The issues are the essential points which have to be proved if the question as a whole is to be upheld. It requires some skill to distinguish true issues from false issues. To discover the issues involved in the question of whether or not moving pictures should be censored, let us first set down a number of possible issues, just as they come to mind. The issues are best stated in the form of specific questions:

1. Do the movies need reform?
2. Has censorship succeeded or failed in the past?
3. Will censorship injure the artistic quality of the movies?
4. Will censorship hurt their entertainment value?

5. Will it decrease movie admissions and therefore injure business?
6. Who will do the censoring?
7. What will Hollywood think?
8. Why do not the movies censor their own pictures?
9. Do not the public prefer uncensored pictures?
10. Is censorship practicable?
11. Is it legal?
12. Will it result in social good to the people as a whole?
13. Why not wait and see what will happen?
14. Will it increase taxes?

Reviewing this list of possible issues, we realize at once that some selection must be made. Some of the questions (like number 7) are irrelevant; others (like number 13) are absurd; others may be combined. Probably the argument rests on four main issues:

1. Do the movies need reform?
2. Is censorship a practicable kind of reform?
3. Will censorship injure the movies artistically?
4. Will censorship result in social good?

If we prove that the movies need reform; that censorship is a practicable kind of reform; that it will not injure the art of the movies; and that it will result in social good—then we win the argument. But if the opposition can show that these issues cannot be sustained, then we lose the argument.

2. *Sound argument must rest upon evidence.* Evidence consists of solid and established facts. Loud assertions and violent approval or disapproval may *express* opinion, but do not make opinion acceptable to others. Rather, they bring the opposite—antagonism, denial, angry retort. To get at the solid facts that compose evidence (and that carry conviction) we must eliminate emotional reactions, sentimental notions, hearsay, propaganda. We must know that the facts we use are really facts. Evidence must therefore meet three requirements:

(*a*) It must bear directly upon the issues. Loose talk, funny stories, personal reminiscences, though they may be pleasant, prove nothing whatever. You may convince people of your amiability by

telling them funny stories, but unless the funny stories illustrate a point (and hence make possible an argument by analogy) they are not evidence.

(*b*) The evidence must be authoritative, unbiased, and up-to-date. In some instances, personal experience may furnish reliable evidence, but it should be considered carefully to see whether it offers grounds for making a generalization. If it comes from wide observation, done close at hand, it may be valuable. If it comes from a narrow or isolated experience, or an experience colored by strong personal feeling, it may not be trustworthy. A resident of Park Avenue, New York, who goes to Florida in the winter is not, for that reason, an authority on share-cropping in the South. On the other hand, a man who has lived on a large cotton plantation in the Mississippi Delta may know much about share-cropping at first hand, and yet his view may not take in the varying conditions of share-cropping in North Georgia, Tennessee, and Texas. We laugh at the English visitor who, after looking at New York and living for two weeks on a dude ranch in Wyoming, goes home and writes a book about America; but our own opinions often have an equally shallow basis of personal experience.

Is a newspaper story authoritative evidence? A magazine article? A book? A lecture by a college professor? If the newspaper story is written by a trained and experienced reporter, and if the newspaper has no partisan reason for coloring or editing the report, it may be good evidence. Since newspapers deal with the changing aspect of affairs from day to day and have, at any moment, policies, formulas, and interests that may be hidden from the reader, we may do well to regard newspaper accounts with a certain amount of skepticism. A magazine article represents a more mature interpretation, and often a more competent one; but again we are justified in looking for marks of prejudice or narrowness of any sort. If the lecturer is really an authority, he may be able to give solid help, within the field of his special knowledge. Books are the most reliable guide of all, for only in books are we likely to find the mature and serious studies of the great authorities. Yet here again we must be watchful. It is better to consult several authorities rather than one, and, when they disagree, to examine the methods by which they have arrived at their interpretations, to study their points of view and special interests, and even to note the sources

from which they may have derived their opinions. Last, it is of course necessary to use up-to-date information. A book on American government written in 1875 may contain valuable theories and be historically interesting; but many of its *facts* will be out of date.

(*c*) Enough evidence must be presented to support the argument effectively. How much, will be a matter of judgment and proportion. Remember that it is better to have a few good pieces of evidence rather than a mass of weak evidence. Concentrate upon what will be convincing and let the rest go.

It is also necessary to deal with evidence which may seem to support another view than your own. In formal argumentation, this part of the general process of argument is called refutation. If you can show that evidence which seems to support another view is not good evidence or does not prove what it seems to prove, you strengthen your own argument. If you neglect to consider evidence contrary to your own argument, you weaken your cause.

3. *Sound argument must be logical argument.* It is impossible to discuss here, with any real completeness, the laws of thought. These lie in the province of formal logic and are a separate study. We can, however, emphasize the necessity of sound logic by reviewing briefly the operation of inductive and deductive methods of reasoning and by showing where errors may arise.

We use the *inductive method* when we reason from the particular to the general. We use the *deductive method* when we reason from the general to the particular.

When a large number of particulars are accepted as pointing toward a generalization as being true or probably true, an induction has been made. We *infer* that the particulars produce the generalization. Sound thinking consists in making a justifiable, or logical, inference, and in avoiding false inference.

Newton's statement of the law of gravitation is an example of a generalization based upon particulars. He made an induction. Induction, as has been pointed out (see page 405), is the method of science. Walter Reed was able to infer the cause of yellow fever by reasoning that since all persons bitten by a certain kind of mosquito caught the disease and other persons, not bitten, did not catch it, therefore the mosquito carried the disease. This generalization, however, was first set up as a working hypothesis; it had

to be verified by prolonged experiment and observation. Science always begins with a working hypothesis, which it either accepts as a true generalization, or abandons, or modifies, according to what may be shown by its long and careful examination of particulars.

Whenever we use inductive reasoning, we should emulate the thoroughness and dispassionateness of science, though of course we cannot often observe and test on the same scale. The use of statistics in argument—though it may be tricky and unreliable—is an approximation of the inductive method of science. We use induction, on a small scale, if we infer from much observation of college life that large-scale education is wasteful because many students are lazy or indifferent or more attentive to social activities than to studies. The more particulars we can find that point the same way, the more likely the generalization is to be true.

Argument by example or analogy is an easier and more attractive use of induction. An example, in inductive reasoning, is really a parallel, from which a generalization applicable to a particular instance is inferred. If you argue that the development of many political parties in the United States is undesirable, and point, as an example, to France, where many political parties exist, apparently to the detriment of good government, you are arguing inductively, by example. In argument by analogy, the particular is chosen from some sphere remote or different from the one under consideration, but one that has enough likeness to render the generalization convincing. If you argue that it is vicious to pay athletes for performing, and give as your reason that such payment corrupts the morals both of athletes and of public; and if you then cite, as analogy, the gladiatorial combats of ancient Rome, you are reasoning by analogy.

But reasoning by example or analogy has obvious dangers. To be logically acceptable, the example or analogy must be a true parallel. If the differences between French politics and American politics, or between the French situation and the American situation, are greater than the resemblances, then it will not necessarily be true that multiplicity of parties will cause the same injury to our government as in France. The gladiatorial combats of ancient Rome may not be a good analogy to subsidized athletics in America, and if so, the generalization falls down. A striking example or an analogy may *seem* so persuasive that it may influence thinking

even though it is not logically sound. Lincoln's famous "House Divided" speech is an example of an argument by analogy that was extremely influential; yet the studies of later historians seem to indicate that the figure of the house divided against itself had a great deal more poetry than logic in it. When an example or an analogy is not logically sound, it is open to easy attack by an opponent. Probably argument by example or analogy is as much exposition as argument. The example or analogy explains or illustrates, even when it is not strictly logical. But be careful to choose an example that is really typical or an analogy that is really plausible, if you do not wish to have your argument questioned.

The deductive method of reasoning from general to particular appears in all argument where a principle is set up and then applied to a group of particulars. The principle may be a generalization that has been reached by a process of induction; or it may be some general truth which is assumed as a matter of course to be acceptable to all concerned in the argument.

The Syllogism. A true statement may be derived as the result of the application of the inductive process to experience. To apply the result of inductive thinking to new particulars is deductive thinking. Back of all deductive thinking is the chain of thought which logicians call a *syllogism*. If the syllogism is properly applied to the chain of thought which is being undertaken, it serves as a test of the validity of the assertion which is being made. Only by such a means can we be assured that the assertion is consistent with itself and the bases upon which it is founded. The bases are called "premises," and the resulting assertion is called the "conclusion."

A syllogism therefore consists of two premises and a conclusion drawn from those premises. The *major premise* states a generalization assumed to be true or already proved as true. The *minor premise* is a specific statement which asserts that some item is included in this generalization. The *conclusion* infers a logical connection as apparent between the premises. For illustration, we may now state a common argument in the form of a syllogism:

Major Premise: Athletic exercise is beneficial to young men.
Minor Premise: Football is a form of athletic exercise.
Conclusion: Therefore, football is beneficial to young men.

The logical validity of this syllogism, as of every syllogism, depends upon the correctness of major and minor premise. If each of these is necessarily and invariably true, as stated, then the conclusion must necessarily be true. The syllogism given above contains certain debatable parts, especially in its major premise, and therefore the conclusion is not a perfectly logical conclusion.

In order to insure exactness and complete validity of thinking, logicians long ago developed laws of logic and syllogistic exercises which illustrate those laws.[1] In logic we are offered perfect syllogisms like the following:

Major Premise: All men are mortal.
Minor Premise: Socrates is a man.
Conclusion: Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

One premise may be stated in the negative form as in the following syllogism:

Major Premise: No kettles are made of wax.
Minor Premise: This object is made of wax.
Conclusion: Therefore, this object is not a kettle.

Other perfect syllogisms will appear in mathematics, since in mathematics thinking can be abstract and perfect. In plane geometry, for example, a syllogism would take a form like this:

Major Premise: A straight line is the shortest distance between two points.
Minor Premise: The line XY, between the points X and Y, is a straight line.
Conclusion: Therefore the line XY is the shortest distance between the points X and Y.

In general, if one premise is negative, the conclusion will be negative. If both premises are positive, the conclusion will be positive. If both premises are negative, there will not be any valid conclusion. The following is an example of the third situation:

Major Premise: No lazy person is a good student.
Minor Premise: No good student will ever fail.
Conclusion: Therefore . . .

[1]For a complete discussion of the syllogism see Bennett and Baylis, *Formal Logic* (Chapter VI), Chapman and Henle, *The Fundamentals of Logic* (Chapter V), or similar works.

We cannot complete any assertion because, so far as we are instructed by our premises, the lazy person may or may not fail. If the minor premise had read, "Good students are the only ones that pass," we should have had only one negative premise and thus could have concluded, "No lazy person will pass."

In the type of disjunctive syllogism known as the "dilemma," the major premise states an alternative between two choices; the minor premise denies one choice; the conclusion is the remaining choice. For the conclusion to be valid, however, it is necessary that the two choices exhaust all possibilities.

Major Premise: This cloth is either linen or cotton.
Minor Premise: It is not cotton.
Conclusion: Therefore it is linen.

It should be evident that the validity of the chain of reasoning represented in any syllogism depends upon the soundness of the premises. If the premises are not true, or if either premise is not true or is doubtful, the conclusion is inevitably untrustworthy.

The following statements have the *form* of a syllogism:

Major Premise: All men are two-headed creatures.
Minor Premise: John is a man.
Conclusion: Therefore John is a two-headed creature.

But the conclusion is false, and indeed absurd, because the major premise is false.

In practice, of course, we rarely encounter a chain of thought expressed with the precise formality of a syllogism. Commonly we encounter the abbreviated form of the syllogism which is known as the *enthymeme* (from the Greek *en,* "in," and *thumos,* "mind"). In the enthymeme one of the three parts of the syllogism is implied but not expressed; the reader is left to supply the missing part. Thus we may read, "Since Socrates is a man, he is mortal." In this enthymeme or incomplete syllogism, the major premise exists only by inference. We assume that all men are mortal; our experience upholds this premise; and hence we do not question the conclusion.

On the other hand, it may be said, "Every one who does not study will not pass; and you are not studying." Here the conclusion, "You will not pass," is omitted. The minor premise is omitted

in a statement of the following kind: "All cheating is dishonest, and this paper is dishonest." The omitted premise is: "This paper is cheating."

Most often, however, the major premise is omitted. Statements which involve such a causal connection as is indicated by the use of words like *since, because, therefore,* and *thus* almost always involve omission of the major premise. For example, we may say, "Since I am tired, I shall not go to the movie." The conclusion is, "I shall not go to the movie." The minor premise is, "I am tired." To reach such a conclusion the major premise must have been, "Whenever I am tired I do not go to the movie."

Common Fallacies. A fallacy is an error, or failure, of logic. Fallacies can be detected by submitting the sequence of thought in any given instance to the test of the syllogism. If the sequence of thought can be expressed in the form of a correct syllogism, the thought is logical. If no correct syllogism can be thus constructed, the thought is illogical. Misapplications of the syllogism are common in our thinking and writing, as, indeed, they have been throughout human history. Most commonly such misapplications, which lead to errors of logic, occur in connection with the enthymeme or abridged form of the syllogism.

The following list includes some of the most common types of fallacies, but it by no means exhausts all the possible fallacies. In the preceding discussion you have been warned against other fundamental errors—for example, errors of fact and errors of vague, weak, or incorrect definition. Here are listed only those errors which are directly related to the deductive process. All have one characteristic in common: either they cannot be set up into any intelligible syllogism or they involve a premise which can hardly be assumed if it is explicitly stated.

(1) *Begging the question.* Begging the question is the fallacy of assuming as true something that is not proved. This fault may occur either in the major premise or in the minor premise of a syllogism.

A farmer argues: "I do not see why my son should waste his time studying Latin. He is only going to be a farmer." The question is begged in the word *waste.* The unproved assumption is that it is a waste of time for farmers' sons to study Latin.

A woman says to her friend: "I recommend that you read *Triple Towers,* because it reveals an interesting mind. You might know that a man with the author's mind would write a book like that." The unproved assumption is in the second sentence.

Arguments for depriving the United States Supreme Court of the power to declare laws unconstitutional may run like this: "The Supreme Court ought not to have the power to declare Federal laws unconstitutional because the justices are not competent to pass on the wisdom of social legislation." The fallacy here is in wrongly assuming that the Supreme Court passes on the *wisdom* of social legislation; and there is also an implied false definition or conception of *Federal law, unconstitutional,* and *pass on.*

The fallacy of begging the question sometimes takes the form called "reasoning in a circle," as in the following sentences: "If we fully develop the resources of the country, people will have a higher standard of living. If they have a higher standard of living, they will become more ambitious and will fully develop the resources of the country."

(2) *Non sequitur.* (It does not follow.) The fallacy of *non sequitur* consists in drawing a wrong conclusion from given premises. The commonest type of *non sequitur* is the fallacy known as the *post hoc* fallacy (from the Latin sentence, *post hoc ergo propter hoc:* "after this, therefore on account of it"). A man sees a black cat cross the road. Soon afterwards he is involved in an automobile accident. If he infers that, since the accident came *after* his encounter with the black cat, therefore the cat caused the accident, he is guilty of the *post hoc* fallacy. Superstitions and popular beliefs lead, of course, to a great many such fallacies. It was formerly a popular belief that malaria was caused by damp night air, which brought miasmatic vapors. The chain of logic was: People sat in damp night air; they then caught malaria; therefore damp night air caused malaria. Actually it was a malaria-bearing mosquito (winging its way through damp night air) which caused the disease. But *non sequiturs* are just as common among the highly educated as among the uneducated, and just as common in our supposedly enlightened age as in the supposedly backward days. People "jump to conclusions." Somehow they seem to prefer to go wrong. It is hard to follow a strict logical discipline.

(3) *Ignoring the question.* The question is ignored when the ground of argument is shifted in some way from real issues to false issues. In popular parlance, this is "to drag a red herring across the trail." A candidate for public office asks to be elected because he is a war veteran, because he holds seniority privileges which will be lost if he is not elected, or (by implication if not by direct utterance) because his father was a distinguished man. All such claims ignore the real question—the candidate's suitability for office.

In another form, ignoring the question is *argumentum ad hominem* ("argument against an opponent rather than against his thesis."—Bennett and Baylis, *Formal Logic*). People may argue that X's opinions on politics should not be considered or respected because he is a college professor—or college student. During Andrew Jackson's campaign for the Presidency his opponents circulated slanders against the general and his wife—a vicious example of *argumentum ad hominem.* This fallacy, of course, is the commonest of all fallacies, but it is one of the most dangerous to sound thinking. It is the last resource of the shallow and unscrupulous thinker.

Any appeal to prejudice or emotion, *when offered as a substitute for logical argument,* is a form of ignoring the question.

(4) *False dilemma.* A false dilemma is created if we are asked to choose between two courses of action or two interpretations of a situation when more than two choices are possible. The student who argues against intellectual interests on the ground that, at college, it is better to be a good fellow than a grind, is setting up a false dilemma. The "two horns" of a dilemma of this kind do not present all the possible choices.

EXERCISES

1. Test the validity of the conclusions in the following syllogistic groups:

A. All politicians are crooks; no gentleman is a crook; therefore no gentleman is a politician.

B. All good citizens are willing to serve in the army; Smith is public-spirited; therefore Smith is willing to serve in the army.

C. No man wishes to die; no man can predict his last illness; therefore whoever may predict his last illness is willing to die.

D. Some persons like dogs; Smith is a person; therefore Smith likes dogs.

E. More money means more wealth. If we have inflation, there will be more money. Therefore inflation will increase the national wealth.

F. No cat has nine tails; one cat has one more tail than no cat; therefore one cat has ten tails.

2. Test and discuss the validity of the following incomplete syllogisms:

A. Smith must be a coward, since he refused to enlist in the army.

B. Jim must be interested in me, because he wrote me this letter.

C. Because she is twice as pretty as Jane, she must be twice as intelligent.

D. A college education is not necessary. Many of our richest men never finished college.

E. Social security laws favor union labor because social security keeps older people and other workers off the labor market.

F. In the past many of our greatest leaders came from the landed aristocracy. For this reason a landed aristocracy would benefit the country now.

3. Identify and discuss the logical fallacies involved in the following statements:

A. Smoke X—— cigarettes; they are smoked by Sir John Doe.

B. Students fail either because of lack of intelligence or lack of study—and you seem to have studied.

C. A lawyer is permitted to use a brief in arguing a case; then a student writing an examination paper should not be required to rely on memory alone.

D. The majority is always right. X voted with the majority. Therefore he is right.

E. Either it is raining or not raining. It is not raining; therefore it is raining.

F. The advisability of national legislation to establish prohibition of alcoholic liquor depends simply on whether you

choose to live in a nation of sober people or a nation of drunkards.

G. Eighteen-year-old boys were subject to the draft during the war; therefore they were entitled to vote.

H. Socialists are really democrats, for they believe in government by the people.

PRESENTATION

Good organization, clear and effective language, all of the rhetorical devices that make writing effective—these must be used as a matter of course in the article of opinion. Yet there still remain certain matters of strategy, peculiar to argument, which must be pointed out.

The writer of an article of opinion assumes that his readers are to be convinced by his arguments. He does not "carry coals to Newcastle," or seek to convert those who are already of his own way of thinking. Nor can he convince people against their will. It is impossible to browbeat people into accepting opinions different from their own. To be really persuasive, sound argument is a first essential, but there must be something more than sound argument. People are likely to be repelled, at first, or even antagonized, by the expression of an opinion contrary to what they hold. Everybody's first impulse, upon encountering a contrary opinion, is to express his own opinion, perhaps even more strongly than before. The great problem of the article of opinion is to overcome this entirely natural antagonism.

A temperate and conciliatory manner is one of the best ways of overcoming antagonism. A belligerent approach stirs up belligerence in others. It is true that certain writers of the iconoclastic school (George Bernard Shaw, H. L. Mencken, perhaps Bernard DeVoto) have used the belligerent approach with some success. In order to get the reader's attention, these writers have chosen to shock him by violent or paradoxical assertions, even at the risk of antagonizing him completely. But it is doubtful whether this method succeeds in the long run. The conciliatory approach is best for most purposes. It is good ethics as well as good strategy to be completely fair to other points of view. It is good strategy to make concessions to the other side in those respects where concessions can be made. If

then, despite such concessions, the arguer can still make a good case, his position becomes all the stronger. Above all, if the writer can begin his discussion on some point about which everybody can be expected to agree, and then proceed, with this as his premise, to build his argument, he has made the best possible beginning. His reader's attention—and possibly momentary sympathy—is gained. The way is open to carry the reader along, step by step. Mark Antony's famous speech in Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar* makes exactly this approach. "I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him," says Antony, addressing a mob which might as easily hiss him as applaud him. Then, after a recitation of Cæsar's philanthropies and personal excellencies, he prepares the way for his denunciation of the conspirators.

ART VERSUS THE MELLON GALLERY[1]

By Thomas Hart Benton

The country is getting overpopulated with museums. The biggest of them all has just been opened down in Washington. And at the same time, by the law of cause and effect, the country is filling up with Museum Minds. I see this happening; I look at the young American artist growing up; and I am uneasy. I am afraid that he will again get the idea, like so many of our retired business men, that culture is something which must have an exotic label and must come from far away or out of the past to be genuine or worthy of attention.

For the last few years our young and growing artists have been working in the field of American life. They have been referring to actualities of American experience for the ideas out of which they made their æsthetic goods. Their attention to these actualities has been the result of some twenty years of pioneer work by artists who have had the wit to see that a culture is the outcome of a way of life and that an American culture cannot be bought or borrowed. This new reference of our artists to experiences which common Americans share has eventuated in an immense popularization of art and offers the promise for capable artists of an economically sound life. American Art has been taken from the garret into the world. The popular magazines give it attention. The public has

[1]Reprinted from *Common Sense*, Vol. X, June, 1941. By permission of the author and of *The American Mercury*.

found something to which it can respond. Even the Federal Government gives out æsthetic jobs. There is hope that Art may again become a living thing, of interest to plain living people, rather than a collection of objects strung up on the cold walls of institutions run for æsthetic dilettantes, amateur philosophers and generally in memory of dead vanities. There is evidence also at the moment that all this may be lost as it has been lost at other times in this country. That is why I "talked" in New York and got myself ousted from the Kansas City Art Institute.

The professors, the critics, the museum boys are ganging up on this new American art. Their lectures and their publications sneer at the art of the "American scene." There is plenty the matter with the American scene as it is expressed in art. All of us who paint today need more in the way of mechanical and organizational techniques than we have. Rembrandt still paints better than we do. But this business of making a living American art that will be as good *in its own way* as Rembrandt's is beyond the understanding of critics and museum boys. They have been conditioned to see art as a collection of objects rather than as a living necessity of the spirit of man. They cannot understand that this drive, in its American aspect, *must* eventuate in objects which will be different in kind from the art of the past which they have learned to know and love. Their sneers at a native art, therefore, are directed at what appears to them a presumptuous denial of the values of art. They cannot understand that what the artist of the American scene denies, in his insistence on environmental stimulus, is merely their own highly conditioned and traditional values. What I am now afraid of, because of the power and prestige of the Museums, is that the young and sensitive artist will be caught in his floundering student days and turned away from life and back to imitating the dead or producing attenuations of exotic imports.

We have had artists in this country. Apart from the many so-called folk artists, we have had Bingham, Homer, Ryder, Eakins. These men knew instinctively that art, to be art and not its imitation, must come through factual and poetic experience in life itself. They were men who had the courage to make their own references to life. What I am now afraid of is that the example of that courage will be lost to the American student under the increasing pressure of institutionally supported minds which minimize their importance. The complete fatuity of these minds is demonstrated by their acceptance of the designation "National Museum" for the building in Washington which houses Mr. Mellon's collection of foreign art.

There is nothing national whatever in Mr. Mellon's museum. We are fortunate to have it, to be sure—though the collection is a perfect demonstration of the accuracy of the late Mr. Veblen's definition of the capitalist love of art as "conspicuous display." The pictures and sculptures there may function particularly as decorations on Mr. Mellon's tombstone, but they remain, just the same, a great heritage of our age-old human struggle to rise above the brute intrigues and passions of economic and political life. Properly regarded they may provide immense stimulation for art in this country. But they are *not* our art and we cannot for a moment regard them as such. They are not of our culture, and they cannot add to our culture *except as their technical and organizational qualities have been absorbed in an art based on our own living environment.*

The museum attitude toward culture implies that art may be bought and that a collection of objects and a mere cataloguing and memorizing of facts about them constitute a cultural achievement. This is a scholastic achievement, quite proper when properly seen, quite useful also when properly estimated but of no direct significance for American culture. It is what I do and what those like me do when we stick our noses into the actualities of American experience and construct our forms from what we find there that is of real significance to American culture. No museum man figures anything whatever in that field. And he will cut no figure there until he admits the inferiority of his present position and declares himself the servant of the living creator rather than the keeper of dead ones. My objection to museum people is that they are too much like undertakers. They suggest the odor of embalming fluid, and their mouths spout nothing but unctuous pæans to the dead and the far-away. They are a sort of pain in the neck, but they are also dangerous. If they get their fingers into the business of art education, they will kill it.

It is the fact that they *are* making inroads in the field of art education that causes me to write as I do now. I think everybody knows that I respect sufficiently our æsthetic heritage to recognize that there is a place for museums. As a technician I could not do without them. Let me make it clear that I do not object to museums but to the effects of museum minds on our American conceptions of art and culture. The museum and professional mind is not creative. Outside of certain fields of administration it is purely scholastic. Its judgments are formed not in the so often bitter atmosphere of the creative struggle where there are no catalogued references

to determine judgment but in the atmosphere of libraries and collections. The scholastic mind does not make judgments: it learns them, it memorizes them, nearly always with reference to particular kinds of created objects. This learning process apparently has high conditioning voltage for the uncreative mind. Ideas once acquired stick as if glued. Appreciation of objects which differ in quality from those *learned about* becomes almost impossible. Here is where the danger lies in letting professors and museum people get control of art education. Art to be art and not an *imitation of art* is sure to differ in quality from any art that has been learned about. Creative capacities are not only necessary to make it but to appreciate it. The museum and professorial mind is without such capacities, or rather, because some creativeness is found in all human beings, it has been smothered by a mass of catalogued opinions which are regarded as correct and true and not to be monkeyed with.

The only people who can teach art or make it of cultural significance are those who create it. Judgments of the creative mind are very unstable, but they are alive and, even when time may show them to be erroneous, tend to stimulate creativeness. The scholastic mind, tied to accepted judgments, even historically correct ones, cannot function here. Sterility does not produce new life. If we let the museums and universities take over art education and put it in the hands of directors and professors we will turn our young American artists into copyists. If we don't want our culture to be a series of imitative gestures we must keep our educational procedures out of the hands of those who don't know or recognize anything else and who are so certain that art is an attribute of the dead that they put thirty-year death clauses in their purchasing programs to keep out the vulgarity of Life.

EXERCISES

1. Make a clear and matter-of-fact statement of the "question" which Mr. Benton is arguing. What are the issues of the controversy? What assumptions underlie Mr. Benton's criticism of the "Museum mind"? Are these assumptions valid? State Mr. Benton's arguments in systematic form. What evidence does Mr. Benton give to support his arguments? What part, if any, of his argument might be considered "emotional," "patriotic," "partisan"? Does the fact that Mr. Benton, as a very distinguished American artist, is moved to express the views here set forth emphasize the importance of those views?

Should Mr. Benton, who is certainly an "authority" on art, be expected to go to the trouble of "documenting" his opinions?

2. State—in syllogistic form if possible—the chain of thought that forms the basis of some of Mr. Benton's generalizations—such generalizations as the following:

a. "An American culture cannot be bought or borrowed."
b. "They [the museum people] have been conditioned to see art as a collection of objects rather than as a living necessity of the spirit of man."
c. "Art to be art and not *an imitation of art* is sure to differ in quality from any art that has been learned about."

3. Does Mr. Benton use the "conciliatory" or the "belligerent" approach? How would you describe the strategy of his argument? Do you find any fallacies in it? Is it effectively written? Does it impress you as being sincere? Forceful? Authoritative?

DID THE PIONEER DESTROY THE FORESTS?[1]

By Bernard DeVoto

We have here a specimen of the *a posteriori* thinking that corrupts history, as no one knows better than the historian of frontier societies, who has to cut his trail through an undergrowth of twentieth century ideas projected backward, usually with indignation. Take, since it does not involve Indians, the notion that the westward-making American pioneer culpably, and to the eternal loss of posterity, destroyed the forests of the Middle West. It is a cornerstone of belief in every mind entitled to call itself liberal and it is taught in the very grade schools of the nation. Well, in the first place, the pioneer did no such thing. He cut down portions of the forests in order to get fields, thereby increasing the productivity of what remained. If the pioneers who made clearings for farms had been the only people who cut down trees, the forests of northern mid-America would probably be healthier today than when the frontier reached them and the problems of flood and erosion would be about what they were in 1800. (That is to say, pretty serious.) What leveled the forests was not the farmers but industry—the oil

[1]From *Across the Wide Missouri,* by Bernard DeVoto. Copyright, 1947. Reprinted by permission of and arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.

industry which wanted barrels, the railroad industry which wanted ties, and the lumber industry which wanted boards and planking.

Yet the personal responsibility of the farmers cannot be got out of popular American history, which continues to belabor them with ideas that began to seep into American thinking with the twentieth century. But, to accept those ideas and work with a virtual movement again, just what was A. Lincoln's father supposed to do? Was it on the whole desirable (even with regard to posterity) to settle Indiana? (On the way to answering this question consult the nature of unforested Indiana land, the accepted frontier ideas about arable soils, and what agronomy knows now but did not know then.) If clearings were necessary, what principles or theorems were to guide Thomas Lincoln in selecting the site of a clearing and determining its extent? If a residue of indignation remains because Thomas Lincoln's neighbors burned the surplus trees they felled, whereas they should have been put to some economic use beyond the potash and pearl-ash, name that use and specify how these wasters of their progeny's wealth were to get the logs to market. Other nagging questions remain. What were the differences between Indiana forests and European forests where conservation was practiced? What were the differences between European and frontier American conceptions of natural resources, private and community ownership, the public domain, the future? How, in terms of past time, would you have communicated your ideas to Tom Lincoln and his neighbors? How would you have applied them? How would you have enforced them?

EXERCISES

1. What is *"a posteriori* thinking?"

2. State, in your own words, the *"a posteriori"* belief that Mr. DeVoto is attacking. Did you yourself acquire "in the very grade schools of the nation" the belief that Mr. DeVoto charges is false? If so, are you convinced, by Mr. DeVoto's arguments, of the probable falsity of that belief?

3. What method does Mr. DeVoto use to demonstrate the absurdity of the false belief that he is exposing? What is the purpose of his series of questions? Why does he refer so pointedly to "A. Lincoln" and "Thomas Lincoln"? Why does he not offer some statistical evidence comparing the pioneer utilization of forest resources with the later utilization by industry?

HOW TO LIE WITH STATISTICS[1]

By Darrell Huff
(Charts by Sigman-Ward)

"The average Yaleman, Class of '24," *Time* magazine reported last year after reading something in the New York *Sun,* a newspaper published in those days, "makes $25,111 a year."

Well, good for him!

But, come to think of it, what does this improbably precise and salubrious figure mean? Is it, as it appears to be, evidence that if you send your boy to Yale you won't have to work in your old age and neither will he? Is this average a mean or is it a median? What kind of sample is it based on? You could lump one Texas oilman with two hundred hungry free-lance writers and report *their* average income as $25,000-odd a year. The arithmetic is impeccable, the figure is convincingly precise, and the amount of meaning there is in it you could put in your eye.

In just such ways is the secret language of statistics, so appealing in a fact-minded culture, being used to sensationalize, inflate, confuse, and oversimplify. Statistical terms are necessary in reporting the mass data of social and economic trends, business conditions, "opinion" polls, this year's census. But without writers who use the words with honesty and understanding and readers who know what they mean, the result can only be semantic nonsense.

In popular writing on scientific research, the abused statistic is almost crowding out the picture of the white-jacketed hero laboring overtime without time-and-a-half in an ill-lit laboratory. Like the "little dash of powder, little pot of paint," statistics are making many an important fact "look like what she ain't." Here are some of the ways it is done.

The sample with the built-in bias. Our Yale men—or Yalemen, as they say in the Time-Life building—belong to this flourishing group. The exaggerated estimate of their income is not based on all members of the class nor on a random or representative sample of them. At least two interesting categories of 1924-model Yale men have been excluded.

First there are those whose present addresses are unknown to their classmates. Wouldn't you bet that these lost sheep are earning

[1]From *Harper's Magazine*, Vol. 201 (August, 1950). Reprinted by permission of the author. Graphs reproduced by permission of Sigman-Ward.

less than the boys from prominent families and the others who can be handily reached from a Wall Street office?

There are those who chucked the questionnaire into the nearest wastebasket. Maybe they didn't answer because they were not making enough money to brag about. Like the fellow who found a note clipped to his first pay check suggesting that he consider the amount of his salary confidential: "Don't worry," he told the boss. "I'm just as ashamed of it as you are."

Omitted from our sample then are just the two groups most likely to depress the average. The $25,111 figure is beginning to account for itself. It may indeed be a true figure for those of the Class of '24 whose addresses are known and who are willing to stand up and tell how much they earn. But even that requires a possibly dangerous assumption that the gentlemen are telling the truth.

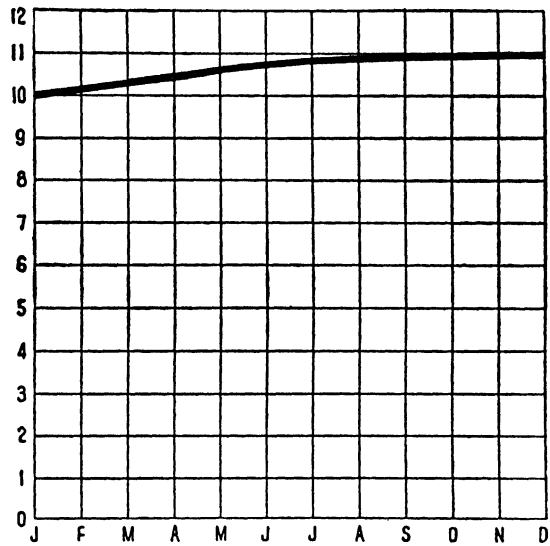
To be dependable to any useful degree at all, a sampling study must use a representative sample (which can lead to trouble too) or a truly random one. If *all* the Class of '24 is included, that's all right. If every tenth name on a complete list is used, that is all right too, and so is drawing an adequate number of names out of a hat. The test is this: Does every name in the group have an equal chance to be in the sample?

You'll recall that ignoring this requirement was what produced the *Literary Digest's* famed fiasco. When names for polling were taken only from telephone books and subscription lists, people who did not have telephones or *Literary Digest* subscriptions had no chance to be in the sample. They possibly did not mind this underprivilege a bit, but their absence was in the end very hard on the magazine that relied on the figures.

This leads to a moral: You can prove about anything you want to by letting your sample bias itself. As a consumer of statistical data—a reader, for example, of a news magazine—remember that no statistical conclusion can rise above the quality of the sample it is based upon. In the absence of information about the procedures behind it, you are not warranted in giving any credence at all to the result.

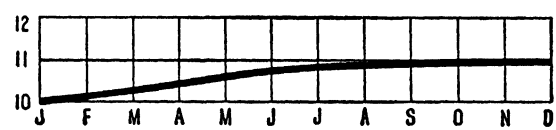
The truncated, or gee-whiz, graph. If you want to show some statistical information quickly and clearly, draw a picture of it. Graphic presentation is the thing today. If you don't mind misleading the hasty looker, or if you quite clearly *want* to deceive him, you can save some space by chopping the bottom off many kinds of graph.

Suppose you are showing the upward trend of national income month by month for a year. The total rise, as in one recent year, is 7 percent. It looks like this:



That is clear enough. Anybody can see that the trend is slightly upward. You are showing a 7 per cent increase and that is exactly what it looks like.

But it lacks schmaltz. So you chop off the bottom, this way:

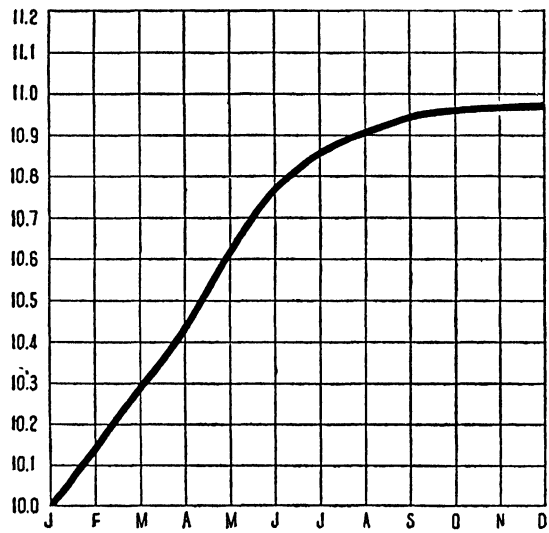


The figures are the same. It is the same graph and nothing has been falsified—except the impression that it gives. Anyone looking at it can just feel prosperity throbbing in the arteries of the country. It is a subtler equivalent of editing "National income rose 7 per cent" into ". . . climbed a whopping 7 per cent."

It is vastly more effective, however, because of that illusion of objectivity.

The souped-up graph. Sometimes truncating is not enough. The trifling rise in something or other still looks almost as insignificant as it is. You can make that 7 per cent look livelier than 100 per cent ordinarily does. Simply change the proportion between the ordinate and the abscissa. There's no rule against it, and it does give your graph a prettier shape.

But it exaggerates, to say the least, something awful:



The well-chosen average. I live near a country neighborhood for which I can report an average income of $15,000. I could also report it as $3,500.

If I should want to sell real estate hereabouts to people having a high snobbery content, the first figure would be handy. The second figure, however, is the one to use in an argument against raising taxes, or the local bus fare.

Both are legitimate averages, legally arrived at. Yet it is obvious that at least one of them must be as misleading as an out-and-out lie. The $15,000 figure is a mean, the arithmetic average of the incomes of all the families in the community. The smaller figure is a median; it might be called the income of the average family in the group. It indicates that half the families have less than $3,500 a year and half have more.

Here is where some of the confusion about averages comes from.

Many human characteristics have the grace to fall into what is called the "normal" distribution. If you draw a picture of it, you get a curve that is shaped like a bell. Mean and median fall at about the same point, so it doesn't make very much difference which you use.

But some things refuse to follow this neat curve. Income is one of them. Incomes for most large areas will range from under $1,000 a year to upward of $50,000. Almost everybody will be under $10,000, way over on the left-hand side of that curve.

One of the things that made the income figure for the "average Yaleman" meaningless is that we are not told whether it is a mean or a median. It is not that one type of average is invariably better than the other; it depends upon what you are talking about. But neither gives you any real information—and either may be highly misleading—unless you know which of those two kinds of average it is.

In the country neighborhood I mentioned, almost everyone has less than the average—the mean, that is—of $15,000. These people are all small farmers, except for a trio of millionaire week-enders who bring up the mean enormously.

You can be pretty sure that when an income average is given in the form of a mean nearly everybody has less than that.

The insignificant difference or the elusive error. Your two children Peter and Linda (we might as well give them modish names while we're about it) take intelligence tests. Peter's IQ, you learn, is 98 and Linda's is 101. Aha! Linda is your brighter child.

Is she? An intelligence test is, or purports to be, a sampling of intellect. An IQ, like other products of sampling, is a figure with a statistical error, which expresses the precision or reliability of the figure. The size of this probable error can be calculated. For their test the makers of the much-used Revised Stanford-Binet have found it to be about 3 per cent. So Peter's indicated IQ of 98 really means only that it falls between 95 and 101. There is an equal probability that it falls somewhere else—below 95 or above 101. Similarly, Linda's has no better than a fifty-fifty chance of being within the fairly sizeable range of 98 to 104.

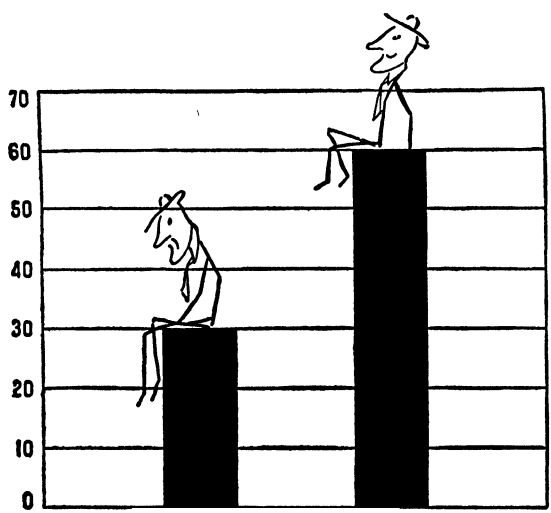
You can work out some comparisons from that. One is that there is rather better than one chance in four that Peter, with his lower IQ rating, is really at least three points smarter than Linda. A statistician doesn't like to consider a difference significant unless you can hand him odds a lot longer than that.

Ignoring the error in a sampling study leads to all kinds of silly

conclusions. There are magazine editors to whom readership surveys are gospel; with a 40 per cent readership reported for one article and a 35 per cent for another, they demand more like the first. I've seen even smaller differences given tremendous weight, because statistics are a mystery and numbers are impressive. The same thing goes for market surveys and so-called public-opinion polls. The rule is that you cannot make a valid comparison between two such figures unless you know the deviations. And unless the difference between the figures is many times greater than the probable error of each, you have only a guess that the one appearing greater really is.

Otherwise you are like the man choosing a camp site from a report of mean temperature alone. One place in California with a mean annual temperature of 61 is San Nicolas Island on the south coast, where it always stays in the comfortable range between 47 and 87. Another with a mean of 61 is in the inland desert, where the thermometer hops around from 15 to 104. The deviation from the mean marks the difference, and you can freeze or roast if you ignore it.

The one-dimensional picture. Suppose you have just two or three figures to compare—say the average weekly wage of carpenters in the United States and another country. The sums might be $60 and $30. An ordinary bar chart makes the difference graphic.



That is an honest picture. It looks good for American carpenters, but perhaps it does not have quite the oomph you are after. Can't you make that difference appear overwhelming and at the same time give it what I am afraid is known as eye-appeal? Of course you can. Following tradition, you represent these sums by pictures of money bags. If the $30 bag is one inch high, you draw the $60 bag two inches high. That's in proportion, isn't it?

The catch is, of course, that the American's money bag, being twice as tall as that of the $30 man, covers an area on your page four times as great. And since our two-dimensional picture represents an object that would in fact have three dimensions, the money bags actually would differ much more than that. The volumes of any two similar solids vary as the cubes of their heights. If the unfortunate foreigner's bag held $30 worth of dimes, the American's would hold not $60 but a neat $240.

You didn't say that, though, did you? And you can't be blamed, you're only doing it the way practically everybody else does.

The ever-impressive decimal. For a spurious air of precision that will lend all kinds of weight to the most disreputable statistics, consider the decimal.

Ask a hundred citizens how many hours they slept last night. Come out with a total of, say, 781.3. Your data are far from precise to begin with. Most people will miss their guess by fifteen minutes or more and some will recall five sleepless minutes as half a night of tossing insomnia.

But go ahead, do your arithmetic, announce that people sleep an average of 7.813 hours a night. You will sound as if you knew precisely what you are talking about. If you were foolish enough to say 7.8 (or "almost 8") hours it would sound like what it was—an approximation.

The semi-attached figure. If you can't prove what you want to prove, demonstrate something else and pretend that the two are the same thing. In the daze that follows the collision of statistics with the human mind, hardly anybody will notice the difference. The semi-attached figure is a durable device guaranteed to stand you in good stead. It always has.

If you can't prove that your nostrum cures colds, publish a sworn laboratory report that the stuff killed 31,108 germs in a test tube in eleven seconds. There may be no connection at all between assorted germs in a test tube and the whatever-it-is that produces colds, but people aren't going to reason that sharply, especially while sniffling.

Maybe that one is too obvious and people are beginning to catch on. Here is a trickier version.

Let us say that in a period when race prejudice is growing it is to your advantage to "prove" otherwise. You will not find it a difficult assignment.

Ask that usual cross section of the population if they think Negroes have as good a chance as white people to get jobs. Ask again a few months later. As Princeton's Office of Public Opinion Research has found out, people who are most unsympathetic to Negroes are the ones most likely to answer yes to this question.

As prejudice increases in a country, the percentage of affirmative answers you will get to this question will become larger. What looks on the face of it like growing opportunity for Negroes actually is mounting prejudice and nothing else. You have achieved something rather remarkable: the worse things get, the better your survey makes them look.

The unwarranted assumption, or post hoc rides again. The interrelation of cause and effect, so often obscure anyway, can be most neatly hidden in statistical data.

Somebody once went to a good deal of trouble to find out if cigarette smokers make lower college grades than non-smokers. They did. This naturally pleased many people, and they made much of it.

The unwarranted assumption, of course, was that smoking had produced dull minds. It seemed vaguely reasonable on the face of

it, so it was quite widely accepted. But it really proved nothing of the sort, any more than it proved that poor grades drive students to the solace of tobacco. Maybe the relationship worked in one direction, maybe in the other. And maybe all this is only an indication that the sociable sort of fellow who is likely to take his books less than seriously is also likely to sit around and smoke many cigarettes.

Permitting statistical treatment to befog causal relationships is little better than superstition. It is like the conviction among the people of the Hebrides that body lice produce good health. Observation over the centuries had taught them that people in good health had lice and sick people did not. *Ergo,* lice made a man healthy. Everybody in those circles had lice most of the time. But when a man took a fever (quite possibly carried to him by those same lice) and his body became hot, the lice left.

Here you have cause and effect not only reversed, but intermingled.

There you have a primer in some ways to use statistics to deceive. A well-wrapped statistic is better than Hitler's "big lie": it misleads, yet it can't be pinned onto you.

Is this little list altogether too much like a manual for swindlers? Perhaps I can justify it in the manner of the retired burglar whose published reminiscences amounted to a graduate course in how to pick a lock and muffle a footfall: The crooks already know these tricks. Honest men must learn them in self-defense.

Exercises and Suggestions for Themes

1. The immediately preceding article, "How to Lie with Statistics," is not only an argument *against* misuse of statistics, but also an implied argument for sound thinking and for correct and valid use of statistics whenever they may be properly used. At what point in his article does Mr. Huff indicate that he is opposing only misuse of statistics and not statistical evidence in general? What does he mean by the term "fact-minded culture"? Does he anywhere suggest that it is the great prestige of science, attaching to statistics, that stimulates abuse of statistics? To what extent does Mr. Huff use analysis? Can you reduce to syllogistic form the steps of thought that Mr. Huff, in connection with his several graphs, represents in mathematical terms? Does Mr. Huff use the conciliatory, belligerent, or matter-of-fact approach? Is his style too "journalistic"—too "snappy" and "slangy"? If you object to his style, how would you "popularize" the highly technical subject?

2. Examine newspapers, magazines, and books for evidence of the statistical fallacies that Mr. Huff exposes. Write a theme based on your findings.

3. Find an example of *"a posteriori"* thinking of the sort deplored by Bernard DeVoto and write a theme in which, using his method, you expose the fallacy involved.

4. Read the editorial page of a newspaper over a period of some days. Study the logic of the editorials and of the signed columns written by commentators. List and classify the methods of argument most often used. Also list and classify any errors of logic that you discover.

5. Study two or three articles of opinion in current magazines recommended by your instructor. Classify the evidence presented by the authors to support their views. Use the following scheme of classification:

a. Statistical evidence.
b. Quotations, summaries, or references from expert and authoritative sources.
c. Evidence originating in first-hand observation by the author.
d. Unauthenticated evidence of any sort—hearsay, rumor, unverified reports, unidentified or questionable sources of information.
e. Opinions or unwarranted assumptions used as evidence.

Reclassify your findings to see whether the evidence presented is, as a whole: (1) partial or impartial; (2) representative or not representative. Note any obvious distortions of fact, propaganda, prejudice, emotionalism.

Write a theme in which you embody the results of your survey.

6. Write an "editorial" on some question of public importance. Remember that an editorial is, in principle, a brief article of opinion—that is, if it is an argumentative editorial; and that, while it must meet the special requirements of the editorial page, it must also conform to the requirements of logic and good taste.

7. Read the current issues of two or three magazines of national circulation. Find an article of opinion with which you may have sound reason for disagreeing. Write an article of your own in which you develop, in a substantial and reasonable way, your views of the question under discussion.

8. In what form should the following topics be put if they are to be argued about with satisfaction? Frame the proposition involved in at least three of the topics, and state the issues that will have to be proved if the proposition is to be argued successfully:

Why not caps and gowns for college students on all academic occasions?—They dress so undiscriminatingly!
"Drum majorettes" are vulgar and puerile
There is something to say in behalf of the old-fashioned "little red schoolhouse"
Freight trucks are a menace to passenger traffic and an imposition on taxpayers
Television for Congressional committees is nothing but "mob justice"
Why not more tollroads and parkways?

9. Examine the logic used in advertisements. Write out some of the "syllogisms" implied in the "appeal" made to the consumer. What kind of argumentative appeal do advertisements most often make? What is the logical validity of "testimonial advertising"? Note all examples of common fallacies. What kind of advertising is logically most sound?

10. Test the reasoning of the following statements:

a. People should take an interest in politics on the precinct level. They should also vote in party primaries. If they will do such things, and if substantial citizens will make the sacrifice of running for public and party offices, the professional politicians and bosses will no longer be able to control politics and government, and we shall have real democracy.

b. Since the whole world is rapidly becoming industrialized like the United States, and since industrial products like airplanes, tractors, and Coca-Cola have world-wide distribution, there should be a world government just like the government of the United States.

c. "My countrymen, know one another and you will love one another," said Senator L. Q. C. Lamar of Mississippi, at the end of the Reconstruction period. Shortly afterwards, the reconciliation between the North and the South became effective. On the basis of the principle asserted by Lamar, we can assume that international conferences

on science, economics, labor, and the arts will promote world peace.

d. The restoration of Jefferson's ideal of the self-sufficient farmer is a noble aim, but it is not to be considered today because we cannot turn back the clock.

e. The authority of government, even such as I am willing to submit to,—for I will cheerfully obey those who know and can do better than I, and in many things even those who neither know nor can do so well,—is still an impure one; to be strictly just, it must have the sanction and consent of the governed. It can have no pure right over my person and property but what I concede to it. The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy, from a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for the individual.—Henry D. Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience."

f. The greatest reforms which could now be accomplished would consist in undoing the work of statesmen in the past, and the greatest difficulty in the way of reform is to find out how to undo their work without injury to what is natural and sound. All this mischief has been done by men who sat down to consider the problem (as I heard an apprentice of theirs once express it): What kind of a society do we want to make? When they had settled this question *a priori* to their satisfaction, they set to work to make their ideal society, and today we suffer the consequences. Human society tries hard to adapt itself to any conditions in which it finds itself, and we have been warped and distorted until we have got used to it, as the foot adapts itself to an ill-made boot. Next, we have come to think that that is the right way for things to be; and it is true that a change to a sound and normal condition would for a time hurt us, as a man whose foot has been distorted would suffer if he tried to wear a well-shaped boot. Finally, we have produced a lot of economists and social philosophers who have invented sophisms for fitting our thinking to the distorted facts.—William Graham Sumner, in *What the Social Classes Owe to Each Other.*

g. Only the wise man is free, and every man unwise is a slave.—Cicero.

A CONCISE HANDBOOK OF GRAMMAR, PUNCTUATION, MECHANICS, AND SPELLING

THE NATURE OF GRAMMAR: A FOREWORD

Grammar is the science which endeavors to systematize the study of language by establishing classes of words and by observing and recording the forms and functions of words in spoken and written discourse. The *inflection* of a word is the change of form made to indicate its grammatical properties. Grammarians commonly divide words into eight classes, called *parts of speech*. The branch of grammar devoted to the study of the parts of speech and their inflections is known as *accidence* (from the Latin *accidere*: "to fall together") or as *morphology* (from the Greek *morpho-*: "form" and *logos*: "science of"). The branch of grammar which deals with the relation of words to one another in sentences or other word-groups is called *syntax*. Although the grammar of any language has important historical aspects that are helpful in understanding the why's and wherefore's of grammar, we are chiefly concerned here with the living grammar, which derives its validity from usages established in our time. For general reference or more comprehensive study, the following books are authoritative: Margaret M. Bryant, *A Functional English Grammar*; George O. Curme, *Parts of Speech and Accidence;* George O. Curme, *Syntax;* Arthur S. Kennedy, *Current English.*

I. THE PARTS OF SPEECH

A word is a unit of speech which usually expresses a simple idea, but its precise meaning is likely to be uncertain unless it is used with other words to express a complete thought. When considered in respect to their general functions in the expression of thoughts and emotions, words may be classified under eight categories called parts of speech. Some of these are inflected to indicate their grammatical properties. But since the English language has very largely dispensed with inflectional forms, the same form may function as any one of several parts of speech. Where this is possible, the use or

construction of the word must determine its classification in a particular instance.

In the following sentences the word *down* is used as five different parts of speech:

On that play we made first *down*. (Noun)
He fell *down*. (Adverb)
He fell *down* the stairs. (Preposition)
A *down* grade makes easy walking. (Adjective)
You cannot *down* him with a single blow. (Verb)

1. NOUNS

1 A. A *noun* is the name of a person, thing, idea, quality, collection, or action.

The *table* is made of *wood*.
His *honesty* is unquestioned.

1 B. There are two main classes of nouns: common and proper.

A *common noun* names a generality. That is, it refers to one or more of a class of persons, things, ideas, etc. The term *common noun* is used because the members of the class have the noun as a designation in common.

A common noun is *abstract* when it names anything intangible, such as a quality, condition, action, or idea.

Examples: justice, hardness, illness, division, truth

A common noun is *concrete* when it names anything tangible—that is, anything which may be perceived by the senses.

Examples: river, knife, oil, sunshine, crash

A common noun is *collective* when it names a group of persons or objects which form a unit.

Examples: crowd, flock, club, committee

It is possible for the same noun to have both an abstract and a concrete meaning. The noun *weight* is concrete when it refers to an object such as a *paper weight* and abstract when it refers to the prop-

erty of a physical object, as when we say, "The *weight* is ten pounds." The noun *circle* is abstract when it refers to the geometric conception, concrete when it refers to an actual circle, and collective when it refers to members of a group.

A *proper noun* names a particular person, place, or thing as distinguished from a class.

Examples: Adam, Tennessee, Monday

1 C. Declension of Nouns. Declension is the inflection of a noun (or pronoun) according to a definite sequence which shows its gender, number, and case.

(1) *Gender* is the grammatical property of a noun or pronoun by which sex or lack of sex is indicated. The genders are *masculine* (male), *feminine* (female), and *neuter* (neither: i.e., sexless). In English, the meaning of the noun shows its gender. A few words, however, have a different form for the feminine gender. Some examples:

Masculine	*Feminine*
fox	vixen
tiger	tigress
duke	duchess
hero	heroine
Joseph	Josephine
aviator	aviatrix

(2) *Number* is the property of a word by which its reference to one (*singular*) or more than one (*plural*) is shown.

Most nouns form the plural by adding *-s* or *-es*. A few nouns use the plural ending *-en*. Others form the plural not by an inflectional ending but by an internal vowel change. Some others have no distinctive plural form.

Singular	*Plural*
house	houses
box	boxes
ox	oxen
foot	feet
deer	deer

When the singular ends in *s, ss, sh, tch, ch* (soft), *x,* and *z,* the plural is formed by adding *-es*: *glass, glasses; crash, crashes; hitch, hitches; church, churches; quiz, quizzes.*

A few words ending in *f* or *fe* change the *f* to *v* and add *-es* to form the plural: *thief, thieves; leaf, leaves.*

Some nouns ending in *y* change the *y* to *i* and add *-es*:*pity, pities; colloquy, colloquies.*

Many foreign nouns retain their foreign plurals: *agendum, agenda; axis, axes; larva, larvae; phenomenon, phenomena; stimulus, stimuli.* But some foreign nouns may use *either* the foreign *or* the English plural form: singular, *formula;* plural, *formulae* or *formulas.*

Some compound words form the plural on a component other than the last: *daughter-in-law, daughters-in-law; man-of-war, men-of-war.*

Some nouns are used only in the plural form: *annals, clothes, wages.* Others have a plural form but a singular meaning: *semantics, economics, news.*

For other rules for the formation of the plural see Section 69.

(3) *Case* is the grammatical property of a noun (or pronoun) by which its sense-relation to other words in the sentence is shown. There are three cases: *Nominative, Possessive,* and *Objective.* In nouns, only the possessive case is formed by an inflectional ending: the apostrophe and *s.* (See Section 68 B.)

Declension of a Noun

	Singular	*Plural*
Nominative	girl	girls
Possessive	girl's	girls'
Objective	girl	girls
Nominative	man	men
Possessive	man's	men's
Objective	man	men

1 D. SUBSTANTIVES. A noun is also called a substantive. A *substantive* is any word or group of words that is used as a noun. The

term includes not only nouns, but also pronouns, verbals, and adjectives when used as nouns, and phrases and clauses when used as nouns.

A PROBLEM OF CASE: THE USE OF THE POSSESSIVE WITH THE GERUND

1 E. What should be the case of a noun (or pronoun) modifying a gerund?

A *gerund* (see Section 4 H) is a verbal form used as a noun.

A substantive used with a gerund is considered to function as an adjective modifying the gerund and is put into the possessive case.

Example: She was disturbed by *Henry's* fast driving.

"OF" PHRASE AS SUBSTITUTE FOR THE POSSESSIVE

1 F. In English there is an increasing tendency to avoid the possessive ending *-'s* and to use an "of" phrase instead: *the rights of a citizen* instead of *a citizen's rights; the imagination of an artist* instead of *an artist's imagination.*

Note that it is improper to use the possessive ending with certain nouns. We say *the leg of the chair,* not *the chair's leg.* The possessive form is used principally with (1) names of persons (*Mary's dress, the judge's decision*); (2) names of other living things (*horse's tail, bird's nest*); (3) personifications (*passion's slave*); (4) nouns of time, space, weight (*a minute's length, a hair's breadth, a feather's weight*); (5) certain conventional phrases (*child's talk, heart's content*).

1 G. The double form of the possessive appears in expressions like "that house *of John's*"; "this poem *of Eliot's.*"

EXERCISES

1. Form the plurals of the following words. Consult your dictionary if you are in doubt as to the proper form.

index	jury ⟨ s	brother-in-law
crux	kindness	cargo ⟨ s

vertebrae	précis	hero
alumnus	hutch	elf
alumnae	sergeant-at-arms	memorandum
elks	casks	vacuum
Joneses	basis	clef
Jersey Citys	corolla	manservant

2. Give the feminine form (or word) for the following:

horse; actor; proprietor; host; waiter;
manager; master; Sir.

3. Correct the errors in the following sentences:
   a. With his knife he could easily cut the girl's name in the tree's bark.
   b. I cannot see the need of father increasing his expenses at this time.
   c. He could remember Paderewski playing of that particular nocturne, and, to hear him talk, it was as good as Chopin interpreting it, if Chopin had been alive to interpret anything.
   d. Rather than a modern song I will choose a lyric of Shakespeare.
   e. Is there any chance of me being elected?
   f. Mother disliked Clara dressing in so careless a way.
   g. In the country the problem of transportation is created by the student being so far away from the school.

2. PRONOUNS

2 A. A *pronoun* is a word which is used instead of a noun in order to avoid repeating the noun to which it refers or to indicate persons or things asked for or understood in the context: *he, it, who, what, anyone.*

The noun for which the pronoun stands is called the *antecedent* of the pronoun.

The *men* left because *they* could wait no longer. (The noun *men* is the antecedent of *they*.)

Who is coming here? (The antecedent of *who* is unknown.)

2 B. CLASSES OF PRONOUNS. Pronouns may be classified in eight ways, as follows: personal, intensive, reflexive, demonstrative, indefinite, numeral, interrogative, and relative.

(1) *Personal pronouns* stand for persons or things. The personal pronouns are *I, you, he, she, it,* and their inflectional forms. Personal pronouns are inflected to show person, number, and case. In the third person singular they are inflected to show gender also. *Person* is the grammatical property by which the speaker shows whether he is referring to himself (*First Person*), to the person addressed (*Second Person*), or to some third person or persons (*Third Person*).

2 C. DECLENSION OF PERSONAL PRONOUNS. English nouns have lost their inflections except in the possessive case, but personal pronouns, especially in the first and third persons, retain the marked inflectional changes of an earlier time. Personal pronouns are declined as follows:

FIRST PERSON

	Singular	*Plural*
Nominative	I	we
Possessive	my, mine	our, ours
Objective	me	us

SECOND PERSON

	Singular	*Plural*
Nominative	you	you
Possessive	your, yours	your, yours
Objective	you	you

THIRD PERSON

	Singular			*Plural*
	Masculine	*Feminine*	*Neuter*	
Nominative	he	she	it	they
Possessive	his	her, hers	its	their, theirs
Objective	him	her	it	them

Archaic Forms. In the second person singular, the English language retains certain old forms which now have little currency except for poetic and religious uses:

	Singular
Nominative	thou
Possessive	thy, thine
Objective	thee

The archaic plural form, second person, is *ye.*

(2) *Intensive pronouns.* When the personal pronouns are combined with the suffixes *-self* and *-selves,* they may be used as *intensive pronouns,* for the purpose of emphasizing the antecedent.

I *myself* will do the work.
You should talk to the farmers *themselves.*

(3) *Reflexive pronouns.* The personal pronouns may also be combined with the suffixes *-self* and *-selves* to form *reflexive pronouns.* A reflexive pronoun is a pronoun that refers *back* to the subject of the sentence or clause in which it stands.

You must do this for *yourself.*
He hurt *himself.*

(4) *Demonstrative pronouns* point out the persons or things for which they stand. The demonstrative pronouns are: *this* (singular), *these* (plural); *that* (singular), *those* (plural).

(5) *Indefinite pronouns.* Indefinite pronouns refer to no definite antecedent. The following is a list of indefinite pronouns:

all	everybody	nothing
another	everyone	one
any	everything	other
anybody	few	several
anyone	many	some
anything	much	somebody
both	neither	someone
each	nobody	something
each one	none	such
either	no one	

When compounds ending in *-body* and *-one* are followed by *else,* the apostrophe and *-s* of the possessive are added to the *else*: *anybody else's hat.*

Note that, by a functional shift, the indefinite pronouns *either, neither,* and *both* are used *as* coördinating conjunctions:

We can have *either* coffee or tea.
Both the manager and his secretary were present.

(6) *Numeral pronouns* are the cardinal or ordinal numerals when they stand for nouns which are understood:

Many men applied for work, but only *two* were employed.
Several men applied for work, but only the *first* was employed.

(7) *Interrogative pronouns* are used for the purpose of asking questions, both direct and indirect. The interrogative pronouns are: *who, which, what, whoever, whichever, whatever.* The use of interrogative pronouns in direct and indirect questions is illustrated in the following sentences:

Direct Question: Which is the road to peace?
Indirect Question: He asked *which* was the road to peace.

Interrogative pronouns are identical in form with relative pronouns, and frequently cannot be distinguished from relative pronouns except by their indefiniteness or by their use in the sentence.

Interrogative pronouns: What did he buy?
Interrogative in indirect question: Mother asked *what* he bought.
Relative pronoun: Mother knows *what* he bought.

The declension of the interrogative pronoun *who* is as follows:

Singular and *Plural*

Nominative	who
Possessive	whose
Objective	whom

(8) *Relative pronouns* have a double function in that they refer to antecedents and introduce subordinate clauses. A relative pronoun therefore serves as a connective between a main clause and the sub-

ordinate clause which it introduces. At the same time it functions as a substantive within the subordinate clause. (See Sections 19 D, E.)

The relative pronouns are *who, which, what, that. Who* refers to persons; *which,* to things or animals. *That* refers either to persons or things. Compounds like *whoever* and *whichever* are also classified as relatives.

The declension of the relative pronoun *who* is the same as that of the interrogative *who*:

	Singular and *Plural*
Nominative	who
Possessive	whose
Objective	whom

Some authorities, basing their opinion on historical usage, hold that the relative pronoun *which* has the older possessive form *whose.* In modern usage, however, *of which* is generally favored instead of the old possessive form.

REFERENCE OF PRONOUNS: PROBLEMS OF AMBIGUITY OR VAGUENESS

2 D. What principle should be followed in establishing the reference of a pronoun to its antecedent?

Every pronoun must refer plainly and unmistakably to its antecedent. There must be no confusion, no ambiguity, no vagueness of reference. Observe the following cautions:

(1) Avoid ambiguous or divided reference:

Wrong: The Secretary of War told the reporter that *his* statement was incorrect.

Right, but awkward: The Secretary of War told the reporter that the reporter's statement was incorrect.

Right: The Secretary of War told the reporter that the statement was incorrect.

Right: The Secretary of War told the reporter that the statement in the newspaper was incorrect.

Explanation: In the first sentence *his* might refer either to *Secretary of War* or to *reporter.* This error can best be corrected by avoiding the use of a pronoun.

(2) Avoid vague reference: Do not use a pronoun which refers to an *implied* antecedent. The antecedent must be present. (This caution of course does not apply to *indefinite pronouns,* which have no antecedents.)

Wrong: He always dresses very slowly, *which* causes him to be late to class.
Right: He is late to class because he dresses slowly.
Wrong: The Ninth Ward went to the polls in great numbers. *This* won the election.
Right: The people of the Ninth Ward went to the polls in great numbers. Their votes won the election.
Wrong: Cotton is the great staple crop of Mississippi. *They* plant cotton, no matter what the price is.
Right: Cotton is the great staple crop of Mississippi. The Mississippians plant cotton, no matter what the price is.

(3) Do not use a pronoun to refer to a noun which is in the possessive case:

Wrong: Chaucer makes a sly reference to the Monk's costume, *who* wore sleeves ornamented with gray fur.
Right: Chaucer makes a sly reference to the Monk's sleeves, which were ornamented with gray fur.

EXERCISE

Correct all errors of reference in the following sentences:

1. It is natural for a human being to want good clothes, entertainment, even wealth or power; they want to get the most they can from life.

2. He received the title, Duke of Cornwall. This made his title of Duke of York void until the King should have a second son.

3. When the water expands, it immediately freezes, which will burst the radiator.

4. If you pump the accelerator with your foot, it may flood the carburetor.

5. Shakespeare may well have studied Marlowe's "mighty line," and now we study him.

6. My Canadian friend is an experienced lacrosse player, and you know what a rough game it is.

7. The committee chairman told Professor Ziegler that he was doubtful whether he should press the issue until further investigation could be made.

8. After supper, we usually found a bench in the summer-house, which was delightfully quaint and comfortable.

9. Sometimes I dream of looking for a job in a larger city, where I will feel more independent and nobody cares who you are.

10. In the best of Walter Scott's novels, he is as realistic as any modern author.

11. Our new senator is so intelligent and conscientious that they think he will represent us adequately despite his inexperience.

12. The curtain rises to a great soar and flourish of the orchestra, quickly followed by a rousing men's chorus, which makes an interesting beginning for an opera.

3. ADJECTIVES

3 A. An *adjective* is a word which limits or qualifies a noun or pronoun, usually by answering the question *What kind?* or *Which one?* or *How many?* Adjectives are said to "modify" the substantive which they thus limit or qualify. An adjective may either precede or follow the word which it modifies. If it precedes, it is sometimes called *adherent* (a *green* tree). If it follows, it is known as *appositive* (a sky *bright* with summer). Phrases and clauses may be used to function as adjectives.

3 B. CLASSES OF ADJECTIVES. Adjectives are either *descriptive* or *limiting*. A *descriptive adjective* expresses the kind, condition, or quality of the person or thing named by the substantive modified. (This is an *excellent* piece of work.) A *limiting adjective* limits the application of the substantive modified to one or more individuals of the class designated by the noun or to one or more parts of the whole.

The following kinds of adjectives are limiting adjectives:

(1) *Pronominal adjectives* are all pronominal words capable of being used as modifiers of nouns. Like pronouns, they are classified as *demonstrative, indefinite, relative,* and *interrogative.*

Demonstrative adjective: These things do not belong to me.
Indefinite adjective: Have you *any* stationery?
Relative adjective: I can tell you *which* house I want.
Interrogative adjective: Which house do you want?

Some indefinite adjectives are not pronominal: *certain, every, no, respective,* and *various.*

(2) *Intensive adjectives,* such as *very:*

This is the *very* book I want.

(3) The *identifying adjectives: identical, same, selfsame:*

You are not the *same* man that you were.

(4) The cardinal and ordinal numerals when used as modifiers of substantives: *three* books, the *seventh* wave.

(5) The *multiplicative* adjectives: *single, double, twofold, manifold,* etc.

(6) Adjectives which refer to order or sequence, such as *farther, former, latter, next.*

(7) The articles *a, an, the.*

PROPER ADJECTIVES

Proper adjectives are adjectives formed from proper nouns: *American, Platonic, Jacksonian, Chinese.* See also *predicate adjectives* (Section 12 B) and *participles* (Section 4 G).

COMPARISON OF ADJECTIVES

3 C. Adjectives may be inflected to indicate degrees of superiority in quantity, quality, intensity, or relation—that is, to indicate *degrees of comparison.*

There are three degrees of comparison. The *positive* degree denotes the simple quality, when no comparison is being made: *sweet warm, pure.* The *comparative* degree denotes a higher degree of quality, or greater quantity or intensity, or the like, than the positive degree: Oak wood is *harder* than poplar. The *superlative* denotes

the highest degree of quality when three or more persons or things are being compared: This oak tree is the *tallest* one in the grove.

Observe that the comparative is used to speak of two things, and the superlative of more than two:

John is the *older* of the two brothers.
He is the *bravest* man in our town.

Most monosyllabic and dissyllabic adjectives form the comparative degree by adding the ending *-(e)r* to the positive, and the superlative degree by adding *-(e)st.*

Positive	*Comparative*	*Superlative*
large	larger	largest
high	higher	highest
heavy	heavier	heaviest

A few common adjectives are compared irregularly:

Positive	*Comparative*	*Superlative*
bad	worse	worst
good	better	best
late	later, latter	latest, last
little	less, lesser, littler	least, littlest
much	more	most
old	older, elder	oldest, eldest

Many dissyllabic adjectives and almost all adjectives of three or more syllables are compared by the use of *more* and *most: peaceful, more peaceful, most peaceful; obstinate, more obstinate, most obstinate.*

Degrees of inferiority may be expressed by the use of the words *less* and *least: happy, less happy, least happy.*

Certain adjectives cannot logically be compared since the quality which they express can have only one degree: *round, unique, black, dead.* In actual practice such words are compared, as when we say, *blacker, most perfect.* But the degrees of comparison are understood to mean *more nearly black, most nearly perfect.*

EXERCISE

Form the comparative and the superlative of the following adjectives; or, in the proper instances, distinguish those that cannot be compared or that have defective comparisons:

sophisticated	reasonable	triangular
supreme	omniscient	ambidextrous
clever	dull	crystallized
big	elective	manly
early	vacant	mean
blissful	chic	sentimental
gaseous	pretty	wise
far	thin	fat

4. VERBS

4 A. A *verb* is a word or group of words that asserts action, state, or being.

Henry *is ringing* the bell. (Action)
Where *will* the plants *grow*? (State)
He *became* angry. (Being)

4 B. CLASSES OF VERBS. A verb is *transitive* when it indicates action as passing over from the agent or subject to a receiver or object. A verb is *intransitive* when it indicates an action or state as limited to the agent, or subject, and therefore as not passing over to a receiver. Many verbs may be used either transitively or intransitively.

He *hit* the ball. (Transitive)
I *am palpitating* with excitement. (Intransitive)
This man *keeps* books. (Transitive)
What flowers *keep* best? (Intransitive)

INFLECTION OF VERBS

4 C. Verbs have *person, number, tense, mood,* and *voice.* These are indicated by inflectional forms, or where a distinctive form to indicate a property is lacking, by syntax.

(1) *Person* is the property of a verb which is determined by the relation of its subject to the discourse. With a few exceptions, person is indicated by the subject of the verb rather than by the form of the verb itself. The verb is in the first person if its subject is the speaker; in the second person if its subject is the person spoken to; in the third person if its subject is the person or thing spoken of.

First Person: I see
Second Person: You see
Third Person: He sees, she sees, it sees, they see.

(2) *Number* is the property of the verb which is indicated by the singular or plural nature of its subject. Number is generally indicated by the subject. Not many verbs change their form to show number.

(3) *Voice* is that property of a verb which shows whether the subject is acting or being acted upon. The voice of the verb is active when the subject is acting, and passive when the subject is acted upon. Only transitive verbs possess passive as well as active voice.

The passive voice of a verb is expressed by combining forms of the auxiliary *to be* with the past participle of the verb.

Someone *broke* this window. (Active Voice)
This window *was broken* by someone. (Passive Voice)

(4) *Mood* is the property of a verb which shows the manner in which the speaker or writer conceives of the action, state, or being denoted by the verb.

The *indicative mood* represents the action or state expressed by the verb as a fact or as in close relation to reality.

This road is well paved. (Statement of a fact)
What shall we do if he comes? (In close relation to reality)
What did you see? (Question about a fact)

The *subjunctive mood* is used to show that the action or state expressed by the verb is regarded not as a reality, but merely as a possibility, improbability, desire, demand, or condition.

It is necessary that you *be* there. (Demand)
You *should go* to see her. (Desire, wish)
I *would prefer* to do this. (A modest wish)

If you *should be* late, we would not go. (Condition)
If George *were* here, he would help us. (Contrary to fact condition)

Since the indicative and subjunctive moods have very few distinguishing forms (see Conjugation, page 568), the mood of the verb must often be determined by its use. This is not always possible, because of the modern tendency to use the indicative mood in constructions which formerly required the subjunctive, or because the construction is ambiguous for other reasons (see Sequence of Tenses, Section 26).

She will agree to this on condition that Jane *leave* tomorrow. (Subjunctive)
She will agree to this on condition that Jane *leaves* tomorrow. (Indicative)
Will you agree to this on condition that I *leave* tomorrow? (Since the indicative and the subjunctive forms are the same for the first person, it is difficult to say whether *leave* is indicative or subjunctive.)

The *imperative mood* is used to express a command or request. When a verb is in the imperative mood, its subject is generally omitted.

Let me see your book.
Do not *make* a mistake.

(5) *Tense* is the property of a verb which indicates the time of occurrence or completion of an action. In the indicative mood there are six tenses: the *present, past,* and *future,* which denote the time of occurrence of an action, and the *present perfect, past perfect,* and *future perfect,* which denote the completion of an action in the present, past, and future respectively. (See page 568.)

SPECIAL USES OF THE PRESENT TENSE FORM

The present tense *form* does not always refer to present *time,* but has certain other uses. It may be used—

—To represent action as occurring in the future:

It *is* sure *to be* a pretty day tomorrow.
The game *begins* at 2 o'clock.
Stay here until I *come.*

—Without reference to time in order to express a general truth:

Virtue *is* its own reward.

—To represent an action or state that is habitual, customary, or characteristic:

He always *walks* fast.
Barn swallows *build* their nests here every spring.

—As an "historical present"—that is, to refer to past time, as in the following example:

Caesar left winter quarters and hurried toward the center of the trouble. His legions move rapidly forward. Before the Gallic chieftains can collect their wits and make their plans, he is upon them in full force.

THE FUTURE TENSE: USES OF "SHALL" AND "WILL"

4 D. Since the future tense presents certain difficulties of usage, it is discussed at this point. The future tense is formed by combining the auxiliaries *shall* and *will* with the present infinitive of the verb. In colloquial usage, especially in the United States, the dominant tendency is to make the auxiliary *will* serve for most of the functions that were formerly divided between the two auxiliaries, *shall* and *will,* and this tendency has affected even literary usage to some degree. In literary usage, however, and especially in formal writing, the rule for the use of the auxiliaries still applies. It is as follows:

In the declarative form, *shall* in the first person, and *will* in the second and third persons denote the pure future.

We shall go to the country tomorrow.
You will see us there.
He will be glad to help you.

Will in the first person and *shall* in the second and third persons denote desire, intention, promise, willingness, inclination, determination, or prophecy on the part of the speaker. The speaker and the subject of the sentence are the same only when the verb is in the first person. When the verb is in the second and third persons, the speaker is represented as directing or exercising control over the subject of the verb.

I will keep my promise.
You shall have whatever you wish.
They shall never know the truth.

Will may be used with all persons to denote determination, inclination, or tendency on the part of the subject of the verb.

You *will* break the rules.
People *will* be unreasonable.

Shall is used in the first person not only to denote simple futurity, but also to denote a resolution or deep conviction.

I shall abide by my decision.

In the interrogative form, *shall* is always used in the first person. In the second and third persons, that auxiliary is used which is expected in the answer.

What shall I do for you?
Shall we receive a reply?
Will you copy this for me? (Answer: Yes, I *will* copy it.)
Will they return tonight? (Answer: Yes, they *will* return.)
Shall you be busy for the next hour? (Answer: No, I *shall* not.)

"SHOULD" AND "WOULD"

4 E. The auxiliaries *should* and *would* follow the same rules as *shall* and *will*. Observe, however, that *should* is used for all three persons to express obligation or duty or a condition; and that *would* is used for all three persons to express an habitual action or tendency.

I (you, he, they) should obey the law. (Obligation or duty)
At that hour I (you, he, they) would always turn out the lights. (Habitual action)

TENSES OF THE SUBJUNCTIVE

4 F. In the subjunctive mood there are four tenses: the present, the past, the present perfect, and the past perfect. The use of tenses in the subjunctive (with the exception noted below) is as follows:

The present and past tenses are both used to represent present or future time; the perfect and past perfect both represent past time;

but the past and past perfect tenses indicate unreality or greater improbability than do the present and perfect tenses.

If this *be* treason, make the most of it. (Present subjunctive, indicating possibility)

If this *were* treason, I should have nothing to do with it. (Past subjunctive, indicating present time, and expressing improbability)

The use of the past tense to indicate present or future time is a distinguishing feature of the subjunctive mood. Use of the past tense enables the reader to determine the mood of the verb.

Example: If he had a dollar bill now, he could buy a ticket. (*He had* is a past form referring to the present; therefore we know that it is in the subjunctive mood. *He could* is also subjunctive.)

But the above rule as to the use of tenses in the subjunctive mood does not apply to a subjunctive in a subordinate clause following a past tense in a principal clause. (See Sequence of Tenses, Section 26.)

VERBALS: INFINITIVE, PARTICIPLE, AND GERUND

4 G. The forms of the verb which have *all* of the properties considered above—that is, person, number, tense, mood, and voice—are called *finite* forms. "Finite" means "limited." The properties named constitute limitations upon the action of the verb.

Other forms of the verb, not limited in all these respects, might be called *infinite* forms. The three infinite forms of the verb are the *infinitive,* the *participle,* and the *gerund.* These are called *verbals* to distinguish them from the finite verb forms. They are not limited as to person, number, and mood.

(Some grammarians hold that in order to avoid confusion of the technical term *verbal* with the broader adjective "verbal," which means "pertaining to a word," the term *verbid* should be applied to the infinitive, participle, and gerund. But *verbal* is more commonly used.)

4 H. The *gerund* is a verbal noun. It always ends in *-ing.*

On *going* to the city, he met with disaster.
Dancing is good exercise.

As verb forms, the verbals take adverbial modifiers and the same complementary constructions (see Section 12) that are used with the finite forms of the verb. In other words, they have multiple functions as parts of speech. The infinitive functions not only as a verb, but also as a noun, adjective, or adverb. The participle functions both as a verb and an adjective. The gerund functions both as a verb and a noun. Verbals also have voice and tense. But the participle has no future tense; the infinitive and the gerund have only present and perfect tense.

EXERCISES

1. Give the tense, voice, and mood of each verb in the following sentences. (See Conjugation of a Verb, pp. 566–569.)

a. If he were my friend, he would long since have come to my aid.

b. Where shall we find another ally, in times like these—times that are critical and may be decisive?

c. The sum was impounded by the court after the suit was filed.

d. The dinner is arranged for Friday evening, and Margaret and John are coming.

e. If we had some ice, we could serve cold drinks.

f. You may think you have been mistreated, but what will you do about it?

g. I had never realized there were so many shades of blue and yellow as we now were watching the sunset unroll across the sky.

2. Point out the verbals in the following sentences and say, in each instance, whether the verbal is an infinitive, a participle, or a gerund:

a. You can arrange for a laundress to do your washing and ironing.

b. In this dismal room, Eugenie and her mother awaited Grandet's coming.

c. Through the forest he could see a full moon rising.

d. Now is the time to be at the pruning of your shrubs.

e. The mere driving of the cattle would have been monotonous if there had not been singing to cheer them and a constant change of scenery to divert them.

f. There I found the boys, tired and overloaded.

g. I fancied I felt her hand tremble in mine.

h. My aunt, patting the cat, looked attentively at Agnes.

i. Overcome with fear, Barbara clutched the gunwale of the boat.

j. I have often heard him mentioned for the office.

k. It seemed as if, the letter once having been sealed and stamped, there was nothing to do but to mail it.

l. I would think of a trout stream I had fished along when I was a boy and fish its whole length carefully in my mind; fishing very carefully under all the logs, all the turns of the bank, the deep holes and the clear shallow stretches, sometimes catching trout and sometimes losing them. I would stop fishing at noon to eat my lunch; sometimes on a log over the stream; sometimes on a high bank under a tree.—Ernest Hemingway, "Now I Lay Me."[1]

THE PROBLEM OF THE POSSESSIVE CASE WITH THE GERUND

41. Since the gerund is identical with the present participle in form, confusion is likely to arise when the gerund is preceded by a substantive modifier (noun or pronoun used as a modifier). The difficulty is most likely to occur when the gerund itself, functioning as a noun, is the object of a preposition. The following sentences illustrate the nature of this difficulty:

Wrong: We were enchanted by *Emily dancing.*
Right: We were enchanted by *Emily's dancing.*
Wrong: I had heard of *him being* in debt.
Right: I had heard of *his being* in debt.

Explanation: In the first sentence, *dancing* is the object of the preposition *by*. The noun *Emily* is not the object of *by* but modifies *dancing*. In the second sentence, *being* is the object of the preposition

[1]Charles Scribner's Sons.

of. The substantives *Emily* and *him* must therefore be changed from the objective to the possessive case, which is the proper inflection for indicating an adjectival relationship between one substantive and another. The error of putting a substantive with the gerund into the objective case apparently arises from wrongly interpreting the *-ing* form of the gerund as the form of the present participle. Thus, in the examples given, it is incorrect to view *dancing* and *being* as participles.

Note, however, that there are instances in which the verbal form in *-ing* may properly be taken as a participle modifying the substantive. It might be correct to say: *I heard a dog barking.* But it would be incorrect to say: *A dog barking kept me awake.* The correct form would be: *A dog's barking kept me awake.*

EXCEPTIONS

There are two important exceptions, however, to the rule that a substantive modifying a gerund must be in the possessive case:

(1) If the substantive is modified by a phrase or clause intervening between it and the gerund, the possessive case is *not* used:

The trouble about *anybody in this group writing* is that no one knows him.

(2) If the noun used with a gerund denotes a lifeless thing, the possessive is avoided (see Section 1 F):

You had better not count on *this letter reaching* him in time.

EXERCISE

Make the necessary corrections in the following sentences:

1. At any other time, I would have been glad to see her, but I was somewhat confused and embarrassed by Felicia appearing, in a cool summer dress, just as I was hotly engaged with the lawn-mower.

2. If you don't like me nibbling at the canapes and nuts, you had better not set them out too soon.

3. In the edge of the woods, up on the mountain, you can hear the owl's hooting.

4. Listen to that cricket chirping on the hearth.

5. I told him I objected to the book's being foxed and worm-eaten, and refused to pay his price.

6. In *Redgauntlet,* Scott has a long story in dialect, about Steenie's, the piper, visiting the devil to recover his receipt for the rent.

7. Because of the cook not coming, we had to get our own breakfast.

8. I could see him shifting his rifle into better position.

9. You talking so loud was what made him notice us.

10. The reason for everybody's in the band not shooting at once was they could not risk the Indians catching them with unloaded guns.

CONJUGATION OF A VERB: PRINCIPAL PARTS

4 J. The inflection of a verb is called *conjugation.* In order to conjugate a verb, it is necessary to know its principal parts, because the various forms of the verb are derived from its principal parts. The *principal parts* of a verb are: present infinitive; past tense indicative active (in the first person singular); past participle. Thus, the principal parts of the verb *stand* are: *stand* (Infinitive), *stood* (Past tense), *stood* (Past participle).

WEAK, STRONG, AND IRREGULAR VERBS: PRINCIPAL PARTS

4 K. Verbs are classified as weak verbs or strong verbs according to the way in which the past tense and past participle are formed. Other verbs which do not fall within this scheme of classification are called irregular verbs.

(1) *Weak verbs* are those which form the past tense and past participle by adding *-ed, -d,* or *-t* to the present infinitive form.

Infinitive	*Past Tense*	*Past Participle*
ask	asked	asked
share	shared	shared
burn	burned (or burnt)	burned (or burnt)
spend	spent	spent
indemnify	indemnified	indemnified
knit	knitted (or knit)	knitted (or knit)
hear	heard	heard

(2) *Strong verbs* are those which do *not* use the ending *-ed, -d,* or *-t* to form the past tense and past participle. Instead they indicate these forms by internal vowel changes. They also make other changes of form.

Infinitive	*Past Tense*	*Past Participle*
begin	began	begun
fly	flew	flown
ring	rang, rung	rung
break	broke	broken
lie	lay	lain
sit	sat	sat
shake	shook	shaken
wake	woke, waked	waked
come	came	come
eat	ate	eaten

(3) *Irregular verbs* are those that have different stems in their different principal parts. Most of them are defective—that is, certain of their forms are missing from the language. In English as in other languages the verb *to be* is highly irregular.

Present Tense	*Infinitive*	*Past Tense*	*Past Participle*
can	.....	could	.....
may	.....	might	.....
shall	.....	should	.....
will	.....	would	.....
must	.....	.....	.....
ought	.....	.....	.....
am	to be	was	been

(4) *Auxiliary verbs* are verbs used to assist in the conjugation of a verb: *be* (combined with a verb form) to form the passive voice; *have* (similarly compounded) to form the perfect tense; and *shall* and *will*, to form the future tense.

EXERCISE

Give the principal parts of the verbs listed below. Since some of the minor variations in the forms of verbs have not been listed in the preceding discussion, it will be advisable for you to refer to

your dictionary. In particular, take care to ascertain which verbs may have alternative forms—as *thrive* has two past tense forms, *thrived* and *throve,* and *bite* the two participial forms *bit* (colloquial) and *bitten.*

detect	hit	grow	dive
lace	plead	prove	hang
buy	bleed	lag	set
sink	inter	string	cast
supply	pin	rive	quit
lend	shoot	ride	wed
freeze	show	shoe	kneel
light	spit	bear	get

CONJUGATION: SYNOPSIS OF THE VERB "SEND"

For reference and for instruction, a complete synopsis of the verb *send,* in the third person singular, is given below. This synopsis shows the correct form of the third person singular, in all tenses, for both the indicative and subjunctive moods, and both the active and the passive voice. The forms of the imperative and of the verbals are also given.

The student should note that the verb changes its form to indicate person only in the third person singular. A *complete* conjugation would give, of course, the first, second, and third persons, singular and plural, for all tenses, in both indicative and subjunctive forms, active and passive.

INDICATIVE MOOD

	Active Voice	*Passive Voice*
Present	he sends	he is sent
Past	he sent	he was sent
Future	he will send	he will be sent
Perfect	he has sent	he has been sent
Past Perfect	he had sent	he had been sent
Future Perfect	he will have sent	he will have been sent

SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD

	Active Voice	*Passive Voice*
Present	(If) he send	(If) he be sent
Past	(If) he sent	(If) he were sent
Perfect	(If) he have sent	(If) he have been sent
Past Perfect	(If) he had sent	(If) he had been sent

IMPERATIVE MOOD

Active Voice	*Passive Voice*
send	be sent

INFINITIVE

	Active Voice	*Passive Voice*
Present	to send	to be sent
Perfect	to have sent	to have been sent

PARTICIPLES

	Active Voice	*Passive Voice*
Present	sending	being sent
Past	.....	sent
Perfect	having sent	having been sent

GERUND

	Active Voice	*Passive Voice*
Present	sending	being sent
Perfect	having sent	having been sent

CONJUGATION: PROGRESSIVE AND EMPHATIC FORMS

In addition to the above forms of the verb, there are a *progressive* form (*he is sending, he was sending, etc.*) and an *emphatic* form (*he does send, he did send, etc.*). The emphatic form is used only in the present and past indicative.

CONJUGATION OF THE VERB "TO BE"

The conjugation of the verb *to be* is irregular in the present and past indicative.

PRESENT INDICATIVE

	Singular	*Plural*
First Person	I am	we are
Second Person	you are	you are
Third Person	he is	they are

PAST INDICATIVE

	Singular	*Plural*
First Person	I was	we were
Second Person	you were	you were
Third Person	he was	they were

The rest of the conjugation of the verb *to be* is regular. It lacks a passive voice.

The verb *to be* also retains certain *archaic* forms (used in solemn, poetical, or religious discourse) which appear in the second person: *thou art, thou wast* (*wert*), *thou hast been, thou hadst been.*

EXERCISE

Give a synopsis, in the third person singular, of the following verbs: *break, sit, drink, weave, strike.*

5. ADVERBS

5 A. An *adverb* is a word which modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. In general, adverbs answer the questions *Where? When? How? How much,* and *Why?* That is, they show place, time, manner, degree, and so forth. Phrases and clauses may be used to function as adverbs. (See Section 16 A.)

Adverbs may be formed from adjectives by the addition of the ending *-ly: late* (adjective), *lately* (adverb). Many adverbs, however, do not have this ending, and some cannot be distinguished by their form from adjectives: *fast, long, near.*

Nouns may be used as adverbs, and when so used are called *adverbial objectives:*

Today we shall know.
At last he came *home.*

CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS

When such adverbs as *however, accordingly, then, so, also, moreover, nevertheless* are used to introduce an independent clause, and especially when they are used to introduce the second of two clauses composing a compound sentence, they are called *conjunctive adverbs.* They serve the double purpose of linking sentences or clauses and of modifying, or seeming to modify, the sentence or clause as a whole. Despite their connective function, they should be viewed as adverbs. They are never to be viewed as coördinating conjunctions. (See Conjunctions, Section 7.)

COMPARISON OF ADVERBS

5 B. Some adverbs are compared to indicate degrees of quality. The degrees of comparison are *positive, comparative,* and *superlative.* Most monosyllabic and some dissyllabic adverbs form the comparative by adding *-er* and the superlative by adding *-est.* Others use *more* to form the comparative and *most* to form the superlative.

Positive	*Comparative*	*Superlative*
hard	harder	hardest
often	oftener	oftenest
far	farther	farthest
easily	more easily	most easily
curiously	more curiously	most curiously

6. PREPOSITIONS

A *preposition* shows the relation of a substantive, called its object, to some other word in the sentence. The preposition and its object together form a prepositional phrase.

Susan gave the book *to* me.
Half *of* these apples are green.

Case After a Preposition: The object of a preposition is in the objective case.

Phrasal Prepositions: A *phrasal preposition* is a group of two or more words used as a preposition.

Because of the difficulties which we encountered, we turned back.
Can we go *as far as* the mill?

Other phrasal prepositions: *according to, apart from, as for, as regards, by dint of, by means of, inside, in spite of, on account of, out of, in front of, on top of.*

Use of Prepositions as Adverbs: Some of the words used as prepositions may also be used as adverbs. When such a word is used as a preposition, an object must be expressed. When it is used as an adverb it does not have an object.

The path runs *along* the brook. (Preposition)
Will you let us go *along*? (Adverb)

7. CONJUNCTIONS

A *conjunction* is a word that has the special purpose of connecting words, phrases, or clauses, and that has no other function in the sentence.

Conjunctions are classified as coördinating and subordinating.

Coördinating conjunctions are used to join words or groups of words that are of equal grammatical rank. The coördinating conjunctions are *and, but, or, nor, for.*

Coördinating conjunctions which are used in pairs to correlate closely two coördinate words, phrases, or clauses, are called *correlative conjunctions.* The most common of these are *both . . . and, either . . . or, neither . . . nor, not only . . . but also.*

Subordinating conjunctions are used to introduce clauses subordinate to the rest of the sentence. According to the relationships they express, they may be classified as follows:

SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

Cause: because, inasmuch as, since.
Purpose: that, so that, in order that, lest.
Comparison: than, as, as if, as well as, as . . . as, so . . . as.

Condition: if, unless, whether, in case that.
Result: that, so that.
Time: after, before, since, when, while.
Concession: although, though.
Place: where, whence, whither.
Manner: how, as if, as though.
Degree: as far as, as much as.
To introduce a substantive clause: that.

In certain English idioms, nouns and adverbs may have the force of conjunctions:

Directly he arrives, I will leave.
The day he comes, I will go.[1]

8. INTERJECTIONS

An *interjection* is an exclamation. Interjections express some degree of feeling or emotion: *oh, ouch, look out, ah, alas.* They may also have some thought content, as in the common expressions: *hello, goodby, good morning, farewell.*

II. SYNTAX

9. Some Definitions. Syntax has been defined (page 543) as the branch of grammar which deals with the relation of words to one another in sentences or other word-groups. Words are the simplest units of discourse, whether written or spoken. In isolation, they can do little work. When combined, they form the units of discourse which are our means of effective communication. These units are classified, according to their degree of completeness in the expression of thought and feeling, as *phrases, clauses,* and *sentences.*

9 A. Phrases. A *phrase* is a group of two or more words which is used as a single part of speech and which does not include a finite verb and its subject.

He is *in the house.*
Put the skillet *on the fire.*

[1]Quoted from Kennedy, *Current English,* p. 311.

When viewed according to their composition rather than their function, phrases are classified as prepositional, infinitive, participial, and gerund phrases. When viewed according to their function, they are classified under the parts of speech for which they may be said to substitute: noun phrase, adjective phrase, adverbial phrase.

(1) A *prepositional phrase* consists of a preposition with its object and modifiers: *from this large house.*

(2) An *infinitive phrase* consists of an infinitive with its complement and modifiers: He is sure *to be ready.*

(3) A *participial phrase* consists of a participle with its complement and modifiers: We saw him *eating an apple.*

(4) A *gerund phrase* consists of a gerund with its complement and modifiers. A gerund can be the object of a preposition: I was pleased *with his winning the race easily.*

Observe that these classifications take their names from the key components of each class. When classified according to syntactical *function,* phrases will fall into different categories, according to their relationship, as units, to other words. Thus in the sentence, "I saw a man coming *from this large house,*" the phrase, "from this large house," is a prepositional phrase used to modify the verbal "coming," and therefore may be called an adverbial phrase.

9 B. Clauses. A *clause* is a group of words which contains a finite verb and its subject and which forms only a part of a sentence. (See pages 591–602 for further definitions and classifications.) A clause may be used as a single part of speech:

He was angry, and I was sad. (Two independent clauses)
I saw the man who did this. (Principal clause followed by a dependent clause used as an adjective)

9 C. Sentences. A *sentence* is a word or a group of words which expresses a single complete thought:

Come!
He is coming now.

There are four types of sentences, as follows:

(1) A *declarative sentence* is a sentence which asserts something:

The door is open.

(2) An *interrogative sentence* is a sentence which asks a question:

Is the door open?

(3) An *imperative sentence* is a sentence which expresses a command or request. Since the subject *you* is frequently understood but not expressed in sentences of this type, the imperative sentence may consist of a single word:

Go.
Go home at once.
You play next, William, please.

(4) An *exclamatory sentence* is a sentence which expresses strong feeling:

What a beautiful morning it is!
Surely you don't mean it!

An *elliptical sentence* may be defined as an abbreviation of a complete sentence, the omitted parts of which are readily supplied from the context. Exclamations, commands, requests, and answers to questions may be termed elliptical sentences.

9 D. The essential elements of a sentence are the *subject* and the *predicate.*

(1) The *subject* of a sentence is that about which something is affirmed or predicated.

He said many things. (*He* is the subject.)

(2) The *predicate* of a sentence is that part of a sentence which asserts, asks, or explains something about the subject, or makes a command to the subject.

He *said many things.* (The predicate is *said many things.*)
You *lie here on the couch for a while.* (The predicate is *lie here on the couch for a while.*)

No group of words can properly be termed a sentence unless it contains both a subject and a predicate. Word groups which lack either a subject or a predicate may, however, stand alone and may be punctuated as sentences under certain recognized conditions. Gen-

erally such independent expressions are sentence fragments deliberately used as fragments for rhetorical effect, or they are answers to questions.

Many people in this town have heard the rumor. Good people, worthy people, respectable people.

"When did you arrive?"

"Yesterday."

Sentences are classified not only as declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory, but also, according to their organization, as *simple, compound, complex,* and *compound-complex.* (See Chapter V, pages 183–185.)

THE SIMPLE SENTENCE AND ITS PARTS

10. A *simple sentence* is a sentence that contains one subject and one predicate. Either one or both of these may be compound and may have modifiers. Phrases may appear as structural parts of the simple sentence, but not clauses.

10 A. The *subject* of a simple sentence may consist of a word or group of words used as a substantive.

Snow is white.
To see is to believe.
Hunting and fishing are their chief occupations.
The boys and the dog rolled and tumbled on the grass.

The subject of a sentence is in the *nominative case.* The subject of an imperative sentence is not expressed except for emphasis.

The *simple subject* is the substantive expression alone, without its modifiers.

The *complete subject* is the simple subject with its modifiers.

A new broom sweeps clean. (*Broom* is the simple subject. *A new broom* is the complete subject.)

ANTICIPATORY SUBJECT

It and *there* are used at the beginning of a sentence as the grammatical or "anticipatory" subject to point to the "real" or "deferred" subject.

There is no further *business* to be transacted. (*There* is the anticipatory subject; *business,* the deferred subject.)

It is an ill *wind* that blows nobody good.

10 B. The *predicate* of a sentence must always contain a finite verb, and it may contain a complement. A complement is a word or group of words used to complete the meaning of the verb. (See Section 12, below.)

The *simple predicate* consists of the verb and its complement without their modifiers.

The *complete predicate* consists of the verb and its complement with their modifiers.

A new broom sweeps exceedingly well. (*Sweeps* is the simple predicate; *sweeps exceedingly well* is the complete predicate.)

Observe that the classification of a sentence as simple is not determined by mere length or elaborateness. "Birds fly" is a simple sentence, and so, too, is the following sentence: "Birds of all kinds, robins, starlings, woodpeckers, sparrows, wrens, and mockingbirds, to say nothing of less common species, can be found in the field near our house."

THE SUBJUNCTIVE IN THE SIMPLE SENTENCE

11. The nature, forms, and uses of the verb have been discussed in a preceding section (pages 557–570). Here we may note the uses of the subjunctive in simple sentences (or independent clauses).

11 A. The subjunctive is used in the simple sentence (or in the independent clauses of the compound sentence) to express a wish:

God *bless* you. (Wish, possible of fulfillment)
If only he *were* here! (Wish, contrary to fact)
I *would prefer* to stay. (Modest wish)

Oaths, curses, and maledictions use the subjunctive of wish in simple sentences: Grammar *be hanged!* May God *punish* you!

11 B. The subjunctive may also be used to express potentiality:

He *may* be here tonight. (Future possibility)
He *might be* here tonight. (Faint future possibility)
We *couldn't do* that now! (Potentiality—past form referring to present)

COMPLEMENTS OF INTRANSITIVE VERBS: PREDICATE NOUNS AND PREDICATE ADJECTIVES

12. COMPLETE VERBS. Not all verbs require complements. Those which do not require complements are the intransitive verbs known as "complete" verbs. (For example: Birds *fly*.)

12 A. COPULATIVE VERBS. Those intransitive verbs which require a complement to complete their meaning are known as *copulative* (linking) *verbs*. The copulative verbs are verbs which once had a concrete meaning but which have acquired a more abstract meaning and function. Formerly the verb *become* meant "to arrive at a place." Now, as a copulative verb, it has a different meaning and use. The copulatives include the verb *to be* and often such verbs as *appear, become, look, remain, seem, feel, smell, sound, taste, turn, go, lie, prove.*

12 B. PREDICATE NOUNS AND ADJECTIVES. The complement which follows copulative verbs is always a word which explains, defines, or describes the subject. It is usually a noun, called a *predicate noun,* or an adjective, called a *predicate adjective*. Since it is in the nominative case, it is also called a *predicate nominative*. The predicate complement may also consist of a pronoun or other substantive expression.

He is a *hero*. (Predicate noun)
The sky is *dark*. (Predicate adjective)
She seems *to be happy*. (Infinitive phrase as complement)
To build on any other foundation is *building on sand*. (Gerund as complement)

An adverb is not a complement.

He looked *up*. (*Up* is an adverb, modifying *looked*.)

COMPLEMENTS OF TRANSITIVE VERBS: DIRECT AND INDIRECT OBJECTS

12 C. The complement of a transitive verb is called an *object.* It is the person or thing toward which the action of the verb is directed.

(1) *Direct Object.* The complement of a transitive verb always includes a direct object.

The *direct object* names the person or thing which is directly affected by the action of the verb. It is always a word or group of words used substantively.

The direct object is in the *objective case.*

She made some *coffee.* (*Coffee* is the direct object.)

A few verbs (such as *ask, take, forbid, excuse*) may be followed by two direct objects—sometimes called "the object of the person" and "the object of the thing."

I asked *him* the *price.*
They led *her* a merry *chase.*

The "two direct objects" should not be confused with the indirect object, which is an entirely different construction.

(2) *Indirect Object.* In addition to the direct object, the complement of a transitive verb may include an indirect object. The *indirect object* denotes the person or thing to whom or for whom the action of the verb is performed. It may be either a word or a group of words used substantively.

My father gave *me a watch.* (*Me* is indirect object; *watch* is direct object.)

CHANGES FROM ACTIVE TO PASSIVE CONSTRUCTION

13. When a sentence is changed from an active to a passive form, the direct object of the verb becomes the subject, and the subject is made the object of the preposition *by.*

My father gave me a watch. (Active)
A watch was given me by my father. (Passive)

Only a transitive verb can normally be used in the passive voice, since intransitive and copulative verbs cannot have direct objects.

Retained Object. An exception to the above rule occurs when the indirect object of a transitive verb is changed to the subject and the object is retained, the verb being made passive:

I was given a watch by my father. (*Watch* is here the retained object.)

EXERCISE

Identify the objects in the following sentences:

1. I allowed myself ten minutes to reach the corner.
2. The proprietor threw open the window.
3. His wife tossed him the key to the car.
4. Who was the man that you met in the lobby?
5. Did you see anyone pick the flowers?
6. In the first set he consistently served me fast ones.
7. The insurance agent always gave Father a calendar at Christmas.
8. The winner was awarded a blue ribbon.
9. By the mistake of a division commander the army was denied a victory.
10. This error cost the Earl his life.
11. He that has once done you a kindness will be more ready to do you another than he whom you yourself have obliged.
12. The clergy refused him their pulpits, and he was forced to preach salvation in the fields.

14. MODIFIERS

14 A. Modifiers are the subordinate elements of a sentence. Any word, phrase, or clause which qualifies or limits the meaning of some other part of the sentence in which it stands is a modifier.

14 B. Modifiers may be classified, according to their function, as adjectival or adverbial.

An *adjectival modifier* is used to modify a noun or a pronoun.

An *adverbial modifier* is used to modify a verb, an adjective, or

another adverb. Note that the nature of the modifier may sometimes identify the part of speech of the word modified, as in the following examples:

That is bad acting. (*Acting* is a noun, modified by the adjective *bad.* If the adjective *bad* were not present, *acting* might be taken to be a part of the compound verb form *is acting,* with *that* as subject.)
He is acting *badly.* (*Acting* is a verbal, modified by the adverb *badly.*)

Any of the following may be adjectival modifiers: an adjective, a possessive pronoun, a participle, a noun in the possessive case, an uninflected noun, an infinitive, a gerund, a participial phrase, a prepositional phrase, a clause.

A *rough* road was ahead of us. (Adjective)
Your car is ready. (Possessive pronoun)
It was a comfortable house, well *situated* and well *designed.* (Participles)
Hawthorne's novels deal with New England. (Noun in the possessive case)
They built a *corn* crib. (Noun, uninflected)
Money *to spend* is what I want. (Infinitive)
He is a *fencing* teacher. (Gerund)
Bursting through the levee, the flood spread rapidly. (Participial phrase)
Take the first street *on your right.* (Prepositional phrase)
The book *that you want* has been sold. (Relative clause)

An adjective or other word used as an adjective is called *attributive* (or *adherent*) when it is placed before the noun it modifies; *appositive* when it is placed after the noun it modifies; *predicate* when it is used in the predicate after a copulative (linking) verb.

The *young* man is speaking. (Attributive)
A man, *young* and *handsome,* is speaking. (Appositive)
The man is *young.* (Predicate)

When a clause is used as an adjectival modifier, it is usually a *relative clause* (page 596), introduced by one of the relative pronouns (*who, which, that, as*). Such a clause may be called an *adjective clause.*

RESTRICTIVE AND NON-RESTRICTIVE MODIFIERS

14 C. Modifiers may be classified as restrictive or non-restrictive, according to the effect which their omission would have on the meaning of the sentence. If the meaning would be changed by the omission, the modifier is *restrictive*. If the meaning would not be changed by the omission, the modifier is *non-restrictive*. In other words, restrictives give essential information; non-restrictives give additional but not essential information.

The rule for restrictive and non-restrictive modifiers applies to words, phrases, and clauses. Adjective phrases and non-restrictive adjectives generally follow the word that they modify.

A young man, *foolish, untutored,* writes this letter. (Non-restrictive adjectives)

John, *greatly angered,* walked away. (Non-restrictive participial phrase)

A mere soldier like him, *with no academic education,* should not be appointed. (Non-restrictive prepositional phrase)

Do not choose a soldier *with no academic education* if a soldier *with an academic education* is available. (Restrictive phrases)

A man *who does this* should be punished. (Restrictive clause)

Charles Smith, *who has confessed his guilt,* has been punished. (Non-restrictive clause)

Some authorities hold that *who* and *that* should be used to introduce restrictive adjective clauses; *who* and *which* to introduce non-restrictive adjective clauses.

See Section 50 E for the punctuation of restrictive and non-restrictive modifiers and for further discussion of this subject.

THE DANGLING MODIFIER

Identify all adjectival modifiers in the following sentences and say whether they are restrictive or non-restrictive:

1. What our community needs is a good general practitioner, discreet, wise, and sympathetic, rather than a merely efficient medical scientist.

2. The big guns throw a shell capable of penetrating armor-plate thick as the wall of your house.

3. A friend with an understanding heart would have stood by him in his difficulties.

4. Be sure to employ an architect who understands the peculiarities of the climate.

5. Fortunately Major Desmond, who had tried in vain to reach us by telephone, had the good sense to send a messenger with a note.

6. The windows on the west side are shaded by trees.

7. He remembered the stories the old man had told about frontier days.

8. We might return to the old plan advocated by the Mayor; or we might accept the plan of the experts, which is based on their survey; but I prefer this third plan, which is our very own.

9. Whether we shall follow other nations down this path, which history marks as the road to ruin, or whether we shall reverse our course and return to American principles—that is the question.

10. The Administration is now about to impair the only hedge the investor has had.

11. Such is the tact which can come only from a gentle mind and a generous soul.

12. I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas that I found not my heart moved with more than a trumpet; and yet it is sung but by some blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude style. —Sir Philip Sidney.

13. Besides being an engineer and a building contractor, my friend Dickinson was an architect, who understood theories of design as well as any professor of art.

14. On the west side, which is well shaded by large trees, we have no need of Venetian blinds.

15. At the first meeting he told me a half-dozen frontier stories, all of which I had frequently recorded in adjoining counties.

THE PROBLEM OF THE "DANGLING MODIFIER"

14 D. Every modifier, whether word, phrase, or clause, must refer clearly and unmistakably to the word which it is intended

to modify; and it must modify a word in the sentence in which it stands. Failure to observe this rule leads to the error of the dangling modifier. A dangling modifier is a modifier which is out of proper grammatical and logical relation to the sentence. It "dangles" —that is, it has nothing to modify.

(1) **Dangling participles.** A participle is a verbal adjective. It must modify a substantive (noun or pronoun). A participle standing at the first of the sentence should modify the subject of the sentence:

Wrong: Running madly toward his rescuers, a root tripped him, and he fell flat on his face.

Right: Running madly toward his rescuers, he tripped on a root and fell flat on his face.

Right: As he ran madly toward his rescuers, he tripped on a root and fell flat on his face.

Explanation: In the first sentence, *running* cannot logically modify the subject *root*. In the second sentence, *running* modifies *he*; the construction is both grammatical and logical. Probably the third sentence is a further improvement; a subordinate clause is substituted for the participle.

(2) **Dangling gerund phrases.** A gerund phrase consists of a gerund (with complement and modifiers) and the preposition of which it is the object. (See subdivision 4, under 9 A.) Such a phrase has the same tendency as a participle. When used at the first of a sentence, it attaches itself grammatically to the subject of the sentence. If the connection is not logical and clear, absurdity or confusion will result.

Wrong: Upon getting off the street-car, an automobile nearly ran me down.

Right: Upon getting off the street-car, I was nearly run down by an automobile.

Right: As I got off the street-car, an automobile nearly ran me down. (Or: I was nearly run down by an automobile.)

Explanation: In the first sentence, there is a logical absurdity. Did the automobile get off the street-car? In the second sentence, the

gerund phrase, *upon getting off the street-car,* correctly modifies the subject *I.* In the third sentence, a subordinate clause is substituted for the gerund phrase.

(3) **Dangling elliptical clauses.** An elliptical clause is a clause from which subject and verb are omitted. The subject and verb are implied by the context. Follow the same rule for the elliptical clause as for the participle and the gerund phrase.

Wrong: When five years old, my grandfather used to take me on his lap and let me play with his whiskers.
Right: When five years old, I used to sit on my grandfather's lap and play with his whiskers.
Right: When I was five years old, my grandfather used to take me on his lap and let me play with his whiskers.

Explanation: In the first sentence, the elliptical clause, *when five years old,* seems to refer to *grandfather.* An absurdity is created. Grandfather when five years old could not have taken me on his lap, and he had no whiskers.

The error can be corrected in two ways: (1) by supplying a subject (*I*), which the elliptical clause can modify; or (2) by filling out the ellipsis (When *I was* five years old . . .).

EXERCISE

Correct all errors in the following sentences and give your reason for each correction:

1. In the typical Sherlock Holmes detective story, Conan Doyle represents Dr. Watson as the friend of Holmes, serving as a foil to Holmes's genius rather than using him to unravel mysteries.

2. Betty Brown, the salesgirl, has to wait on many "masters" and "mistresses," working in the ready-to-wear department on the second floor.

3. One evening after returning home from graduation exercises at junior high school my mother confronted me with a serious question.

4. Upon telling the patient to swing his arms or legs, he will do so.

5. Comparing an Elizabethan theatrical performance with a modern baseball game, disturbances were quite frequent, for the audiences expressed themselves freely, often violently.

6. While detained by the police, his wife went to the nearest drug-store to call the insurance company.

7. Although handicapped by disease and poverty, the reader of Keats's early poems can see he was a true genius from the beginning.

8. Due to the presentation of a play that aroused the displeasure of the Queen, the Swan was forced to close in 1598.

9. When a freshman, the faculty adviser arranges the student's program of studies.

10. A resident of Poughkeepsie, N. Y., the old gentleman's diary shows that he nevertheless had studied the Southern situation and was a friend of prominent Southern writers of the pre-Civil War period.

THE PROBLEM OF MISPLACED MODIFIERS

14 E. A modifier should stand near the word that it modifies. Failure to observe this rule leads to the error of the misplaced modifier. Since syntactical relationship in English is revealed largely by the position of sentence elements, related parts should normally be placed close together. Otherwise, confusion or absurdity may result.

Wrong: A fisherman was slapping at a mosquito in rubber hip-boots and mackinaw.

Right: A fisherman, in rubber hip-boots and mackinaw, was slapping at a mosquito.

Explanation: The phrase, *in rubber hip-boots and mackinaw,* modifies *fisherman* and must be placed near it to avoid an absurdity.

Such words as *only, ever, almost* are frequently misplaced. In the sentence, *I only want a quarter,* the word *only* is separated from *quarter,* the noun which it modifies, and it seems to modify the intervening verb, *want.* The sentence should read: *I want only a quarter.*

EXERCISES

1. What differences of meaning are brought about by the placing of the modifiers in the groups of sentences given below:

a. (1) The officer is coming from Chicago by airplane.
(2) The officer from Chicago is coming by airplane.

b. (1) The teacher told John not to come back with an injured look on his face.
(2) With an injured look on his face, the teacher told John not to come back.

c. (1) I drink coffee with cream only at night.
(2) At night, I only drink coffee with cream.
(3) Only I drink coffee with cream at night.

d. (1) To be brief, the lady is not at all eager.
(2) The lady is not at all eager to be brief.

2. Correct the errors in the following sentences:

a. I am returning the transcript of my remarks which you sent me with a few corrections.

b. Along this section of U. S. Highway 42 you may encounter horsedrawn buggies driven by Amish farmers with black tops, narrow bodies, and high wheels.

c. The list of theatrical offerings in my opinion for the coming winter is far below the standard of a decade ago.

d. White-collar employees only work five days a week in certain financial occupations, except in administrative positions.

e. If you want to enlist the admiration of this lady, don't neglect to borrow or rent a car and to knock on her door with candy or flowers strictly on the hour.

f. It is the custom of the Inn to serve some traditional native dish at each meal except breakfast, like baked beans, fish chowder, or blueberry pie.

g. After giving the command, "At ease!" the Colonel told us that the regiment had been outflanked and almost surrounded, while we listened with amazement.

h. We could see the effects of the hurricane from the number of blow-downs and the roofs that had been hastily patched, when we returned in the following summer.

i. A young man should use his educational opportunities if he expects to achieve a professional career, with real foresight and determination.

j. At last Mr. Baker caught the idea on the train to Memphis.

15. APPOSITIVES

Similar in function to the adjective modifier is the substantive modifier—word, phrase, or clause—which is placed beside another substantive to explain or describe it. Such a modifier is called an *appositive.* The two substantives are said to be in apposition.

An appositive may be introduced by some such expression as *namely, like, as, that is,* but such an introductory expression is not necessary.

Uncle Remus, an *ex-slave,* tells the stories.

He disclosed his purpose—namely, *to make Roger governor of the state.* (Infinitive phrase in apposition with *purpose.*)

This means what it says—*that such actions are prohibited.* (Clause in apposition with a clause)

16. ADVERBIAL MODIFIERS

16 A. An adverbial modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that is used as an adverb. Any of the following may be adverbial modifiers: an adverb, a noun, a noun with adjective, an infinitive or infinitive phrase, a participle or participial phrase, a prepositional phrase, a clause. Adverbial clauses may be used to express cause, concession, condition, degree, manner, place, purpose, result, time. They are introduced by subordinating conjunctions. (See Section 19 F.)

Go *quickly,* for the time is *very* short. (Adverbs)
I waited *hours.* (Noun—"adverbial objective")
Drive *four blocks* before you turn. (Noun with adjective)
I am eager *to go.* (Infinitive)
He ran *laughing.* (Participle)

The hart-back was hurt *in the shoulder.* (Prepositional phrase)
She ran *to open the door.* (Infinitive phrase)
I crept *fumbling down the hall.* (Participial phrase)
He works *because he likes to work.* (Adverbial clause)

PROBLEM: THE CONFUSION OF ADJECTIVE AND ADVERB FORMS

16 B. Do not use an adjective form where an adverb is required or an adverb form where an adjective is required.

(1) Misuse of adjective form for adverb:

Wrong: It was a *real* hard problem.
Right: It was a *really* hard problem.
Right: It was a *real* problem.

(2) Misuse of adverb form:

Wrong: The wind blew *coldly.*
Right: The wind blew *cold.*
Wrong: The roses smell *sweetly.*
Right: The roses smell *sweet.*

Explanation: In such instances confusion occurs largely because certain English adverbs have two forms: one, a form identical with an adjective form and distinguished only by its use in the sentence; the other, a form ending in *-ly.* For example: *right, rightly; hard, hardly; late, lately; near, nearly.* Certain other adverbs retain both forms, but only the *-ly* form is in respectable use as an adverb; the simpler form appears in good usage as an adjective, but in vulgar and colloquial usage retains its function as an adverb. Thus, in formal discourse, the word *real* can be used only as an adjective; the correct adverbial form is *really.* In vulgar usage, however, we encounter such phrases as *real good, real nice, real sweet.* In such expressions *real* is a loose colloquial substitute for the adverb *very.* The correct form of the adverb, *really,* is not the best written substitute for colloquial *real* in the sense of *very. Really* ought to mean *in reality.*

Observe that, in the sentence *The wind blew cold,* the word *cold* may be parsed as a predicate adjective referring to the subject *wind.*

The error in the sentence *The wind blew coldly* is an error of grammar, not of usage.

If, however, the predicate modifier refers to the action of the verb, it is an adverb. Compare the two sentences following:

The roses smell *sweet.* (Adjective)
The moon glimmered *faintly.* (Adverb)

EXERCISE

In the following sentences, choose the correct form of the modifier and justify your choice:

1. The situation is not (near, nearly) as critical as you think.
2. If this truck-driver had not acted so (badly, bad), the company would have treated him (good, rightly, right).
3. Shelley the poet is (sure, surely) a more admirable person than Shelley the radical theorist.
4. If we can judge a tree by its fruits, we will naturally suspect that the accused did not (accidently, accidentally) fire the fatal shot.
5. In the April moonlight the old house stood (quietly, quiet), and I breathed (deep, deeply) the familiar odors of spring.
6. The table was loaded with a (good, goodly) number of dishes, and the (kind, kindly) manner of our host set us at ease.
7. The manager reproved him for finishing the report so (late, lately).
8. I have (late, lately) received a report from the chairman of the investigating committee.
9. A medal of honor was awarded the (late, lately) Colonel.
10. (Doubtless, doubtlessly) you realize that your income ought at least to equal your expenditures.
11. If you don't want to be overheard, don't talk so (loud, loudly).
12. When they left the restaurant, still arguing (loud, loudly), the proprietor looked relieved.

17. CLAUSES

17 A. As has been noted, a sentence must have a subject and a predicate, but a group of words containing a subject and predicate is not necessarily a sentence. Such a group of words may be merely an

element of a complete sentence which contains one or more additional predications. The group that is merely a sentence element is called a clause. A *clause* is therefore defined as a group of words which has a subject and predicate but which forms only a part of a sentence.

INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT CLAUSES

17 B. Clauses may be classified as independent (principal) and dependent (subordinate).

An *independent clause* is one that will make complete sense when standing alone. That is, it is grammatically and logically capable of standing alone. In a sentence of two or more clauses, all may be independent clauses. In a sentence containing an independent clause and one or more dependent clauses, the independent clause is often called the *principal clause* or *main clause.*

A *dependent clause* is one which is not capable of standing alone and which functions as a single part of speech—that is, as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

We rented a house, but *it was too small.* (Two independent clauses)

Although the house was small, we decided to rent it. (*Although the house was small* is a dependent clause. *We decided to rent it* is an independent clause, and the principal clause of the sentence.)

Whoever runs is a coward. (Dependent clause used as a noun)

A coward is a man *who runs.* (Dependent clause used as an adjective)

The soldiers behaved like cowards *when they ran.* (Dependent clause used as an adverb)

18. CLAUSES IN COMBINATION: COMPOUND AND COMPLEX SENTENCES

Clauses may be combined to form different types of sentences, as follows:

18 A. COMPOUND SENTENCE. Two or more independent clauses may be combined in a pair or in a coördinate series to form a sentence, which is called a *compound sentence.* The clauses of a compound sentence may or may not be joined by one of the coördinating conjunctions: *and, but, or, nor, for.*

We bought a house, but the Joneses bought an automobile.
We bought a house; the Joneses bought an automobile.
The gates were opened, the crowd surged forward, and the rush began.

18 B. COMPLEX SENTENCE. A sentence which contains one main predication and one or more dependent clauses is called a *complex sentence.*

If it rains, we shall not go to the game.
If it rains, I shall wear that new slicker which I bought last July.

18 C. COMPOUND-COMPLEX SENTENCE. A sentence made up of two or more coördinate parts, each of which contains one main predication, and at least one of which contains a dependent clause, is called a *compound-complex sentence.*

When the game was over, we went to get our car; but at first John could not remember where he had left it.
If you are virtuous, you will remember these principles; you will not easily forget them.

ANALYSIS OF SENTENCES

18 D. Analysis of the parts of compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences is carried out in the same way as in the simple sentence (see Sections 9 D, 10, 10 A). Each of the independent clauses of a compound sentence is analyzed into subject, predicate, and modifiers. Compound and compound-complex sentences have dependent clauses as modifiers, as well as words and phrases; and in these sentences, clauses may also serve as subjects or as complements. Each dependent clause, in turn, is analyzed into subject, predicate, and modifiers.

Example 1

The old lady from Keokuk, who had been leaning across the aisle, now entered the conversation.

Analysis

This is a complex sentence. The principal clause is *The old lady from Keokuk now entered the conversation.* The simple subject is *lady.* The complete subject is *The old lady . . . aisle.* The simple predicate is *en-*

tered the conversation. The complete predicate is *now entered the conversation. From Keokuk* is a prepositional phrase modifying *lady.* The relative clause, *who . . . aisle,* modifies *lady. Now* is an adverb modifying *entered.* The relative clause has *who* as its subject and the remainder of the *who*-clause is the predicate.

Example 2

The old lady from Keokuk, who had been leaning across the aisle, now entered the conversation, and the other passengers listened attentively.

Analysis

This is a compound-complex sentence. The two independent clauses are (1) *The old lady . . . entered the conversation* and (2) *the other passengers listened attentively.* The analysis of the first clause proceeds as in Example 1, above. In the second clause, *passengers* is the simple subject; *the other passengers,* the complete subject; *listened,* the simple predicate; *listened attentively,* the complete predicate.

EXERCISE

Analyze the following sentences:

1. My father had such a skirmishing, cutting kind of a slashing way with him in his disputations, thrusting and ripping, and giving every one a stroke to remember him by in his turn, that, if there were twenty people in company, in less than half an hour he was sure to have every one of 'em against him.—Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy.*

2. So she came holding her dress with one fair rounded arm, and her taper before her, tripping down the stair to greet Esmond.—William Makepeace Thackeray, *Henry Esmond.*

3. Every violation of truth is not only a sort of suicide in the liar, but is a stab at the health of human society.—Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Prudence."

4. Darkness closed around, and then came the ringing of church bells and the distant beating of the military drums in the Palace Courtyard, as the women sat knitting, knitting.—Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities.*

5. Over his head was a bull's head, stuffed by a Madrid taxidermist; on the walls were framed photographs and bull-fight posters.—Ernest Hemingway, "The Undefeated."[1]

6. To err is human; to forgive, divine.—Alexander Pope.

7. Gouging and butting, the supposed traditional features of American frontier fights, were by no means peculiar to America.

8. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them.—Sir Francis Bacon.

9. That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or few, or none, do hang
Upon those boughs that shake against the cold,
Bare, ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang.
—William Shakespeare, Sonnet LXXIII.

10. "Vanity of vanities," saith the preacher: "all is vanity."—Ecclesiastes, XII, 8.

11. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.—Matthew, XI, 15.

19. DEPENDENT CLAUSES

19 A. Dependent clauses may be classified according to their use as noun clauses, adjective clauses, and adverbial clauses.

(1) A *noun clause* is a clause that is used as a noun:

I saw *that he was not ready.*
What you decide will govern me.

(2) An *adjective clause* is a clause that is used as an adjective:

Are you the man *who wanted the flowers?*
Pick out the ties *you like best.*

(3) An *adverbial clause* is a clause that is used as an adverb:

They did not plant cotton *because the price was low.*
Look *before you leap.*

NOUN CLAUSES

19 B. Noun or substantive clauses may be classified according to their use as subject clauses, predicate clauses, object clauses, and

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appositive clauses. They are introduced by indefinite relative pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs; interrogative pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs; and by the word *that,* especially when they are used as object clauses in indirect discourse.

Whatever you say will be used against you. (Subject clause)
The house is *what we are looking for.* (Predicate clause)
He said *that he was busy.* (Object of verb *said*)
He is not sure of *what he will be expected to do.* (Object of the preposition *of*)
I have no doubt *that you will be pleased.* (Appositive)

USES OF THE SUBJUNCTIVE IN NOUN CLAUSES

19 C. The subjunctive is used in noun clauses to express a wish or an indirect imperative and to state a motion or resolution.

I wish that he *were* here. (Wish)
The contract requires that the money *be paid* in advance. (Indirect imperative)
It is necessary that John *be* present. (Indirect imperative)
I move that the meeting *be adjourned.* (Motion)
Resolved, that the Secretary *be empowered* to cast the ballot of the society . . . (Resolution)

Observe that in colloquial usage there is a strong tendency to avoid the subjunctive and to use the indicative instead in sentences like the first one given above. The colloquial form is: "I wish that he *was* here." In written discourse, however, as well as in formal spoken utterance, the subjunctive should be used.

The weakness of the subjunctive in English is connected with the loss of inflectional changes to differentiate subjunctive from indicative forms. In many instances the only difference between subjunctive and indicative is the use of *were* instead of *was* for the singular number of the verb.

The subjunctive form is required, however, to express indirect imperatives, as in noun clauses after such verbs as *ask, agree, order, require, urge, demand, insist,* etc. The sign of the subjunctive, in such instances, is the use of *be* as auxiliary verb.

The use of the third person singular without the *-s* (that is, the

subjunctive form) is considered archaic by some grammarians. In formal writing, however, it is correct to say: "I wish that John *sing*." In colloquial usage the subjunctive form is generally avoided by a change of construction: "I wish John to sing."

ADJECTIVE CLAUSES

19 D. Adjective clauses are usually relative clauses. They are introduced by the relative pronouns *who, which, that,* etc.

The girls *who were here this morning* returned.
The papers *that you want* are on the desk.
The family papers, *which are very valuable,* ought to be put in the safe.

Omission of Relative Pronoun. In restrictive clauses the relative pronoun is often omitted:

The papers *you want* are on the desk.
That salad *I ate* was not very good.
Here is somebody *you know.*

For the classification of adjective clauses as restrictive and nonrestrictive, see Section 14 C.

THE PROBLEM OF THE CASE OF A RELATIVE PRONOUN

19 E. Although a relative pronoun has an antecedent in the principal clause, it takes its case from its construction in the clause in which it stands. Thus, in the relative clause, "John knows the man who received the money," the antecedent of *who* is *man,* which is in the objective case, since it is the direct object of *knows.* But *who* is in the nominative case because it is the subject of the verb *received.*

(1) Confusion sometimes arises when the relative clause is the object of a preposition or a verb. The rule holds good nevertheless. Do not treat the relative pronoun as the object, if the whole clause is the object.

1. I make this offer to *whoever* is willing to go with me.
2. They stop *whoever* has no passport.
3. Choose *whom* you will serve; follow *whomsoever* you will.

Explanation: In Sentence 1, *whoever* is in the nominative case because it is the subject of *is willing*. The clause as a whole is the object of *to*. The same situation occurs in Sentence 2. In Sentence 3, however, *whom* and *whomsoever* are the objects of *will serve* and *you will (follow)*, respectively, and are therefore in the objective case. If written as follows, the sentences would contain errors of case:

Wrong

1. I make this offer to whomever is willing to go with me.
2. They stop whomever has no passport.
3. Choose who you will serve; follow whoever you will.

(2) Parenthetical expressions, such as *I think, he said, you suppose,* and the like, do not affect the case of a relative pronoun, but sometimes, when they stand between the relative pronoun and its verb, they are wrongly thought to affect the case:

Wrong: That is the fellow *whom* I think stole my purse.
Right: That is the fellow *who* I think stole my purse.

Explanation: Who is the subject of the verb *stole.*

(3) Observe similar caution when interrogative pronouns are used in indirect questions:

Wrong: I asked *who* he was seeking.
Right: I asked *whom* he was seeking.

EXERCISE

In the following sentences choose the correct form of the relative pronoun and explain your choice:

1. She never dreamed that a certain Major-General Eisenhower (who, whom) she was to pick up at the airport would some day become Supreme Commander.
2. The groom's family must be consulted on the matter of (who, whom) to invite.
3. Every boy in school wondered (who, whom) the headmaster would punish.

4. Nobody could guess (who, whom) would be punished.

5. The president could decide (who, whom) to appoint chairman of the committee.

6. No matter (who, whom) you think is really most deserving and industrious, you are compelled to observe union rules as to seniority.

7. After spending that miserable night in the rain we were ready to accept food and shelter from (whoever, whomever) might be good enough to offer them.

8. I was never quite convinced as to (whom, who) was the author of the newspaper story.

9. Even the village preacher, (who, whom) they all said would be most likely to know, had never heard the name.

10. Mrs. Le Sueur introduced me to a very pretty girl (who, whom) I took to be the object of Philip's intentions.

ADVERBIAL CLAUSES

19 F. Adverbial clauses are introduced by subordinating conjunctions, such as *although, because, since, if,* and may therefore be grouped according to the relationships indicated by these conjunctions.

Cause: because, since, as
Concession: though, although
Condition: if, provided, unless
Degree: as far as, as much as, than
Manner: as if, as though
Place: where, whence, wherever, whither
Purpose: that, (so) that, in order that
Result: so that, (such) that
Time: when, before, after, since, while, until, as, till

It is important to remember that an adverbial clause cannot be distinguished as an adverbial clause merely by the subordinating conjunction which introduces it. It is an adverbial clause only when it is used as an adverb. Most of the conjunctions given above can introduce noun clauses and adjective clauses as well as adverbial

clauses. The following examples show the distinction according to use in the sentence:

I want you at the time *when you are needed.* (Adjective clause, modifying *time*)

I do not know *when you will be needed.* (Noun clause, object of *know*)

He will be ready *when he is needed.* (Adverbial clause, modifying the adjective *ready*)

Go *when you are ready.* (Adverbial clause, modifying the verb *go*)

Because-clauses: The use of a *because*-clause as a noun is generally considered incorrect.

Wrong: The reason why he refused to sign the petition was *because he considered it mere propaganda.* (The *because*-clause is incorrectly used as the predicate complement.)

Right: He refused to sign the petition because he considered it mere propaganda. (The *because*-clause is correctly used as an adverbial clause modifying *refused.*)

Right: The reason why he refused to sign the petition was that he considered it mere propaganda. (The substitution of *that* for *because* converts the clause into a noun clause, which can correctly be used as predicate complement.)

EXERCISE

Compose ten pairs of sentences in which you illustrate the use of subordinating conjunctions (1) in adverbial clauses and (2) in other types of dependent clauses. Select the conjunctions from the list given in Section 19 F.

USE OF THE SUBJUNCTIVE IN ADVERBIAL CLAUSES

19 G. The subjunctive is frequently used in clauses of concession and manner.

Even though he *were* here, he could not help. (Concession, contrary to fact)

He looks as if he *were* sick. (Manner)

She behaves as though she *were* frightened. (Manner)

THE PROBLEM OF CASE AFTER "THAN" AND "AS"

19 H. The subject of an elliptical clause introduced by *than* or *as* is in the nominative. Or, in general, the case of a substantive following *than* or *as* depends upon its construction in the elliptical clause in which it stands.

An *elliptical clause* is a clause in which ellipsis occurs: that is, one or more words essential to grammatical completeness are omitted, but are nevertheless supplied by the mind and are said to be "understood."

Examples

1. You ought to save more money than *I*.
2. Would you think him as tall as *me*?
3. You can eat more than John and *he* together.
4. This law affects Charles more than *her*.

Explanation: In Sentence 1 the pronoun *I* is the subject of *ought to save* understood. The true sentence is: *You ought to save more money than I (ought to save)*. *I* is the subject of the elliptical clause *I (ought to save)*. In Sentence 2 the pronoun *me* is the object of *you would think* understood and therefore is in the objective case: *Would you think him as tall as (you would think) me?* In Sentence 3, *John* and *he* are in the nominative case, subjects of *can eat* understood. In Sentence 4, the pronoun *her* is the object of *affects* understood.

If written as follows, the sentences would contain errors of case:

Wrong

1. You ought to save more money than me.
2. Would you think him as tall as I?
3. You can eat more than John and him together.
4. This law affects Charles more than she.

This rule is so often violated in common speech that the error is all too readily carried over into writing. Grammarians would explain the frequency of the error in colloquial usage by saying that *than* and *as* are tending to lose their character as conjunctions and are in process of becoming prepositions.

EXERCISE

Indicate the correct form of the pronoun in the elliptical clauses:

1. The winner of the pole vault could clear the bar six inches higher than (me, I).
2. My young collie dog needs training; he will follow any stranger as quickly as (I, me).
3. My object is to become as ready a speaker as (he, him).
4. If you are heavier than (she, her), you have less chance for the part.
5. I have never seen a more careful driver than (he, him).
6. To reward (they, them) rather than (we, us) seems a decided injustice.
7. You deserve more than (we, us) because you did most of the work.
8. You identified the warbler because you are better trained and more experienced than (I, me).

20. CONDITIONAL CLAUSES AND TYPES OF CONDITIONS

Conditional clauses may be classified according to the degree of probability which they express. Conditional clauses cannot, however, be considered apart from the sentences in which they stand, and the study of conditional clauses is therefore a study of types of conditions.

The following are the types of conditions commonly used in English:

(1) *Present and Past Conditions, or Simple Conditions*

If this *is* the right answer, your solution *is* incorrect. (Present condition; indicative in condition and conclusion)

If there *was* a storm, it *ruined* the party. (Past condition; indicative in condition and conclusion)

If there *be* any who doubt this, they *are* unreasonable. (Present subjunctive in condition; present indicative in conclusion)

If he *has finished* his work, he *will leave* soon. (Perfect indicative in the conditional clause; future indicative in the conclusion)

If this *is* the truth, I *was* wrong. (Present indicative in the conditional clause; past indicative in the conclusion)

(2) *Future Conditions*

a. Simple future

If the things *are* ready, I *shall take* them. (Present indicative in the condition, pointing to the future; future indicative in the conclusion)

b. Less vivid future

If they *should fail* to come, I *should be disappointed.* (In condition, *should* with the infinitive; in conclusion, *should* or *would* with infinitive)

(3) *Contrary to Fact Conditions*

a. With reference to present time, the contrary to fact condition uses the past subjunctive in the conditional clause and a past subjunctive auxiliary (*should, would, could,* or *might*) with the present infinitive in the conclusion.

If this hat *were* mine, I *would* not *wear* it.

b. With reference to past time, the contrary to fact condition uses the past perfect subjunctive in the conditional clause and an imperfect subjunctive auxiliary (*should, would, could,* or *might*) with the perfect tense of the infinitive in the conclusion.

If they *had* come, I *would* not *have seen* them.

EXERCISE

Explain the use of the subjunctive mood in the following sentences:

1. The shrieks and cries were audible there, though subdued by the distance. He referred to them, as if she were lying in our presence.—Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities.*

2. Labor is everywhere welcome; always we are invited to work; only be this limitation observed, that a man shall not for the sake of wider activity sacrifice any opinion to the popular judgments and modes of action.—Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar."

3. They may bury me twelve feet deep, and throw the church down over me, but I won't rest till you are with me. I never will. —Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights.*

4. If the Poet's subject be well chosen, it will naturally and upon fit occasion lead him to passions, the language of which, if selected truly and judiciously, must necessarily be dignified and variegated, and alive with metaphors and figures.—William Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads.*

5. Whatever Becky's private plan might be by which Dobbin's true love was to be crowned with success, the little woman thought that the secret might keep.—William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair.*

6. People say, meaning to bestow a great compliment, that an actor playing a hobo is a hobo. If this were true, it would clearly be as good to see the hobo, and never go to see the actor at all.—Stark Young, "Illusion in Acting," in *Glamour.*[1]

7. If only your father could see you at this moment!

8. The law requires that the citizen have been resident in the state one year before he is eligible to vote.

9. Though he slay me, yet will I trust him.

10. I move that the secretary record the gentleman as present but not voting.

11. If my check had come, I would have paid the bill.

12. If a man have salvation for his soul, what need of earthly honor or treasure?

13. I demand that the seller guarantee the machine.

14. If the package should fail to reach him by Christmas, I would never be able to explain.

21. ABSOLUTE ELEMENTS

Absolute elements are words, phrases, or clauses which, though part of a sentence, do not have any grammatical relation to the rest of the sentence.

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(1) *Exclamations*

Alas, his story is told.
Heavens! you never told me that before.

(2) *Vocatives* (words used in direct address)

John, start the car.
Speak up, *you,* and tell me the time of day.

(3) *Nominative Absolutes.* The nominative absolute consists of a noun with a modifyng participle. It is used without grammatical relation to the rest of the sentence. The participle may be either active or passive; usually it is in the past tense.

All things considered, I think you are right.
The papers having been drawn up, we made ready to sign.
Dinner being ready, we came into the house.

(4) *Absolute Participles*

Generally speaking, the weather is fair at this time of year.
Taking all things into consideration, your prospects are not bad.

(5) *Introductory Words and Phrases*

In conclusion, I wish to make this point.
To be sure, he never thought of that.
Still, I cannot believe it is true.

(6) *Parenthetical Expressions*

His car, *don't you see,* was on the wrong side.
The basket—*believe it or not!*—had nothing in it.
The apples—*I should have said this before*—come from a Virginia orchard.

22. AGREEMENT OF SUBJECT AND VERB

22 A. A verb agrees with its subject in person and number.

I am certain of this.
He has agreed to sign.
Father mows the lawn every Saturday.
They are coming tonight.

In simple situations the rule is easily observed. When the subject is clearly first person singular, as in the first example, the verb form must be *am*. When the person and number of the subject are thus readily determined, no difficulty will arise. The sections following take up other kinds of situations in which uncertainty as to the person and number of the subject may affect the form of the verb.

PROBLEMS OF AGREEMENT: SUBJECT AND VERB

22 B. The indefinite pronouns *somebody, anybody, everybody, either, each, someone, anyone,* etc., are singular in number and, when used as subjects, require singular verbs.

After a long walk, *everybody has* a good appetite.

Difficulty occurs when the indefinite pronoun is followed by a possessive, or "partitive genitive" phrase, as in the sentence: "Each of the onlookers present at the scene of the accident was greatly excited." In this sentence the tendency is to think of the singular *each* as having been affected by the plural form, *of the onlookers,* and, accordingly, to write *were . . . excited.* The temptation should be resisted. *Each,* the subject, remains singular, despite the plural that follows it, and the verb must be singular. The following sentences are correct:

Each of the boys *is wearing* an old straw hat.
Every one of the clerks in this establishment *receives* good pay.

22 C. The indefinite pronoun *none* may be treated as either singular or plural. Its number may be determined by the meaning of the sentence, and it may take either a singular or plural verb, as the following examples indicate:

Is there any salt in the pantry? *None is* in the salt-shaker.
There are many politicians in this assembly. *Few are* real leaders. *None are* statesmen.
None of the men *were* hurt. (*Men* emphasized)
None of the men *was* hurt. (*None* considered as meaning *not one*)

22 D. A collective noun, when used as subject, takes a singular verb if the speaker or writer is thinking of the group as a whole, a plural verb if the emphasis is on individual members of the group.

The *committee has been* appointed. (Singular)
The *committee are unable* to agree. (Plural)

22 E. A disjunctive subject (indicated by *either . . . or, neither . . . nor*) is singular if both parts of the subject are singular. But if one of the components of the subject is singular and the other plural, the verb agrees with the nearer component.

Either the coaches or the captain *is* to blame.
Either the captain or the coaches *are* to blame.

If the two components of a disjunctive subject are not of the same person, the verb agrees in person with the nearer.

Either father or *I am* to blame.

Frequently it is better to avoid the choice by giving each of the subjects a verb:

Either father *is* to blame or I *am*.

22 F. A compound subject requires a plural verb.

The boy and his dog *are* here.
The boys and the dog *are* here.

22 G. Do not allow intervening words or phrases to attract the verb into the wrong number.

Wrong: The head coach, together with the trainers and several assistant coaches, are sitting on the bench.
Right: The head coach, together with the trainers and several assistant coaches, *is sitting* on the bench.

The verb *is sitting* is in the singular number to agree with the subject *coach*. The intervening phrase, *together with the trainers and several assistant coaches,* is parenthetical and does not affect the number of the subject.

But in the following sentence the subject is compound, therefore plural, and accordingly takes a plural verb:

The head coach, the trainers, and several assistant coaches *are sitting* on the bench.

Expressions like *as well as, together with, in addition to, including, no less than,* when they come after the subject, introduce parenthetical matter.

22 H. When the expletive *it* is used as subject, the verb is singular, even though the predicate complement may be plural.

It *is* the farmers who must bear the load.
It *is* we who must face this new responsibility.

22 I. When *there* is used as anticipatory subject and the predicate complement is plural, the verb must be plural.

There *are* forty-eight states in the Union.
On the table there *are* a book, some withered flowers, and a cigarette lighter.

22 J. Some English nouns are plural in form but are generally singular in meaning. They usually take a singular verb.

The following nouns are generally considered singular: *bellows, economics, ethics, gallows, mathematics, measles, mumps, news, physics, whereabouts.*

The following nouns may be treated as either singular or plural: *alms, means, politics, wages.*

The following nouns are generally considered plural: *acoustics, athletics, gymnastics, riches, scissors, tactics, trousers.*

EXERCISE

Choose the correct form of the verb and give your reasons for your choice:

1. Evidently none of the waiters (was, were) prepared to meet such an unusual situation.
2. Despite the prestige of science, mathematics (attract, attracts) relatively few students.
3. Either one large floor lamp or two ordinary table lamps (is, are) necessary for proper lighting.

4. Every one of us who (believe, believes) in this program will take your part.

5. This particular water-color is one of the most daring compositions that (has, have) ever been exhibited in our city.

6. On his table (was, were) a sheaf of paper, a typewriter, a new eraser, and other tools of literary composition, but he just stared blankly at them.

7. It (is, are) you taxpayers who must bear the burden.

8. Each one of the bridesmaids (is, are) to be at the bride's home by 5 P. M.

9. We soon realized that this was only one of many occurrences which (was, were) likely to be investigated.

10. Where none (has, have) qualms of conscience, none can feel pity.

11. The most heroic chapters of our history, magnificent though our history is, (report, reports) no more remarkable deed.

12. The chaperon was asking us whether she or I (is, am) the driver of the car.

13. Neither of these outfits, no matter what you say, (seem, seems) the right thing for the climate.

14. Ham and eggs (was, were) my order.

15. In such matters, my guide and counselor (has, have) always been my Uncle Jim.

16. Plow and mule, together with the traditional singing Negro, (has, have) yielded to tractor, disc, and combine.

23. AGREEMENT OF PRONOUN AND ANTECEDENT

23 A. A pronoun agrees with its antecedent in person, number, and gender. The case of a pronoun depends upon its grammatical construction in the clause in which it stands.

The boss asked me a question, but I could not answer *him*.
Did you call for Miss Smith? *She* is waiting.
Here is the man to *whom* you gave the money.

23 B. A singular pronoun must be used to refer to an indefinite pronoun (*another, anybody, everybody, neither, somebody, someone,* etc.) when it is used as an antecedent.

Everyone waved *his* hand.
Neither of the men had *his* ticket with him.

It would be a mistake of grammar to say, in the above sentences, *their hand, their ticket.* The context of the sentences suggests "more than one" as the *meaning* of the antecedent, but the *form* of each antecedent enforces singular number.

23 C. The masculine form of the pronoun is preferred unless the indefinite pronoun is known to be feminine.

Each of the guests at the house party solved the problem in *his* own way.
Each of the nurses looks after *her* own patients.

23 D. A pronoun referring to a compound antecedent must be in the plural number.

Now father and son must go *their* own ways.

23 E. When a pronoun refers to two or more antecedents of different persons, the first person has precedence over the second and third, the second person over the third.

You and I will divide it between *us.*
You and he divided it between *you.*[1]

EXERCISE

Correct all errors of agreement in the following sentences. Rewrite the sentence if a considerable revision is advisable.

1. I suppose that during every one's life, unless they have an unusually tenacious memory, they will often have the misfortune to forget the name of somebody they ought to know.

[1]These examples are quoted from Curme's *Syntax.*

2. How can I be sure, ladies and gentlemen, that each of you will give me their support?

3. The policeman asked each of the young men where they lived and who their parents were.

4. It will do no good to announce that all will be treated alike, for, people being what they are, someone will always think they deserve special consideration.

5. The farmer and the union laborer will have his own ideas about the issue.

6. None of our party followed their instructions; everyone went their own ways.

7. Each of the seamstresses have their own machine.

8. I hope you will not forget, my dear Uncle, that I, Robert McEwen, who is writing this, is your only brother's only child.

9. You have seen the kind of fellow who, if he is playing tennis, assumes that the game was invented for their special benefit.

10. Everybody naturally wanted their child to win.

24. AGREEMENT OF DEMONSTRATIVE ADJECTIVES

The demonstrative adjectives *this* (plural *these*) and *that* (plural *those*) agree in number with the word modified.

Right: I want *this kind* of scissors.
Wrong: I want those kind of scissors.

25. AGREEMENT OF PREDICATE COMPLEMENT

A predicate complement of an intransitive verb agrees with its subject in case.

This is *he*. (Predicate nominative)

I supposed that the speaker was *he*. (Predicate nominative)

I supposed the speaker to be *him*. (*Speaker*, the subject of the infinitive *to be*, is in the objective case; therefore *him* is in the objective case.)

26. SEQUENCE OF TENSES

Sequence of tenses has to do with the time relationships of verbs in the sentence. No absolutely strict rules can be laid down for the indication of these relationships. The tenses of verbs in successive clauses of a sentence should be determined by the principle of logical consistency, rather than by fixed rule. The following general directions will offer some guidance.

26 A. In a complex sentence, when the verb of the principal clause is in the past or past perfect tense, the verb in a subordinate clause should generally be in the past or past perfect tense. After any of the other tenses, a verb in a subordinate clause has its tense determined, not by the tense of the main verb, but by the thought to be expressed.

They say that a large crowd will be there tomorrow.
They said that a large crowd would be there tomorrow.
I think that he has left.
I thought that he had left.

26 B. Sequence of tenses may be disregarded when something is represented as a general or universal truth, or as something customary, habitual, or characteristic, and, especially in indirect discourse, for greater accuracy of expression.

He *knew* that men *are* mortal.
The astronomer *proved* that the moon *revolves* around the earth.
They *reported* that the climate *is* mild.
You *observed* that she *dislikes* cats.

26 C. Since in the subjunctive mood a past tense form is used to indicate present or future time, the rule as to sequence of tenses does not apply:

If I *were* sure that he *is* right, I would sell my stocks and bonds.

27. TENSE OF INFINITIVES

A present infinitive represents action occurring at the same time as the action of the governing verb; a perfect infinitive represents action

prior to the time of the action expressed by the governing verb, or completed at the time of that action.

He wanted *to go* yesterday. (Present infinitive)

He will want *to go* tomorrow. (Present infinitive referring to future action)

He is said *to have done* this. (Perfect infinitive referring to action completed in the present)

III. VARIOUS PROBLEMS OF GRAMMAR AND SENTENCE STRUCTURE

28. SPLIT CONSTRUCTIONS

28 A. Do not separate sentence elements which have a close grammatical relationship if the separation causes awkwardness or confusion.

28 B. The split infinitive is the commonest form of split construction. Do not place a modifier between the word *to* and the infinitive.

Wrong: To accurately and definitely predict weather conditions is difficult.

Right: It is difficult to predict weather conditions accurately and definitely.

Right: It is difficult to make an accurate and definite prediction of weather conditions.

Some authorities hold that the split infinitive may be allowed if the intervening modifier is a single adverb and if the placing of the adverb between the parts of the infinitive will avoid a confusion of relationship. In their view, a sentence like the following would be permissible: *He urged me to plainly say what I wanted.* The argument is that the meaning of the sentence is obscured if the sentence is made to read: *He urged me plainly to say what I wanted,* or *He urged me to say plainly what I wanted.* There may indeed be situations in which it might be better to use a split infinitive than to attempt to avoid it. But such situations are rare. Normally, it is best to follow the rule given above.

But note also that the prohibition against splitting applies to the present infinitive *active*. The present infinitive *passive* and the perfect infinitive, *active* and *passive*, regularly allow a modifier to be inserted between the auxiliary and the past participle:

He seemed to be *slightly* injured. (Present infinitive passive)
He was thought to have *willingly* consented. (Perfect infinitive active)
The garden appeared to have been *carefully* planned. (Perfect infinitive passive)

28 C. Do not needlessly separate the parts of a verb phrase. Do not separate a subject from its verb if the separation causes awkwardness of expression.

Wrong: What opinion of me *could* a girl of her tastes and background, schooled as she was in every social nicety, *hold*?
Right: What opinion of me could a girl hold who had her tastes and background and was schooled in every social nicety?
Wrong: A *student* in the thousand little diversions and temptations of college life *should* not *lose* his head.
Right: A student should not lose his head in the thousand little diversions and temptations of college life.

It is proper to separate the parts of a verb when a question is asked: *Did he speak? Can you write?*

29. SQUINTING MODIFIERS

Avoid placing a modifier so that it may modify either of the two elements between which it is placed.

Wrong: The car in which he was driving calmly slid off the road.
Right: The car which he was calmly driving slid off the road.
Right: The car which he was driving slid calmly off the road.

EXERCISE

Correct all errors in the following sentences:

1. With the goal in sight I began at last to really study and think.
2. Whenever evolution was mentioned Henry used to always joke about swinging in the trees and eating bananas.

3. When he had, despite his repeated excuses and delays, gone at last off to visit his poor country cousins, he found them much less poor and much more worldly wise than he had dreamed.

4. Celestine understood enough of our college French to, without further delay, produce some wine of dubious vintage, as well as the usual bread and cheese.

5. He swore that he was determined to loyally uphold the Constitution and the laws.

6. No matter what modern critics say, his warmth of color and his romantic feeling have established, in my personal opinion, Maxfield Parrish as a genuine artist.

7. He agreed to devotedly remember her kindness.

8. His fields may appear to have been carelessly cultivated, but he does not believe in clean tillage.

9. The opposing team appeared to almost be ready to quit the field.

10. The page I was reading mechanically blurred, and I found myself nodding.

11. Determined to achieve results, by fair means or foul, he carried his faction to victory after victory.

12. The Dean ordered me promptly to go to my faculty adviser.

30. PARALLELISM

30 A. The principle of parallelism calls for consistency of structure, especially in coördinate parts of a sentence. Positively stated, it is: Like thoughts require like forms of expression. Negatively stated, it is: Do not needlessly change syntax, tense, or point of view, when you have committed yourself to a certain syntax, tense, or point of view.

Wrong: When you have learned the trigger squeeze, and after a good deal of practice in aiming, you are ready to fire at a target.

Right: When you have learned the trigger squeeze and have had a good deal of practice in aiming, you are ready to fire at a target.

Explanation: The first clause, *when you have learned the trigger squeeze,* commits the writer to a form of expression which is need-

lessly changed in the next coördinate element, the phrase, *after a good deal of practice*. The inconsistency is remedied by pairing the verbs: *have learned* and *have had*.

30 B. The principle of parallelism applies to two sentence elements joined by the conjunctions *and* and *but* or by the correlative conjunctions *either . . . or, neither . . . nor*. It also applies to elements in series.

Parallelism in Two Elements

Wrong: Happy and buoyantly, she rushed to the door.
Right: Happy and buoyant, she rushed to the door.
Wrong: After long preparation, and when he had acquired some skill, he went to work.
Right: After he had undergone long preparation and had acquired some skill, he went to work.
Wrong: I am sure about his honesty and that he means well.
Right: I am sure about his honesty and his good intentions.
Wrong: She is well educated and of a very genteel appearance.
Right: She has a good education and very genteel manners.

Parallelism in a Series

Wrong: It teaches them the binomial theorem, formulas in chemistry, how Napoleon managed his armies, but does it teach them anything about living with other people, recipes in a cook-book, or how to manage servants?
Right: It teaches them the binomial theorem, the formulas of chemistry, and the strategy of Napoleon; but does it teach them how to live with other people, how to use a cook-book, or how to manage servants?

30 C. An unnecessary shift of subject or of voice changes the point of view and causes inconsistency.

Wrong: T. S. Eliot was born in St. Louis, but London has been his home in later years.
Right: T. S. Eliot was born in St. Louis, but he has made his home in London in later years.

In the first sentence, the subject is changed from *T. S. Eliot* to *London,* with the result that the point of view is changed in the second independent clause.

Wrong: An amateur can take a good photograph by accident, but a good oil painting is made only by skill.
Right: An amateur can take a good photograph by accident, but only a skilled student of art can make a good oil painting.

In the first sentence, the change from the active voice, in the first independent clause, to the passive voice, in the second independent clause, shifts the point of view and spoils the sentence.

30 D. Avoid an unnecessary shift of tense.

Wrong: The fact that Pickett's charge had penetrated Meade's lines did not mean that Lee won.
Right: The fact that Pickett's charge had penetrated Meade's lines did not mean that Lee had won.
Wrong: Since we heard the whistle blow, we hurry to the station.
Right: Since we heard the whistle blow, we hurried to the station.

See also Sequence of Tenses, Section 26.

EXERCISE

Make the necessary corrections in the following sentences. In each instance give the reasons for your correction.

1. You should be careful to observe the social amenities both when you arrive and at your departure.

2. A good golfer knows that the head of his club must swing in a parabola, the axis of which is perpendicular to the plane of the tee, and that his head must be kept down, and he must coördinate arms, shoulders, and body.

3. If he had been a weaker, less determined man, he would have been unable to have held the throne.

4. Most eighteen-year-old boys and girls are students who have either recently completed high school or now being freshman in college.

5. They came out of the struggle both the victor, and strengthened twofold.

6. Just because a few well-publicized but limited triumphs have been achieved with radio-active materials and atomic rays does not mean that our scientists conquered cancer.

7. She always preached to her sister that whenever she married to marry a rich man, and thus she would be secure for life.

8. The Mississippi once carried a large volume of passenger traffic, but only bulky types of freight, such as oil, gasoline, coal, lumber, and automobiles, are now borne by the great river.

9. The musical director was not only anxious and eager, but the students were enthusiastic.

10. Our maid is very prim and neat and with some gift for cooking.

11. To make potato salad, clean and chill some lettuce; boil, peel, and cube some potatoes; and the eggs must be hard-boiled and sliced; then mix with chopped celery, seasoning, mayonnaise, and place in a bowl, on the lettuce, putting the sliced eggs on top, garnished with parsley.

12. I should like to have seen the play if I could have bought seats.

31. INCOMPLETE CONSTRUCTIONS

31 A. Do not omit a word or phrase which is necessary to complete a grammatical construction or to fill out the logical meaning of a sentence.

The syntax of the English sentence permits the omission of words and phrases in certain situations when the omitted words and phrases are clearly implied by the context; but the word or phrase thus implied must logically and grammatically fit the place from which it has been omitted.

Wrong: The window has been washed, and the curtains rehung.
Right: The window has been washed, and the curtains have been rehung.

Explanation: In the first sentence, we should expect the verb *has been* to be implied; but the subject, *curtains,* is plural. To say *The curtains has been rehung* would be grammatically incorrect. The following sentences illustrate a proper form of omission:

Right: The prevailing north winds had warped the trees around the old church and swept salt spray against the windows.

The auxiliary *had* may be understood with the verb *swept.*

Right: His eyes were sunken and dull; his cheeks, hollow.

The verb *were* may be correctly supplied in the second clause.

31 B. Do not use incomplete comparisons or correlations.

Wrong: On the way to Knoxville we motored through the most beautiful mountain scenery.

Right: On the way to Knoxville we motored through some of the most beautiful mountain scenery in the United States.

The phrase, *the most beautiful scenery,* implies a comparison which is not carried out. Do not use the superlative degree (*most*) simply to gain intensity of expression. The words *so* and *too* are frequently used in conversation as intensive expressions, as in the sentences: "I am *so* tired." "It was just *too* beautiful." This usage is incorrect. *So* implies *that. Too* implies *for.*

The intensive *very,* when used with a past participle, cannot be used alone in formal discourse, but is correct only when used with the adverb *much.*

Wrong: I was very fatigued by the journey.
Right: I was very much fatigued by the journey.

EXERCISE

Correct the errors in the following sentences:

1. By late afternoon, the axle was mended and the broken wheels replaced.
2. To an old man, the climb up three flights of stairs is so exhausting.
3. I feel very rewarded by your praise.

4. Mount Vernon is one of the most impressive, if not the most impressive, national shrine in the United States.

5. The beach was clear and bright as usual, but the cottages all empty of life.

6. This particular senator always has and always will place the welfare of the country above his personal ambition.

7. Fiction is sometimes as convincing, often more, than scientific truth.

8. The driver of the bus impressed me more than anyone I met during our tour of historic points.

9. Any little gesture or casual remark he drops is noted by the reporters.

10. As for operatic works, I admire Wagner more than any composer.

11. The hotel-keeper showed a great interest and curiosity about the lives of his guests.

12. This should make us want to succeed even more than we did in the beginning.

FRAGMENTARY SENTENCES (The "Period Fault")

31 C. See that every sentence is logically and grammatically complete. Do not treat a fragment of a sentence as a complete sentence. Do not separate phrases, clauses, or other parts of a sentence from the sentence in which they belong.

Wrong: Frontiersmen were expert marksmen. Able to shoot a turkey through the head.

Right: Frontiersmen were expert marksmen, able to shoot a turkey through the head.

Wrong: I could not help pitying the fellow. Even though I knew he was a professional beggar.

Right: I could not help pitying the fellow, even though I knew he was a professional beggar.

The error of the fragmentary sentence is often classified as an error of punctuation and is therefore sometimes called the "period fault." The error of punctuation, however, generally results from a failure to understand what a sentence really is. It occurs when a

writer fails to combine in one sentence all the elements that properly belong to a sentence.

For the exception, see Chapter V, page 179. Skilled writers may use fragments of sentences as whole sentences for the sake of some special rhetorical effect.

EXERCISE

Correct the errors in the followng sentences. Rewrite the sentences or add words, if it is necessary to do so, in order to make the sentences complete and effective.

1. Autohypnosis, or the ability to induce upon oneself the trance of sleeping hypnosis, together with such of the phenomena as may be desired.

2. Courage in some form can be found in everyone, from little children to grown people. From courage to take a first step to courage to face death itself.

3. Once, little as you realize it, a rare thing to see, now a necessity, the automobile.

4. Not wanting to stay at the bottom, he tried hard to learn the plumbing trade. Even though he would have preferred some other occupation.

5. Under socialized medicine the doctors are appointed to a certain district. A wide loophole which allows incompetents with political backing to get good positions.

6. The lake was enormous. Reaching as far as the eye could see.

7. How many times have you planned something very important? Something which has taken days and hours of preparation. Every detail worked out and understood, and then it did not materialize.

8. Because John Donne's conceits seem far-fetched to a reader of our day and often have little meaning. Fantastic, even pedantic metaphors.

32. THE COMMA FAULT ("Comma Splice")

The comma fault, sometimes called the comma splice, occurs when two sentences are punctuated as one—that is, are separated by a comma when the principles of grammar and punc-

tuation would require a period, or perhaps a semicolon, or a comma and a conjunction. The error arises from failure to recognize the limits of a given sentence.

Wrong: The referee pawed at the squirming pile of muddy bodies, I thought he would never get them untangled.

Right: The referee pawed at the squirming pile of muddy bodies. I thought he would never get them untangled.

Wrong: The dear little creature looked at Jim out of the corner of her eyes, then she smiled.

Right: The dear little creature looked at Jim out of the corner of her eyes; then she smiled.

Right: The dear little creature looked at Jim out of the corner of her eyes, and then she smiled.

Note that the comma may be retained if a coördinating conjunction is added. But the conjunction should not be added unless the groups of words thus joined are really coördinate clauses of a compound sentence. If they are not coördinate clauses, they should be punctuated as separate sentences.

EXERCISE

Correct the errors in the following sentences:

1. Another promotion was granted Scott three months later; this time he was given the title, "Warden of the Scottish Marches."

2. The story moves along very quickly except in a few places, the plot is somewhat confused by masses of unimportant detail, yet the reader's interest does not flag.

3. Some of the Crusaders were good, sincere men; some were just glorified bandits.

4. Naturally nobody wanted to do anything drastic, so we just drifted outside and tried to make conversation.

5. I wanted to work, but my parents told me to stick to books; they would count more in the end.

6. First, Mr. Jensen gives the reader an accurate summary of the work of the organization; then he relates a few important events in Mr. Baldwin's life.

7. "That is one of the most ridiculous statements I ever heard," said Barclay, "you must have found it in one of my opponent's press releases."

8. He arranges a very popular kind of program, I grant, yet his concerts appeal to me.

9. I always hand the morning newspaper to Father; he likes to read it at breakfast.

10. We were a little surprised when Mrs. Elmore left first of all; probably it was a kind of signal.

11. One ambulance siren after another shrieked its way through the night; therefore we concluded a real disaster had taken place.

12. You must not turn to the end of the book before you really get started; that would spoil the fun.

33. PROBLEMS OF COÖRDINATION

33 A. Coördinate expressions are those of equal rank. Words, phrases, and clauses may be coördinate—that is, words (of equal rank) are coördinate with words, phrases with phrases, clauses with clauses. The coördination of ideas, whatever their form of expression in the sentence, should always be logical as well as grammatical.

The presence of one of the coördinating conjunctions, *and, but, or, nor,* is a sign of coördination; but elements may be combined without a conjunction.

He believed in a government *of the people* and *by the people.* (Coordinate phrases)

He believed in a government *of the people, by the people, for the people.* (Coördinate phrases in series, not joined by a conjunction)

Bring me a *spade,* a *pick,* and a *shovel.* (Coördinate words)

I have bought a car, but *John has bought a house.* (Coördinate independent clauses)

He is the man *who used to sell fruit,* but *who is now a wholesale grocer.* (Coördinate dependent clauses)

33 B. Avoid loose and straggling coördination.

I intended to buy a hat, and so I went down town early, but the hat department was crowded, and I could not find a clerk to wait on me, and so I went home.

The sentence contains excessive coördination. All of the ideas set forth in independent clauses are not properly coördinate. The remedy for such loose coördination is to distinguish the main ideas by expressing them as independent clauses, and the subordinate ideas by putting them into subordinate construction.

Better: Intending to buy a hat, I went down town early; but since the hat department was crowded, I could not find a clerk to wait on me. So I went home.

33 C. Avoid incorrect or illogical coördination.

Wrong: The next day we visited Fort Ticonderoga, a place beautifully located on Lake Champlain, and which is famous for its connection with Ethan Allen.

The error here (familiarly known as the "and which" construction) consists in wrongly coördinating the phrase, *a place beautifully located on Lake Champlain,* and the clause beginning with *which.* Two or more phrases or two or more clauses can be coördinated, but not a phrase and a clause.

Right: The next day we visited Fort Ticonderoga, which is beautifully located on Lake Champlain and is famous for its connection with Ethan Allen.

Right: The next day we visited Fort Ticonderoga. It is beautifully located on Lake Champlain and is famous for its connection with Ethan Allen.

EXERCISE

Rewrite the following sentences in such a way as to remove all instances of loose, straggling, incorrect, or illogical coördination:

1. The sirens were sounding, everybody was rushing down the street, and so we naturally wanted to go too, but Mother objected to our going to the scene of the wreck, so we had to be satisfied with listening to the police calls and radio bulletins.

2. Rufus came to the edge of the field about dusk, and he looked expectantly over the rail fence, but there was no mule to be seen, and he did not know what to do next.

3. It was a large suite of several rooms and furnished in a modern style.

4. Walt Whitman, author of "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed," was in Washington during the Civil War, and he wrote what is now known as "free verse."

5. Florida is a peninsula, with the Gulf of Mexico on one side and the Atlantic Ocean on the other, and it is the great winter resort of the nation.

6. High rents, union wages, and other circumstances now make it very expensive to produce new shows on Broadway, and producers are naturally unwilling to risk large sums of money unless they feel sure of success, so that new writers have small opportunity for a New York production, but this situation is being remedied by the rise of the university theaters.

7. One may do more than just swim in the lake, and another popular sport is boating; then, of course, there is good fishing at some points and under good conditions.

8. We became alarmed when a strange green light came through the windows and rushed out to look at the sky.

9. You may have read about such lovers in romantic novels: tall, dark-eyed, just a touch of the mysterious, and with thick, wavy hair brushed back from a pale forehead.

10. Not far from the Capitol is the Library of Congress, less historic and less striking in architectural design, but which certainly has attractions from a cultural point of view.

11. The watchman would not have become alarmed but for two unusual circumstances: the broken window in the basement, and he could see where the flowers had been trampled.

12. Charles came to New York without ever having seen a big city and thus being ignorant of the problems he would encounter.

34. ERRORS OF SUBORDINATION

34 A. The subordinate elements of a sentence are its modifiers of all sorts. See that all sentence elements which are properly modifiers are placed in constructions that indicate their grammatical and logical relationship to other sentence elements.

34 B. Avoid upside-down subordination. The error of upside-down subordination consists in subordinating the wrong idea.

Wrong: His mother had always bought his clothes for him, so that Ralph had not the least idea what a suit of clothes cost.

Right: Since his mother had always bought his clothes for him, Ralph had not the least idea what a suit of clothes cost.

34 C. Avoid overlapping subordination—the "House That Jack Built" construction.

Wrong: As I was going down the street, I suddenly remembered what she said to me when I called on the telephone, after we had our other quarrel.

Right: As I was going down the street, I suddenly remembered what she said to me over the telephone after the other quarrel.

EXERCISE

Correct all errors of subordination in the following sentences:

1. Numerous valuable by-products are derived from parts of the animal once treated as refuse, so that we can readily see the value of research in the meat-packing industry.

2. Trudging to and fro with a rifle on my shoulder, I felt that my two lonesome hours "walking post" must have run over-time, when at last the corporal marched up with the relief.

3. The United States is a middle-class nation, although it has moved consistently toward high cultural objectives that might be called aristocratic.

4. The pioneer communities of a century and a half ago had few roads and no really efficient means of transportation, being small and isolated.

5. He had only been discharged from the hospital, when he was immediately sent back to the front line.

6. They are examples of the manner of life which was pursued by those who were called "old-fashioned people" in what once was "Little Russia."

7. While Mother was busily at work with the packing, she kept

saying that we could not afford such an expensive trip, and worrying about whether the tires were too old.

8. While I was talking with the department manager, whom I met when I was coming through the little room where we punch the clock, I brought up the question of vacation.

9. I tipped my hat and nodded to Miss Emily, so that I am sure she saw me.

10. My uncle's cook's dog, a melancholy hound, always follows her to the kitchen door.

COMMON PROBLEMS OF USAGE: A GLOSSARY

35. In the following glossary are words and phrases that are frequently misused. For a discussion of the principles of good usage, the student is referred to Chapter V, "Words," and to the dictionary. The errors of usage listed in the glossary are for the most part corruptions of form, distortions or confusions of meaning, vulgarisms, or colloquialisms improper in written composition.

Accept, except. *Accept* is a verb and means "to receive with consent." *Except* is used both as a verb and as a preposition. As a verb it means "to make an exception of."

He *accepted* the nomination.
He *was excepted* from the general indictment.

Advertisement, ad. Do not use the colloquial abbreviation "ad" as a substitute for *advertisement.*

Affect, effect. *Affect,* when used as a verb, means "to attack, as a disease attacks"; "to make a display of liking or following"; "to act, or to produce an effect upon."

The disease *affected* his heart.
He *affected* a modern style.
He *was affected* by the philosophy of Bergson.

Effect, when used as a verb, means "to bring about, to accomplish": "They *effected* a reform." The noun *effect* means "a result or consequence" or "purport, intent":

The reform is having no visible *effect.*
His remarks were to the *effect* that . . .

Agree to, agree with. English idiom requires that one "agree to" a proposal and "agree with" a person.

A man of conviction never *agrees to* a makeshift plan.
I am inclined to *agree with* John.

Ain't. Historically justifiable as a first person singular interrogative (*Ain't I? = Am I not?*), but not proper in formal discourse.

Allusion, illusion. *Allusion* means "an indirect reference." *Illusion* means "a harmless deception." *Delusion* means "a misguiding deception."

Personal *allusions* are often offensive.
In childhood we have happy *illusions.*
The policy is based on a dangerous *delusion.*

Almost, most, nearly. Use *almost* or *nearly* instead of *most* in sentences like the following:

The conscientious student profits *almost* (or *nearly*) every time.

See *most, almost,* below.

All right, alright. The correct form is *all right.*

Alternative. An alternative should mean a choice or decision between *two* things. In colloquial usage the word is broadened to mean "choice." The following sentences show the correct use:

Forced to choose between literature and music, he took the second *alternative.*
I must do this thing. I have no *alternative.*

Among—between. *Among* refers to more than two objects. *Between* refers to two.

The crew divided the rations *among* them.
The two robbers divided the money *between* them.

But *between* may also refer to action or possession in common, as in the sentence: "The three hunters now had but one loaded gun *between* them."

And etc. See *etc.*

Apt—liable. The preferred meaning of *apt* is "fitted, adapted for"; "appropriate, expressive"; "inclined, disposed"; "quick to learn."

He is an *apt* pupil.
That was an *apt* remark.
He is *apt* in running and jumping.

Liable is often misused for *apt.* Technically, it means "bound by law, answerable for"; "exposed or subject to some undesired contingency."

The employer is *liable* for damages under this law.
A child is *liable* to be imposed upon.

As. Incorrect for *that* or *whether.*

I do not know *that* I shall go. (Not *as I shall go*)

Avocation, vocation. *Avocation* is "diversion," which relaxes one from his more important *vocation* or "business."

His *vocation* requires him to keep long hours at the office.
His *avocation* is hunting.

Automobile, auto. Avoid *auto,* which is the colloquial abbreviation of *automobile.*

Awful. Do not use *awful* as an intensive.

We had a very good time. (Not *an awfully good time*)

Awful in the sense of *very bad, ugly, horrible* is slang.

Awhile, a while. *Awhile,* written as one word, is an adverb. *A while,* two words, is a noun modified by the indefinite article *a.*

Destructive policies flourish only *awhile.*
For a while they may be unopposed.

Because. *Because* is an adverbial conjunction and should not be used to introduce a noun clause.

Wrong: Because I knew him was the reason why I trusted him.
Right: Because I knew him, I trusted him.
Right: The reason why I trusted him was that I knew him.

Between. See *among.*

Big, large, great. *Big* implies "bulk" and is used colloquially for "large."

He is a *great* man. (Not *he is a big man*)

But that, but what. Do not use *but that* or *but what* for *that* with verbs expressing fear or doubt.

I fear only *that* we shall be late. (Not *but that*)
I have no doubt *that* he can do it. (Not *but what*)

Can, may. *Can* implies ability. *May* implies permission or possibility.

I *can* take the trip if I receive my check.
I *may* make the trip if the weather is good.
May I have your assistance?

Cannot help but. *Cannot help* is always followed by a gerund: *I cannot help whistling while I work. Can but* is followed by a finite verb: *I can but whistle; I cannot sing.*

Can't hardly. A double negative. Incorrect. The correct form is *can hardly: I can hardly bear it.*

Complected. Dialectal American for *complexioned.*

Contact. *Contact* is a noun. The use of *contact* as a verb is colloquial or slang.

Could of. A corruption of *could have.* Incorrect.

Credible, creditable. *Credible* means "worthy of belief." *Creditable* means "worthy of praise."

He can tell a *credible* story.
The story is sometimes hardly *creditable* to him.

Cute. Slang when meaning "attractive, dainty, pretty." *Cute* properly means "acute, clever, keen-witted."

Decimate. The proper meaning is "to take a tenth part"; later, "a large part." Do not use an adverb like *terribly* to modify *decimate.*

Differ from, with. *Differ from* means "to be different from": *She differs from him as sweet differs from sour. Differ with* means "to disagree with": *I differ with you on this issue.*

Different from, than, to. Usually *different* is followed by the preposition *from:*

The Celts were *different from* the Anglo-Saxons.

Different with the preposition *to* is in colloquial use in England Some authorities permit the use of *than* in order to avoid awkward circumlocutions: *The argument was different than I had expected it to be.* (To avoid *different from what I . . .*)

Disinterested, uninterested. *Disinterested* means "not swayed by self-interest." *Uninterested* means "not interested."

His work as chairman was *disinterested.*
I talked to him, but found him *uninterested.*

Doubt of, doubt that, doubt whether. Use *of* or *that* after *doubt* when no doubt is expressed or intended. Use *whether* if doubt is implied or assumed.

I have no *doubt of* his intentions.
I do not *doubt that* he will come.
I doubt *whether* he will come.

Due to. Although the expression *due to* is in common use as a synonym of *on account of, because of, owing to,* it should be considered an adjectival phrase and should always have a substantive to modify.

Right: His illness was *due to* over-eating.
Wrong: Due to indigestion, he missed several classes.

Effect. See *affect.*

Elude, allude. *Elude* means "to escape." *Allude* means "to refer to indirectly." *Elusive* and *allusive* are the corresponding adjectives.

Emigrant, immigrant. An *emigrant* is one who moves out of a place; an *immigrant,* one who moves into a place. The corresponding verbs are *emigrate* and *immigrate.*

Enthuse. A colloquialism meaning "to make, or become, enthusiastic."

Equally with, equally as. The correct form is *equally with. Equally as* is redundant and incorrect.

Etc. Avoid the abbreviation *etc.* in formal writing, unless the writing is of a highly technical nature. The expression *and etc.* is incorrect. *Etc.* is an abbreviation for *et cetera* (Latin: "and other things").

Except. See *accept.*

Farther, further. *Farther* is preferred for reference to distance; *further,* for reference to degree.

Feature. *Feature* is properly used as a noun to denote something of prominence or importance. Do not use it as a verb.

Fine. Incorrectly used as an adverb to mean "well."

He did *well* in his first speech. (Not *He did fine*)

It is correct to use *fine* as an adjective:

He makes a *fine* use of color.

Funny. Incorrectly used to mean "queer, strange, odd."

Gent. Do not use *gent* for *gentleman.*

Good. Incorrectly used as an adverb meaning "well."

This automobile runs *well.* (Not *runs good*)

Gotten. Allowed, as the past participle of *get,* in expressions like "He has gotten rich."

Gym. Colloquial abbreviation of *gymnasium.*

Had ought. This vulgarism is apparently an attempt to supply the missing past tense of the verb *ought.*

Wrong: He *hadn't ought* to have done it.
Right: He ought not to have done it.

Hardly, scarcely, but. Since these words are themselves negative or limiting in application, they should not be used with a negative.

Wrong: I could not hardly lift my hand.
Right: I could hardly lift my hand.
Wrong: There isn't but one filling station in town.
Right: There is but one filling station in town.

Historic, historical. *Historic* suggests "importance in history." *Historical* means "with the authority of history."

Human, humans. *Human* is an adjective and is not in good standing as a noun.

They are *human beings* like everybody else. (Not *humans* like . . .)

If, whether. *Whether* is preferable to *if* for introducing a noun clause used as the object of a verb.

I do not know *whether* he has come. (Not *if he has come*)

Immigrant. See *emigrant.*

Incredible, incredulous. *Incredible* means "beyond belief." *Incredulous* means "skeptical, not believing."

It is an *incredible* story.
As I told him the circumstances, I saw that he was *incredulous.*

Ingenious, ingenuous. *Ingenious* means "clever, resourceful." *Ingenuous* means "frank, naive."

Is because, is when, is where. *Because, when,* and *where* clauses should not be used as predicate substantives in sentences like the following:

Wrong: The reason is because I was too ill to come.
Right: The reason is that I was too ill to come.

Wrong: A foot-fault is when you step over the line in serving.
Right: A foot-fault is made when a player steps over the line in serving.
Wrong: A cross-roads is where two or more roads meet.
Right: A cross-roads is the intersection of two or more roads.

Its, it's. The contraction *it's* (for *it is*) should not be confused with the possessive form *its.*

Its pages (not *it's*) are full of advertising.

Kind of, sort of. These phrases should not be used as substitutes for *somewhat, rather,* and the like.

I *rather* like him. (Not *I kind of like him*)

The expressions *kind of a* and *sort of a* are incorrect.

What *kind of hat* do you want? (Not *what kind of a hat*)

Liable. See *apt.*

Lie, lay. *Lie* is an intransitive verb with the principal parts: *lie, lay, lain. Lay* is a transitive verb with the principal parts: *lay, laid* (*layed*), *laid* (*layed*).

Like, as, as if. *Like* is correctly used as a preposition, as in the sentence: *He is like her father.* In colloquial usage *like* often functions as a conjunction, as in the sentence: *He acted like he was angry.* But this use of *like* is considered incorrect in formal writing. It is proper to substitute *as* or *as if* in such clauses, whether they are complete or elliptical.

He acted *as if* he were angry. (Not *like he was angry*)

Like, love. *Like* suggests "taste." *Love* refers to the affections.

She *likes* folk-song. (Not *she loves folk-song*)

Loose, lose. *Loose,* as an adjective, means "not fastened." As a verb it means "to unbind." Do not confuse it with *lose,* which means "to suffer the loss of."

May. See *can.*

Most, almost. *Most* is an adjective, the superlative degree of *many* or *much*. *Almost* is an adverb meaning "nearly." Do not substitute the adjective *most* for the adverb *almost*.

Wrong: *Most* all the boys attended the meeting.
Right: *Almost* all the boys attended the meeting.
Right: John caught the *most* fish.

The error arises because *most* is used as an adverb of degree to form the superlative of certain adjectives: *beautiful, more beautiful, most beautiful.* (See Section 3 C.) Expressions like *most all, most every one, most well* are colloquial and incorrect.

Muchly. A vulgarism for *much*. Incorrect.

Nice. The use of *nice* to mean "pleasant, agreeable, kind" is colloquial. *Nice* means "characterized by discrimination, dainty, subtle, exactly fitted."

He is a *nice* judge of horses.
She has a *nice* taste in art.
Our diplomatic relations are kept in a *nice* balance.

Off of. Use *off*, not *off of*, in sentences like the following:

He fell *off* the horse.

Onto. Slang, when used in expressions like "We are *onto* his tricks." Correct if used as a preposition in sentences like the following: "He leaped onto the truck."

Ought. Avoid the incorrect form *had ought*. See *had ought*.

Over with. It is incorrect to say, "The performance was *over with* at eleven o'clock." Omit *with*: "The performance was *over* at eleven o'clock."

Per cent.—percentage. *Per cent.* (abbreviation for the Latin *per centum*) is used to refer to a specific number:

I have located *two per cent.* of the errors.

Percentage has a more general meaning:

The *percentage* of accidents is higher this year than last.

Authorities disagree as to whether a period should be used after *per cent.*, as here. Do not use the symbol % except after figures in writing that involves the use of statistical or technical material.

Phone. Colloquial abbreviation for *telephone*. Improper in formal composition.

Photo. Colloquial abbreviation for *photograph*. Improper in formal composition.

Plenty. *Plenty* is a noun, not an adjective or an adverb.

Right: We had *plenty* of food.
Wrong: That wrestler is *plenty* strong.

Practical, practicable. *Practical* is used as a term antithetical to *theoretical* or *ideal*. It also means "useful." *Practicable* generally is used to refer to some plan or device that is considered workable, capable of actual application.

His inclination was entirely *practical*.
Engineers consider the high-dam system *practicable* for this river.

Principal, principle. *Principal,* as an adjective, means "the highest in rank, the most important." As noun, it refers to a leader, chief, or head, or to a capital sum. *Principle* is used only as a noun to refer to a general law, source, doctrine, or settled rule.

These are the *principal* elements in the problem.
Mr. Smith is *principal* of the school.
The *principal* and interest will amount to a good deal.
It is the *principal* city of the region.
I do not understand his *principles*.
This is a *principle* of physics.

Reckon. Dialectal for *think, suppose, guess*. Its proper meaning is "to count, calculate, estimate."

Reminisce. Formerly regarded as a colloquialism but is now recorded as in good standing. See *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*.

Respectfully, respectively. *Respectfully* means "in a courteous manner." *Respectively* refers to the order of items in a series.

Reverend, the Reverend, Rev. To be used only with the full name of a clergyman: *Reverend John F. Asbury; Rev. J. P. Asbury; the Reverend John Asbury; the Rev. Mr. Asbury.* Never with the surname alone, as *Reverend Asbury, Rev. Asbury.*

Should have, should of. *Should of* is an illiterate form of *should have.*

Species, specie. *Species* means "class, kind." *Specie* refers to gold or silver coins. It is not the singular of *species.*

Statue, stature. *Statue* means "a sculptured figure." *Stature* means "height."

Summons. A noun in the singular number. The verb is *summon.*

The summons of the court *is* in written form.
The court will summon him as witness.

Transpire. "To exhale, to come to light." Not to be used as a substitute for "to happen, to occur."

Uninterested. See *disinterested.*

Unique. *Unique* means "the only one of its kind." It should not be used as a synonym for *odd, strange, unusual.*

Vocation. See *avocation.*

Whether. See *if, whether.*

While. *While* is a subordinating conjunction meaning "at the same time that." Do not use *while* for *although.*

Wrong: While I was greatly distressed, I concealed my emotion.
Right: Although I was greatly distressed, I concealed my emotion.
Right: I will peel the potatoes while you are making the biscuit.

Do not use *while* as the equivalent of *but* or *and.*

Wrong: He is from Cleveland, while I am from Detroit.
Right: He is from Cleveland, but I am from Detroit. (Or use *and* if no contrast is intended.)

Would of. A corruption of *would have*. Illiterate.

You all. Colloquial. Southern United States for *you*, plural. *You all* is never used to refer to the singular, but implies a plural even when it is apparently addressed to one person.

IV. PUNCTUATION

Punctuation is the *pointing* of a sentence by means of brief symbols ("points" or marks) to indicate its grammatical organization or its rhetorical divisions. Punctuation is simply a convenience to the reader. It marks divisions between sentences and parts of sentences, or sets boundaries around them, and thus makes comprehension easy. In most instances punctuation depends upon grammatical organization. Less often it depends upon emphasis and rhythm. The rules of punctuation are really conventions, or established usages, but they are closely related to grammatical principles and are rarely arbitrary. They are arbitrary and purely conventional only as applied to isolated words, symbols, headings, abbreviations, and the like.

A. TERMINAL PUNCTUATION

36. The marks of terminal punctuation are the Period, the Question Mark, and the Exclamation Point.

37. THE PERIOD

37 A. Use the period at the end of a declarative sentence:

The district attorney tried in vain to discover the source of the mysterious telephone call.

37 B. Use the period at the end of an imperative sentence if the imperative be not so strong as to call for an exclamation point:

Cut the grass, water the lawn, and weed the flower beds.

37 C. Use the period after all abbreviations, no matter where these appear:

The bus leaves at 8 A. M. for Cincinnati and Cleveland.
Eleazar Mather, Ph.D.
Mr. and Mrs. R. T. Bowers called.

Exception: It is a common practice to write the initial letters of certain governmental agencies without a period: SEC, NLRB. This practice should be considered as allowed rather than preferred. It is found chiefly in reports, pamphlets, and newspapers.

Allowed: The TVA was organized as a government corporation.
Preferred: The T. V. A. was organized as a government corporation.

38. THE EXCLAMATION POINT

38 A. Use the exclamation point at the end of an exclamatory sentence:

It was an astonishing performance!
I swear that I will never surrender!

38 B. Use the exclamation point after isolated words, phrases, or clauses that express strong feeling:

Oh!
Heavens above!
No more! Ah, nevermore!
What a performance it was!

Note: The exclamation point may stand after an interjection within the sentence:

Horrors! the thief was there again.

39. THE QUESTION MARK

39 A. Use the question mark after a direct question:

Where are you going?
If it comes to that, shall we deliver ourselves, bound hand and foot, and take pleasure in our slavery?

39 B. Indirect questions do not require the question mark.

I asked them where they were going.

B. INTERIOR PUNCTUATION

40. Interior punctuation is used to set off words, phrases, and clauses within the sentence. The two kinds of interior punctuation are *separative* and *parenthetical.* Punctuation is *separative* when it is used between elements that are grammatically coördinate. Punctuation is parenthetical when it is used to enclose subordinate elements.

SEPARATIVE PUNCTUATION

41. Use a comma between the members of a series, if the members of the series do not have interior punctuation. (See Section 45 for punctuation of a series containing interior punctuation.)

41 A. Between words in series:

There were deer, elk, and antelope in the valley.

He was a tall, ungainly, ill-dressed fellow.

They sighted airplanes, airplane carriers, and captive balloons on the western horizon.

41 B. Between phrases in series:

On the sidewalks, in the streets, even in the very air the streamers hung.

41 C. Between clauses in series when the clauses are simple in structure and do not have interior punctuation:

I will argue, I will protest, I will not surrender.

Whoever obeys, whoever believes, whoever has faith, that man will triumph.

Note 1. Generally clauses in a series, whether dependent or independent, are parallel in structure. The same thing is true of phrases in a series.

Note 2. Two coördinate adjectives, preceding the noun that they modify, are punctuated as if in series:

It was a tedious, empty oration.

When the adjectives are joined by *and,* do not use a comma:

A rich and happy life will be your reward.

But in a series of the form *a, b,* and *c,* the comma is usually retained before the conjunction *and*:

His manner was brisk, pert, and overbearing.
We looked in the woods, along the shore, and under the house.

Note: Some authorities hold that the last comma may be omitted in a series of the form *a, b,* and *c.* The omission of the comma would cause no confusion in a series of the following type:

We were tired, irritable and disgusted.

But in a sentence like the following the omission of the last comma would tend to cause momentary confusion and perhaps misreading:

There were statues, marble saints, paintings of Christ and His mother, and angels carved in wood.

THE COMMA IN THE COMPOUND SENTENCE

42. Use commas to separate the clauses of a compound sentence when the clauses are joined by the coördinating conjunctions *and, but, for, nor, or:*

At last election day came, and the voters went to the polls.
A crowd had gathered, but for some reason the speaker did not appear.
Neither were the supplies delivered, nor was any reason given for their failure to appear.
Henry VIII ought to have been an authority on marriage, for he was married six times.
Either you must obey the law, or you must take the consequences.

Exception: If the independent clauses are short, parallel in structure, and closely related in meaning, the comma may sometimes be omitted, even though the coördinating conjunction is present:

The houses shook and the earth trembled.
I laughed and I shouted.

THE SEMICOLON IN THE COMPOUND SENTENCE

43. Use the semicolon to separate the clauses of a compound sentence when those clauses are *not* joined by a coördinating conjunction (*and, but, for, or, nor*):

He went to Chicago; he did not go to Detroit.
The Smiths have decided to move; they want a larger house.

Caution: Conjunctive adverbs (*however, accordingly, so, also, moreover, nevertheless*) are not coördinating conjunctions. They serve the double purpose of linking sentences and of modifying, or of seeming to modify, the clause as a whole. The presence of a conjunctive adverb at the beginning of the second of two independent clauses does not abrogate the rule given above.

I was anxious to make an early start; however, Charles did not get the car packed until 9 o'clock.
The girls declared that they had not seen a movie in ages; therefore Henry had to lay down his book and go.
The hour was late; so we did not call.

43 A. When the clauses of a compound sentence have interior punctuation in one or more than one member, or when they are highly involved in structure, use a semicolon to separate the clauses, even though they are joined by a coördinating conjunction. (The rule applies to the coördinate parts of a compound-complex sentence.)

With some hesitation, therefore, because he was not sure of himself, he signed the contract; but he did so against his better judgment. (Interior punctuation in one member)
The Tennessee Valley Authority, administration leaders agree, is supposed to look after flood control, reforestation, soil erosion, and electric power; and that division of interests, unforeseen at the time of its creation, has caused much conflict and debate. (Interior punctuation in two members)
At this stage of the proceedings it is impossible to predict what will happen or when it will happen; but we shall soon find out whether the verdict is for our welfare or for our ruin.

43 B. A semicolon *may* be used to make an emphatic separation between the clauses of a compound sentence, even when the clauses are joined by a coördinating conjunction and have no interior punctuation or no great complexity. This rule gives permission; it does not command. The rule is a clear instance of punctuation for rhetorical emphasis:

> Of course the gentleman will speak; but let him speak.
> The book is on the stands; and who cares?

44. Three Degrees of Separation. The rules given for the punctuation of the compound sentence may be stated in a slightly different form, so as to emphasize the separative principle. Usage evidently takes into consideration both the conjunction and the mark of punctuation as establishing degrees of separation. The degrees of separation may be stated as follows:[1]

First Degree of Separation: Conjunction, without Punctuation

I will pitch and you will catch.

Second Degree of Separation: Comma and Conjunction

Jones and Smith will be the battery, and MacDonald will be the reserve pitcher.

Third Degree of Separation: Semicolon; or Semicolon and Conjunction.

Let us go to the auction; we have always wanted to attend one.
There was nothing that we wanted to buy; but, to show our good will, we bought a few trinkets.

45. Use the semicolon to separate phrases or clauses in a series, when the phrases or clauses have interior punctuation. Clauses in a series, even when they do not have interior punctuation, are often separated by semicolons:

The following officers were elected: Hector MacGregor, president; Marion O'Connor, vice-president; James D. Wilson, secretary and treasurer.

[1] As in John Crowe Ransom's *Topics for Freshman Writing*, pp. 447–448.

We know that these things are true: that the land is the source of life itself; that people who live on the land are close to this source; and that their vigor is something like the vigor of nature.

It is impossible to think such things; it is almost impossble to imagine them; and yet they do exist.

PARENTHETICAL PUNCTUATION (PUNCTUATION TO ENCLOSE)

46. Parenthetical matter of every sort must be punctuated by marks of enclosure at its beginning and end. Parenthesis marks, brackets, dashes, and commas are used as marks of enclosure.

PARENTHESIS MARKS

47. Use parenthesis marks to enclose matter not grammatically related to the sentence in which it stands. The matter must be foreign to the thought of the sentence or else clearly an insertion, interpolation, or afterthought:

Beneath the thick shade of the apple tree the old man could watch (who could forbid him this simple pleasure?) the slow movement of the sunlight and the intricate patterns of the leaf-shadows.

Please go to the grocery store (you know where it is) and get me a dozen eggs.

48. Observe the following rules for punctuation within the parenthesis marks:

a. If the matter included within the parenthesis is a question or exclamation, use a question mark or exclamation point inside the parenthesis. See Example 1, above.

b. If the sentence is declarative, use no punctuation. (See Example 2, above.)

c. If the matter included in the parenthesis is a complete and separate sentence, use a period (or other terminal punctuation) inside the parenthesis:

We once more decided to go. (It was the third time we had made the decision.) This time, the rain held off.

48 A. When a parenthesis occurs within a sentence, use no punctuation after it unless punctuation would normally be required at that point. A comma, semicolon, or colon coming after matter enclosed in parenthesis should stand *outside* the closing parenthesis mark:

If the edition is as large as Jim says (and I think it is), the publishers must expect a large sale.

BRACKETS

49. Brackets are a special form of parenthesis marks used *only* when a writer interpolates a comment or an interpretation in matter which he is quoting, or when an editor makes an insertion in matter that he is editing:

"Here the old burgher would sit in perfect silence," writes Washington Irving, "puffing his pipe, looking in the fire with half-shut eyes, and thinking of nothing for hours together; the goede vrouw [Dutch for *good wife*], on the opposite side, would employ herself busily in spinning yarn, or knitting stockings."

The note made no mention of the wound which General Jackson had received [i. e., during the first day's fighting at Chancellorsville], but congratulated General Lee upon the great victory.—From Colonel Charles Marshall's statement in Jones's *The Life and Letters of Robert E. Lee.*

In typed manuscript, brackets must generally be inserted by hand, since most typewriters lack the keys for brackets. Do not use parenthesis marks as a substitute for brackets.

50. COMMAS FOR PARENTHETICAL PUNCTUATION

50 A. Commas are used to enclose parenthetical matter which is not so unrelated to the sentence as to require parenthesis marks. The enclosure by commas therefore is generally used for subordinate members of a sentence, if those subordinate members are not necessary to make the sentence logically complete. The subordinate members thus enclosed may be words, phrases, or clauses.

Their parenthetical nature may be determined from the fact that they constitute *added,* not required, material.

50 B. Use commas to enclose appositives. An appositive is a noun or noun-phrase used to explain a preceding noun or pronoun. It is therefore considered added information, not necessary information:

Police Sergeant Marvin Johnson, the youngest man on the force, was first on the scene.

Wilhelm of Hohenzollern, last of the German emperors, lived in retirement at Doorn.

Exception: An appositive is not enclosed by commas if it forms an integral part of a proper name or if it is needed to identify the noun it follows:

Billy the Kid was a famous Western desperado.
Jack the Giant-killer is a character in a fairy story.
The poet Sidney Lanier was a native of Georgia.

50 C. Use commas to enclose vocatives. Vocatives are nouns or pronouns used in direct address:

Young man, who are you?

Father, please tell us that story again.

And what would you think, ladies and gentlemen, if Masko the Magician began to pull rabbits out of *your* hats?

50 D. Use commas to enclose year numerals, when they explain a preceding month date; geographical expressions which explain preceding geographical expressions:

On October 12, 1492, Columbus discovered America.

At Rochester, Minnesota, is one of our most notable medical establishments, the Mayo Clinic.

50 E. Use commas to enclose non-restrictive adjective modifiers. A non-restrictive adjective modifier may be either a single adjective, or a phrase or clause used as an adjective. (See Section 14 C.)

To determine whether an adjective modifier is non-restrictive or restrictive, apply the following test: If it conveys added, not essential, information, it is non-restrictive. If it conveys essential information, it is restrictive. Modifiers which identify a substantive or closely limit its meaning, so that the logic of the sentence will be injured by their omission, are restrictive.

A non-restrictive modifier is always enclosed.

A restrictive modifier is never enclosed.

Examples of Non-Restrictive Modifiers

(1) Single adjective:

a. A young man, enchanted, looks up at a lady, enchanting.

b. The armorial bearings are a lion, couchant, in a field, azure.

(2) Adjective phrase:

a. David Crockett was a jovial character, quick-witted and kind, quick with a song, too, and certainly quick with a rifle.

b. The street, empty and straight, lay before us in clear moonlight.

c. The speaker, gathering himself for a renewed effort, took a deep breath and started off at a higher pitch.

d. Missing the key, he looked a little abashed, but kept on singing, undaunted by the discord.

e. In the place of this motion I offer another one, perhaps with less rhetoric, but surely with more logic.

(3) Adjective clause:

a. The theory of divine right, which holds that kings derive their authority from God, was upheld by James I.

b. The Liberty Bell is kept in Independence Hall, where the Declaration of Independence was signed.

Examples of Restrictive Modifiers

a. The supporters *of this candidate* are not governed by reason.

The phrase, *of this candidate,* identifies one group of supporters.

b. You want me to build a house *larger than the old one.* I do not want to build a house *that large.*

The two adjective phrases in italics closely limit the meaning of the nouns they modify.

c. Men *who drive recklessly* are enemies of society.

The clause, *who drive recklessly,* is an adjective clause modifying *men.* It identifies a certain group of men.

Observe that in each of the above sentences the restrictive modifiers give essential, not added, information. If they are omitted, the logical meaning of the three sentences is changed entirely:

The supporters are not governed by reason.
You want me to build a house. I do not want to build a house.
Men are enemies of society.

50 F. Use commas to enclose non-restrictive adverbial modifiers. A non-restrictive adverbial modifier may be a simple adverb, or a phrase or clause used as an adverb.

Examples of Non-restrictive Adverbial Modifiers

(1) Adverb:

a. Reluctantly, Genevieve decided to accept the invitation.
b. She gave me her answer, modestly yet firmly.

(2) Phrase:

a. In just a moment now, you will hear the signal.
b. The whistle blew at last, with a long, melancholy wail.

(3) Clause:

a. I will do it, if you are absolutely sure that this document is authentic.
b. If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.
c. Go to the outer gate, just as soon as the car is ready.

50 G. It is not always easy to tell whether an adverbial modifier is restrictive or non-restrictive. In doubtful instances the writer must be ruled by his own sense of the meaning of his sentence. Observe, however, that, when adverbial modifiers are put in inverted order (when, for example, an adverb precedes both subject

and verb) they are generally punctuated as non-restrictive. Compare the following sentences:

a. Genevieve accepted the invitation reluctantly.
b. Reluctantly, Genevieve accepted the invitation.
a. Prepare to shed tears if you have any tears.
b. If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.
a. I shall go when I am called.
b. When I am called, I shall go.

50 H. Always set off a dependent clause preceding an independent clause if any slight confusion would result from the omission of punctuation:

Slightly confusing: While I hammered the woman kept on making sarcastic remarks.

Better: While I hammered, the woman kept on making sarcastic remarks.

Confusing: If, despite the condition of your eyes, you insist on reading your spectacles are in the upper left-hand drawer.

Better: If, despite the condition of your eyes, you insist on reading, your spectacles are in the upper left-hand drawer.

50 I. Use commas to enclose obviously parenthetical expressions. These are parenthetical expressions which do not have much grammatical function in the sentence, but which are added to improve the general meaning or to make clear the connection of the sentence or clause with a preceding sentence or clause:

These elm trees, on the other hand, have quite escaped the disease.

Examples of Obviously Parenthetical Expressions

On the other hand; all the same; none the less; on the contrary; however; nevertheless
On that account; accordingly; hence; therefore
Namely; to wit; that is; for example
For instance; say (for *let us say*); I suppose; generally speaking
In the first place; first; next; then; last

Caution: Some of the above expressions are called conjunctive adverbs: *however, moreover, accordingly, hence, so,* and others.

Conjunctive adverbs are enclosed when their adverbial function, within the clause where they stand, is stronger than their conjunctive function. If the conjunctive function is stronger, they are thought of as connectives and are not enclosed. They are much more likely to be enclosed when they do not stand at the beginning of a sentence or clause.

a. The house needed painting badly; moreover the roof needed mending.
b. The house needed painting badly; the roof, moreover, needed mending.
a. If a society does not breed virtuous men, it cannot govern itself; therefore let us be virtuous.
b. If a society does not breed virtuous men, it cannot govern itself: let us, therefore, be virtuous.

Always enclose the conjunctive adverb *however.* Only by such enclosure can it properly be distinguished from the subordinating conjunction *however*:

The waiter brought us the dessert; however, we were already sated and left it almost untouched.
I will not eat my dessert, however much you may tempt me.

50 J. Use commas to enclose absolute phrases. Absolute phrases are sometimes called nominative absolutes. Their construction is the equivalent of the ablative absolute in Latin:

My notes taken, I left the library.
My notes having been taken, I left the library.
The taxi being ready, I called John.

Caution: Distinguish the participial absolute phrase, as in the examples given above, from the participial phrase which modifies a sentence element:

Having taken my notes, I left the library.

The phrase, "having taken my notes," is a non-restrictive adjective phrase. Its main element is the participle *having taken,* but the construction is not absolute because the participle modifies the pronoun *I.*

50 K. Use commas to enclose interjections when the interjections are not of such force as to require the exclamation point:

Oh, why do you say that?
But the pass receiver, alas, kept dropping the ball.

50 L. Two commas are necessary to make an enclosure complete; or the comma may be combined with another mark of punctuation to make an enclosure.

(1) His remarks, I suppose, were out of order.

The two commas have the function of parenthesis marks. It would be as absurd to omit one of them as it would be to omit one of the parenthesis marks. Omission of one of a pair of parenthetical commas may alter the meaning of a sentence:

a. His remarks, to me at least, were out of order.
b. His remarks to me at least, were out of order.

(2) There were sandwiches, toothsome and large; and there were several enormous slabs of pie.

The semicolon after *toothsome and large* completes the enclosure, and it is unnecessary to have a comma also.

50 M. Never put a punctuation mark at the beginning of a sentence or clause. The rule given above ("two commas are necessary to enclose") does not apply when the parenthetical element stands at the beginning of a sentence or of a clause preceded by separative punctuation:

If you are men, take this to heart.

It would be absurd to place a comma before the word *if*. The capital letter serves, with the comma, to complete the enclosure.

We were given a pleasant room; moreover, it had a private bath.

It would be absurd and confusing to put a comma before the word *moreover*.

DASHES

51. Parenthetical matter may be enclosed by a pair of dashes when it seems desirable to emphasize the separateness of the matter thus enclosed. Thus used, dashes have the effect of parenthesis marks.

Just as I picked up my morning newspaper—it was lying on the doorstep as usual—I heard a shot next door.

52. QUOTATION MARKS

52 A. Use quotation marks to enclose a direct quotation. The rule applies to all quoted matter: (1) quoted speech, remarks, sayings, utterances; (2) quotations from printed or written matter; (3) quoted titles (except when italics are used—see Section 73 B).

52 B. Quoted speech:

a. "I can reserve the seats," said Henry, "but I can't pay for them until I get a check cashed."
b. "Move on," shouted the policeman.
c. "What did he say?"
"That Dickens was an English novelist."
The fat man was silent. He seemed to be chewing this thought. "Is that so?" he asked. "I thought it was a cuss word."

52 C. Excerpts from printed or written matter:

In *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* I find this saying: "It is in youth that we plant our chief habits and prejudices; it is in youth that we take our party as to profession, pursuits, and matrimony."

52 D. Literary titles—when quoted:

The titles of articles in periodicals, of essays, single poems, and of subordinate parts of larger works are generally enclosed in quotation marks:

a. I want you to read Bernard DeVoto's "Jonathan Dyer, Frontiersman," in *Harper's Magazine.*
b. Archibald MacLeish's "The End of the World" is a sonnet.

c. I have been reading Herbert Agar's "But Can It Be Done?" in the symposium called *Who Owns America?*

d. Have you seen an editorial, entitled "The New Dollar Diplomacy," in the *Times*?

Caution: Observe that the titles of books and periodicals are put in italics. See Section 73 B.

PUNCTUATION WITHIN THE QUOTATION

53. When an expression such as *he said* is interpolated within a quotation, the following usage should be observed:

(1) Each part of the quotation thus divided must be enclosed in quotation marks. The interpolated expression is normally treated as parenthetical and is enclosed by commas. The first of the two commas is placed within the quotation marks, as in the following example:

"I am anxious," he said, "to avoid a clash."

(2) If, however, each part of the quotation is a complete and separate sentence, place a period after the interpolated expression:

"I am going to try it," he shouted. "Nobody can stop me."

(3) The interpolated expression should be followed by a semicolon if the semicolon would be required after the first part of the quotation in case the expression were omitted:

"She is willing," he said; "and I, Heaven knows, and everybody in town knows, have been willing this good while."

53 A. Periods and commas occurring at the end of a quotation are placed within the quotation marks. See examples given above.

53 B. A question mark must be placed outside the quotation marks if the quotation is not itself a question but stands at the end of a main clause which is a question:

Will you swear that the accused used the words, "I intend to shoot"?

53 C. When quoting printed matter, reproduce exactly the punctuation of the original.

53 D. When a part of a quoted passage is omitted, indicate the omission by three periods (ellipsis):

Samuel Pepys's reference to the ballad, "Barbara Allen," is found in the entry made in his diary for January 2, 1666: "Up by candlelight again . . . and to my Lord Brouncker's, and there I find Sir J. Minnies and all his company . . . but, above all, my dear Mrs. Knipp, with whom I sang, and in perfect pleasure I was to hear her sing, and especially her little Scotch song of 'Barbary Allen' . . ."

QUOTATION WITHIN A QUOTATION

54. Use single quotation marks to enclose a quotation within a quotation:

Marquis James in his *Sam Houston* says this: "The infantrymen roared a volley and lunged forward drawing their hunting knives, 'Remember the Alamo! Remember the Alamo!' "

EXTENDED QUOTATION

55. A quotation that extends for more than one paragraph must have quotation marks at the beginning of each paragraph indention but at the end of the last paragraph only:

Seizing it, a fiery youth mounted upon the bowed shoulders of an old man, his sire; and with a shrill voice, ever and anon interrupted by outcries, read as follows:

"Sovereign kings of Vivenza! it is fit you should hearken to wisdom. But well aware that you give ear to little wisdom except your own; and that, as freemen, you are free to hunt down him who dissents from your majesties, I deem it proper to address you anonymously.

"And if it please you, you may ascribe this voice to the gods: for never will you trace it to man.

"It is not unknown, sovereign kings! that in these boisterous days, the lessons of history are almost discarded, as superseded by present experiences. And that while all Mardi's present has grown out of its past, it is becoming obsolete to refer to what has been. Yet, peradventure, the past is an apostle. . . .

"Time, but Time only, may enable you to cross the equator and give you the Arctic Circles for your boundaries."—Herman Melville, *Mardi.*

55 A. In typed or printed matter, extended quotations are often indented without quotation marks.

55 B. The following conventions are in approved use in typed manuscript containing quoted matter:

1. A *verse* quotation of a single line is not an "extended" quotation and is therefore "run on"—that is, included in quotation marks as a part of the text:

In the line from Sonnet LXXIII, "Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang," Shakespeare weaves a subtle counterpattern of verbal accents with metrical accents.

2. Two or more lines of *verse* are considered an "extended" quotation and should be typed without quotation marks, indented, and centered on the page. Do not "single-space" such quoted matter.

Matthew Arnold cited, as one of the touchstones of excellence in poetry, the following lines from Shakespeare's Sonnet LXXIII:

> That time of year thou mayst in me behold
> When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
> Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
> Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

3. *Prose* quotations of ten lines or more should be typed without quotation marks, indented, and centered on the page. Do not "single-space" such quoted matter.

56. In dialogue the words of each speaker are set in a separate paragraph:

"Are you coming?" said I, and opened the door of the car.

"Won't you wait just a minute?" she answered, fumbling in her purse.

"It's nearly eight o'clock." I was getting impatient, but she kept pulling things out and stuffing them back again.

"Well!"

"Well, what?"

"I've lost it."

57. Quotation marks are sometimes used to enclose single words when the word is thought of as a word apart from the idea that it represents:

The writing was illegible, and I could not tell whether the word was "hush" or "bush."

The word "tote" is used to mean "carry."

Modern usage favors italics instead of quotation marks in such instances (see Section 73 E):

I could not tell whether the word was *hush* or *bush*.

58. Quotation marks are rarely used to enclose foreign words:

Most American soldiers learned only a few French words, like "combien," "oui," "beaucoup."

The best usage prescribes italics (see Section 73 D):

Most American soldiers learned only a few French words, like *combien, oui, beaucoup*.

59. Quotation marks may be used to enclose slang expressions and technical terms. This use of quotation marks is now in some disfavor. The slang expression or technical term should not be used at all if it does not belong in the context where it appears. Or at least the use of quotation marks is not an adequate apology for the unnecessary or affected use of a slang word or technical term. But if the expression has the effect of a quotation, then it is proper to use quotation marks:

Bad: It was "hot" music, and we had "pep."

Correct: The old Vermont shanty-boy said that they cut only the trees which were "going by"—that is, the ripe timber.

C. PUNCTUATION TO INTRODUCE

60. Use the colon after a formal passage of introduction, when the introductory matter is followed by a list or an extended quotation. Introduction by a colon implies completeness in the list that follows or some extension or formality in a quotation.

Frequently such introductory matter will contain an expression like *as follows* or *the following:*

(1) The following officers were elected: Susan Anthony, president; A. J. Wheeler, vice-president; R. W. Badeau, secretary; J. Gould, treasurer.

(2) Writing of the red-headed woodpecker, Audubon makes the following comment: "With the exception of the mocking bird, I know no species so gay and frolicsome. Indeed, their whole life is one of pleasure. They find a superabundance of food everywhere, as well as the best facilities for raising their broods."

Note: A long quotation is considered to be a quotation of three sentences or more; or it is any formal quoted statement.

(3) Post-war fiction had three notable characteristics: a disillusioned point of view, a pessimistic philosophy, a love of experimentation for its own sake.

(4) We find the advocates of this policy argue thus: the economic system is too big for private control and must therefore be ruled by the government.

61. Use a comma after an expression like *he said* which introduces a brief quotation:

He replied, "I admit the charges."

62. An introductory expression which does not imply completeness, but which points out an instance or instances, an example or examples, is not considered formal and is not followed by a colon. A sentence containing such introductory matter will be punctuated according to the principles of separative and parenthetical punctuation, as the situation may demand:

(1) The old fellow had several weapons of offense and defense in his cabin; for example, a shotgun, an old-fashioned derringer, a muzzle-loading rifle, and something resembling a pike.

The sentence is punctuated as a compound sentence, the clauses of which are not joined by a coördinating conjunction. The words *he had* are understood at the beginning of the second clause. *For example* is parenthetical.

(2) The old man had an arsenal consisting of various weapons, such as an antiquarian might collect.

The clause beginning with *such as* is parenthetical. No punctuation after *such as.*

(3) When he got into this humor, he would do foolish things; for instance, he would tie up his head in a red bandanna.

Note that such expressions as *namely, for example, that is,* are directive expressions, used at the beginning of a clause or phrase which is added to explain a preceding clause or phrase. Do not attach them to the preceding, or introductory, matter. They belong with the added material.

Wrong: This candidate appeals to two types of voters, namely: those who are already out of work, and those who are afraid of being out of work.

Right: This candidate appeals to two types of voters: namely, those who are already out of work, and those who are afraid of being out of work.

63. Use a colon after the salutation of a letter:

Dear Sir:
My dear Professor Smith:
Gentlemen:

Summary: Uses of the Comma and the Semicolon

64. For convenient reference and for purposes of review, the uses of the comma and the semicolon may be listed as follows:

A. USES OF THE COMMA

Use the comma:

(1) Between members of a series when those members are not unwieldy or complex in character. (41 A, B, C)

(2) Between clauses of a compound sentence joined by a co-ordinating conjunction, especially when the clauses do not have interior punctuation. (42)

(3) To enclose parenthetical matter, such as appositives, vocatives, year numerals, geographical expressions. (50 A, B, C, D)

(4) To enclose non-restrictive modifiers, whether adjective or adverbial. (50 E, F)

(5) To set off a dependent clause preceding an independent clause. (50 H)

(6) To enclose obviously parenthetical matter not otherwise described in these rules. (50 I)

(7) To set off or enclose absolute phrases. (50 J)

(8) To set off mild interjections. (50 K)

(9) After expressions like *he said* when used to introduce a quotation. (61)

(10) After a quotation followed by an expression like *he said,* unless the sentence quoted is interrogative or exclamatory. (53)

(11) After expressions like *for example,* when used as introductory expressions. (62)

(12) Under certain circumstances, to prevent misreading. (66)

(13) Under certain circumstances, to mark the omission of a word or words. (67)

(14) After the complimentary close of a letter. (76)

B. USES OF THE SEMICOLON

Use the semicolon:

(1) Between members of a series when the members are rather complex or have interior punctuation. (45)

(2) Between clauses of a compound sentence not joined by a coördinating conjunction. (43)

(3) Between clauses of a compound sentence, even though joined by a coördinating conjunction, if one or more of the clauses is very complex or has interior punctuation. (43 A)

(4) Under certain conditions, to make an emphatic separation. (43 B)

D. SPECIAL RULES OF PUNCTUATION

65. Use a dash to mark a sudden interruption or digression:

The train will be on Track 7—no, on Track 11.

That was a good shot, Mr.—what is your name, anyhow?

Australia is a great sheep-raising country—but let's take up kangaroos first.

To indicate a dash in typed manuscript, type two hyphens with no blank space before or after.

65 A. Use a dash before a summarizing expression which stands near the end of a sentence:

One by one the neckties, tennis racquets, boxes, books, pennants, ash-trays, and the dozens of objects that strewed the room and made it look so familiar—all these were packed away.

65 B. A dash is sometimes used before introductory expressions, such as *that is, namely, to wit, viz.*

I want just one thing at the moment—namely, my dinner.
The powers were granted for the duration of the emergency—that is, for several years, for an indefinite period.

66. A comma may be used to prevent misreading:

Instead of John, Howard appeared.
Inside, Wu Fing, the Chinese cook, was singing.

67. A comma should be used to indicate the omission of a word or words which may be supplied or understood from the context:

In the East the climate is humid; in the West, dry.
This hat suits your hair and complexion; that one, not at all.

E. CONTRACTIONS, POSSESSIVES, PLURALS

68. Contractions occur when a letter or a series of letters is omitted from a word. A word thus contracted is often combined or fused with another word to form a single expression. The apostrophe is the symbol of such an omission and is used in various types of contraction.

68 A. Use the apostrophe to signify the omission of letters or figures:

They don't want to come.
Matilda isn't at home.
Aren't you tired?

I'm in a hurry.
The meeting is set for ten o'clock.
All this was far back in '61.
"Shet de do'," said Uncle Remus. "I'm feelin' po'ly today."

68 B. Use the apostrophe and *s* to form the possessive of nouns. The apostrophe in this instance really indicates a contraction. The old case-ending for the possessive was *-es*. The apostrophe indicates the omission of the letter *e*. There are, however, variations in the application of the rule:

(1) Singular nouns add apostrophe and *s*:

man . . . man's	Burns's poems
Mildred's	Mr. Jones's yard

(2) Plural nouns ending in *s* add the apostrophe only:

The soldiers' feet	The ladies' wraps
The orphans' food	The MacDonalds' house-party

(3) Plural nouns not ending in *s* add the apostrophe and *s*:

Women's hats	Men's opinions

(4) When nouns of two or more syllables ending in an *s* sound are not accented on the last syllable, and when the last syllable is preceded by an *s* or *z* sound, add merely the apostrophe to form the possessive:

Moses' tomb	For conscience' sake
Jesus' sake	Ulysses' travels

Proper nouns ending in *-es* add only the apostrophe when the accent is on the next to the last syllable:

Achilles' heel

(5) When joint possession is to be indicated (two or more nouns possessing the same thing), add an apostrophe and *s* after the last noun only:

Wilson and Downey's grocery store
Lilian and Josephine's arrival

(6) To form the possessive of compound nouns, add the apostrophe and *s* after the last element of the compound:

His son-in-law's house was large
She wanted her mother-in-law's opinion.

68 C. Use the apostrophe and *s* to form the possessive of impersonal or indefinite pronouns:

The captain wants everyone's opinion.
The girls brushed one another's hair.
Someone's umbrella has been left here.

68 D. Personal pronouns retain the inflectional endings of the old genitive case and do not use the apostrophe to form the possessive, even when the possessive form ends in *s*:

This book is hers.
The privilege is yours.
Its windows are broken.
The mistake was theirs.

Caution: Observe that the form *it's* is a contraction for *it is,* and is not a possessive.

69. The apostrophe is used with *s* to form the plural of letters, figures, symbols, and words referred to as words.

Dot your *i's* and cross your *t's.*
You may check the problem by counting out 9's.
I do not like resolutions containing so many *whereas's* and *therefore's.*
A Frenchman has difficulty in pronouncing our *the's* and *this's.*
All those +'s and −'s are confusing.

F. COMPOUNDS

70. A compound is an expression formed by the union of two or more words. The hyphen is sometimes but not always used to indicate a compound. Authorities do not agree perfectly on the matter of what compounds should be written solid (*blackboard*), or separate (*radio announcer, post office*), or with a hyphen joining

the parts. Since usage varies, it is best to consult a dictionary whenever there is doubt as to how an expression should be treated.

There are, however, certain types of expressions in which hyphenation has become a well-established convention:

a. Compounds in which the second element is capitalized: A pro-British account

b. Compounds containing prepositional phrases or based upon syntactical relations: father-in-law; all-controlling

c. Compounds containing the prefix *self*: self-starter

d. Compounds in which the hyphen is necessary to prevent confusion of the word with another word of similar form: The soldiers re-formed their ranks. Cleveland began civil-service reform.

e. Compounds which use the hyphen in order to avoid a wrong grouping or doubling of letters: will-less; co-operate

f. Compounds made up of a possessive case and a noun: bull's-eye

g. Most compound adjectives and adverbs: two-faced; well-nigh; evil-smelling

h. Compound numbers. The hyphen is used between the tens and units and between the numerator and the denominator of fractions: twenty-three; three-fourths

i. To avoid wrong linking of words: office-building designs (to avoid confusion with *office building-designs*)

G. DIVISION OF WORDS BY SYLLABLES

71. Use the hyphen to indicate syllabication. Ordinarily the need of such a division will arise at the end of a line, when it is necessary to divide a word and continue it on the next line. The hyphen must appear at the end of the line, not at the beginning of the following line. It may be placed only between syllables, never between parts of words that are not syllables.

Observe the following principles of division by syllables:

a. Do not divide monosyllables.

b. If two vowels are separated by only one consonant, place the consonant with the second vowel: A-ra-bi-an; co-lo-ni-al.

Exceptions: If the first syllable is short and has some stress, the consonant is placed with it: rap-id; vis-it.

Digraphs are treated as single consonants: sym-pa-thet-ic; o-phid-i-an.

c. The syllabic division is usually made after a prefix and before a suffix (except when letters are doubled before inflectional endings): pro-nounce; un-de-cid-ed; dole-ful; run-ning.

d. When two or more consonants stand between the vowels, the syllabic division falls between the consonants: in-tel-li-gence; ad-mis-sion.

V. MECHANICS

Under the heading, "Mechanics," come the conventions that grow out of usage rather than the demands of grammar, sentence structure, and punctuation. They are universally observed because of the neatness and clearness that they give to writing. Not to observe them is a mark of extreme carelessness or illiteracy.

CAPITALS

72. Capitalize all proper nouns and proper adjectives.

a. Names of persons:

Jefferson, Jeffersonian, William Shakespeare, Wagner, Wagnerian.

b. Geographical, political, and racial units:

France, the United States of America, Chinese, Lake Erie, California.

(In proper names like *the United States of America* do not capitalize prepositions and conjunctions.)

c. Names of months, days of the week, festivals:

October, Halloween, Thanksgiving Day, Tuesday

d. Literary titles. Capitalize the first word and each important word (prepositions and conjunctions are not considered important words):

O. Henry's "A Municipal Report"; Millay's *The Buck in the Snow;* Whitman's *Specimen Days in America*; Poe's *Tales of the Arabesque and Grotesque.*

Exception: In referring to the title of a periodical which begins with *a* or *the,* do not capitalize the first word:

I have been reading the Middlebury *Register.*

e. The word *God,* all its synonyms, and the pronouns referring to Deity:

We prayed to God, and He aided us in our trouble.
These are the works of the Almighty.

f. Historical events, laws, organizations, offices, departments of government (capitalize important words):

The Declaration of Independence, the Norman Conquest, the War of the Roses, the Dred Scott Decision, the Fugitive Slave Law, the Department of Commerce, the Secretary of the Interior, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

g. Personifications:

the Spirit of '76
"the mountain nymph, sweet Liberty"
"Let Nature be your teacher"

72 A. Capitalize the first word of every sentence:

For some reason, he insisted on a labyrinth near the summer house.

72 B. Capitalize the first word of every line of poetry:

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought,
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste.
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

72 C. Capitalize the first word of a direct quotation:

Benjamin Franklin is reported to have said: "We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately."

Note: Do not capitalize the first word of an indirect question:

I asked him whether he intended to order a steak.

72 D. Capitalize the first word of a sentence which is preceded by a very formal introduction:

This is the great teaching of the Greeks: Know thyself.
At this critical moment the overwhelming question is: Can we gain peace through war?

72 E. Capitalize the first word of the salutation and of the complimentary close of a letter:

Dear Professor Smith:	Cordially yours,
My dear President Bowers:	Yours very truly,

72 F. Capitalize titles prefixed to the names of persons:

Mr. Severance B. Wheeler	Mayor La Guardia
General John J. Pershing	Marquis de Lafayette
Sir Wilfred Grenfell	Justice Holmes

Senator Borah

72 G. Capitalize the pronoun *I* and the exclamation *O* (but not *oh*).

72 H. Do not capitalize:

a. The names of the seasons, unless they are personified.
b. Points of the compass, unless they refer to regions, sections, or districts:

The wind blew from the west.
Cotton-growing in the Southwest differs from cotton-growing in the states of the Old South.

c. Words like *company, street, river,* except when they are used as parts of a proper noun:

They will organize a new company.
The Twin Hills Real Estate Company was reorganized.

d. Words like *freshman, fraternity, college,* except when they are used as part of a proper noun:

He joined a fraternity.
He joined the Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity.

ITALICS

73. To the printer, italics mean a certain kind of type. Italics can be indicated in manuscript only by underlining the letters or words intended to be italicized.

73 A. Italicize a word or expression to which special emphasis is to be given:

Don't tell me that you *like* snails, pigs' feet, and tripe.

At last they reached the edge of the chasm and began to search for the footbridge by which they had crossed earlier in the day. *There was no bridge.*

Caution: Do not make a habit of using italics for emphasis. A frequent use of italics for emphasis is a mark of affectation.

73 B. Italicize the titles of books, plays, periodicals, and works of art:

You will find the story in *Harper's Magazine.*

Tolstoi's *War and Peace* deals with the Napoleonic wars.

Eugene O'Neill's *Strange Interlude* was influenced by Freudian psychology.

You will find the editorial in the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch.*

Note 1. Manuals of punctuation and usage generally hold that the article preceding the title proper of a magazine should not be italicized, and that neither the article nor the name of a city preceding the title of a newspaper should be italicized. This rule is illustrated in the following sentences:

The editorial appeared in the *Nation.*
He reads the New York *Herald Tribune.*

In actual practice, however, usage varies greatly. Often the article preceding the title of a magazine is considered a part of the title, and is capitalized and italicized: *The New Yorker; The Southern Re-*

view. And often the name of the city preceding the title of a newspaper is held to be a part of the title: the *London Times;* the *Chicago Daily News*. Institutions, scholars, printing houses often have their own rules for italicization of titles. Whatever rule is adopted should be followed consistently.

Note 2. Observe that titles of short stories, essays, magazine articles, poems, chapters, or any subdivisions of a complete work are generally enclosed by quotation marks and are not put in italics:

Have you read "Corporal Hardy" in *Harper's Magazine*?

73 C. Italicize names of ships, trains, airplanes:

There is an American ballad about the sinking of the *Titanic*.
We will arrive on the *Dixie Flyer*.
The name of the new airplane is the *Hurricane*.

73 D. Italicize foreign words that have not become naturalized in English:

I can still remember the old Frenchman's *mais oui* and *alors*.
This is called his *Sturm und Drang* period.
They sang the *Dies Irae*.

73 E. Italicize letters when they are referred to as letters, and words when they are referred to as words:

Your *q's* look like *g's*.
The words *outstanding, constructive, service* should be struck out. Find something more vivid.

ABBREVIATIONS

Convention allows the use of a few common abbreviations in ordinary writing. In scholarly and technical writing the number of abbreviations used is much greater. Often, as in dictionaries, encyclopedias, and scientific textbooks, special systems of abbreviation are devised for which keys must be provided. These can be dealt with as a reader encounters them. For ordinary writing, the important thing is to know what to abbreviate and what not to abbreviate.

74. The common abbreviations are as follows:

a. *Dr., Mr., Mrs., Rev.,* and *St.* (for Saint), when used before proper names:

Dr. Wentworth is our family physician.

Caution: Mr. and *Mrs.* are never written in full.

b. Abbreviations of degrees and honorary titles (*A.B., LL.D., Ph.D., Esq., Jr., Sr., M.P.*), when they appear after proper names.

c. The abbreviations *A. M.* and *P. M.* when used to designate an exact hour:

Right: The class meets at 9 A. M.
Wrong: We spent the P. M. studying.

d. The abbreviations *$* (for *dollars*), *No.* (for *number*), *A. D.* (*Anno Domini*), *B. C.* (*Before Christ*) when they are used with numerals.

74 A. In formal writing, these abbreviations are approved:

i. e. (*id est:* that is), *e. g.* (*exempli gratia:* for example), *viz.* (*videlicet:* namely), *Q.E.D.* (*quod erat demonstrandum:* which was to be proved). But it is always proper to use the English terms, unabbreviated: *that is, for example, namely.*

74 B. In general, avoid abbreviations except the common abbreviations listed above.

In ordinary writing, do not abbreviate the terms listed below:

(1) The names of states, counties, and cities.

It is permissible to abbreviate the names of states in lists or in addresses; but to avoid errors it is better to spell out the names of states in full when addressing envelopes.

(2) The names of months.

Write *September 12, 1952;* not *Sept. 12, 1952.*

(3) Given names.

Write *William, Joseph, Charles, George, John,* not *Wm., Jos., Chas., Geo., Jno.*

(4) The expressions *and so forth, and the like.* (Avoid the abbreviation *etc.*)

Wrong: Picks, spades, axes, *etc.*
Right: Picks, spades, axes, and so forth.
Picks, spades, axes, and the like.

(5) *Company* and *Incorporated.* (Avoid using *Co.* and *Inc.*)

(6) Such words as *avenue, street, boulevard, building, road.* These should be written out, even when used with a proper noun: *Spruce Street,* not *Spruce St.*

For a list of the abbreviations used in footnotes, see Chapter VIII, page 460.

REPRESENTATION OF NUMBERS

For the sake of clearness and economy, it is customary in certain instances to use figures, rather than words, to represent numbers.

75. Use figures to represent dates, street numbers, room numbers, telephone numbers, volume, chapter, and page numbers, hours (when the hour numeral is followed by *A. M.* or *P. M.*):

The *Pan-American* is due at 12:12 P. M.
He lives at 320 Mockingbird Road.
Address the box to me at 55 Kensington Hall.
Call me at Hemlock 5586-W.
The statement occurs in Beard's *The Rise of American Civilization,* Volume I, page 35.

75 A. Use figures for numbers which would require more than one or two words for representation if spelled out:

Five freshmen and twenty-eight sophomores were present.
Harvard University is over three hundred years old.
The College of William and Mary was chartered in 1693.
The turnstiles registered 25,127 admissions.
The per capita farm income for New York state in 1929 was $493. In Tennessee it was $137.

75 B. Use figures to represent each number in a passage containing several numbers or a group of statistics:

To illustrate per capita farm income in 1929 the following figures may be selected: for the Southeast, $183; for the Northeast, $366; for the Middle States, $262.

75 C. Use Roman numerals for volume and chapter numbers and for the main divisions of outlines.

EXERCISES IN PUNCTUATION

A. Punctuation of a Series

1. A new cabin painted a bright red a gaudy beach umbrella on the weedy lawn and a freshly graveled road winding up the slope all of it fitted Paul's description of his cottage.

2. Something was moving through the woods unskillfully yet not clumsily and quite purposefully.

3. The major features of this historic movement were as follows first journeys by hunters and explorers second establishment of trade relations with the Indian nations third extension of the settlements toward the Indian boundaries with the cattle herders always at the point of farthest advance fourth illegal encroachment upon the Indian lands themselves fifth an approximate encirclement of the Indian lands after their reduction by war and treaty and last dispossession and removal of the remnants of the Indian nations.

4. The table was set the candles were lit the guests were assembled but where was the hostess?

5. Over meadow forest and mountain streamed a golden light.

6. On such a fine clear day we came into harbor and saw once more the beloved old city; wind-swept rugged but peaceful just as we had remembered it.

7. I have always thought him a fumbling, hesitant speaker.

8. The city editor told him to call police headquarters, all the hospitals, and all the hotels.

9. For the first semester his course included English composition chemistry, social science, mathematics, and French.

10. What an idiotically foolish, impudent, yet obviously innocent, remark it was!

11. To maintain his health, Colonel Sayers fished, hunted, and exercised constantly.

B. Compound Sentences

1. Who is your candidate and what do you expect him to achieve?

2. The reviews were largely unfavorable but we found the exhibit interesting in a coarse and brutal sort of way.

3. If romantic zest is the quality which you seek in a writer of fiction Joyce is not the man to read but if you enjoy grappling with a complex somewhat embittered mind perhaps not unlike your own in some essentials then you should undertake to study him.

4. An artist should free himself from the shackles of rules and fashions he should be himself or nothing.

5. Roses may be used as border flowers or they may be given a place apart in their own little formal garden.

6. The tugs back off and turn away then imperceptibly but steadily the great ship picks up speed.

7. Throughout World War II my family lived at Augusta then we moved back to St. Louis.

8. As we climbed the lofty steps to the portico we could imagine ourselves visitors to fifth century Athens when we entered the great bronze doors the illusion was shattered.

9. Cotton is no longer as it used to be the great staple crop in fact large areas of the old cotton country are now devoted to cattle raising and diversified farming.

10. Marry in haste and repent at leisure.

11. Every one leaves after the cowboy show for it is supper-time and the boys must learn their lessons.

12. I suppose I was lucky for someone yelled at me and I ducked my head just in time.

C. Parenthetical Elements

1. This war like any other war was a tragedy.

2. To begin with an agreement would have to be reached between the company and the union.

3. On this day Longstreet and Ewell moved to Culpeper Courthouse Virginia while Hill's corps remained at Fredericksburg.

4. The office is at 386 Fourth Avenue New York N Y.

5. In this region the Pacific states California Washington and Oregon are necessarily included.

6. Abraham Lincoln you must realize had access to the telegraph but not to the telephone.

7. William Gilmore Simms author of The Partisan Woodcraft and other novels was born on April 17 1806 in Charleston South Carolina.

8. President Andrew Old Hickory Jackson should not be confused with General Thomas Jonathan Stonewall Jackson the Confederate military genius.

9. The Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company you know it now simply as A & P began its career by selling tea and coffee not miscellaneous groceries.

10. The horse-riding Comanche Indian with his osage orange bois d'arc bow was more than a match for the pioneer equipped only with a muzzle-loading rifle.

11. Men with previous governmental experience William Howard Taft and Warren Harding are notable examples have not always been conspicuously successful in the capacity of President of the United States.

12. Do not forget my dear Sir that James Thurber no less has written an essay on this very subject.

13. The forces of William Duke of Normandy and Harold the last of the Saxon kings met in decisive battle at Hastings in 1066.

14. William the Conqueror defeated the Saxon army at the battle of Hastings.

15. A volume entitled Lyrical Ballads the joint work of Wordsworth and Coleridge was published in 1798.

D. Restrictives and Non-Restrictives

1. Mr. Browder who is a deacon in the church and a very religious man attends the prayer service every Wednesday night.

2. One hundred and fifty years after the great Norwegian con-

queror Rollo became the first Duke of Normandy William the Conqueror was born.

3. The problem that concerns us in the Missouri Valley is too complex to be pigeon-holed under any one heading such as "land use" "conservation" "flood control."

4. After reading various comments I find myself equally confused by those sports editors who believe athletic reform desirable but impracticable and those who with astonishing frankness admit it to be practicable but think it undesirable.

5. A scientist of any standing would not flinch before the problem which considered in strictly scientific terms is not insoluble.

6. Ask that question of the girl at the front desk the one who answers the telephone.

7. You may get the desired information from Mr. Brown's secretary who has a desk near the entrance.

8. A boy with whom I used to go to school spoke to me on the train.

9. Dr. E.C. Jones a professor we all know well will address the meeting.

10. I shall be sorry if he is not elected but even if he is elected I am not sure that real improvement will result.

11. Far down the moonlit street which at that time of night carried little traffic I heard the old song that I remembered from childhood days.

12. In the rear of the house at some distance from the original garden he is laying out a new much more ambitious garden formal in character and extensive in area with flower-bordered paths and green-hedged alcoves guarded by symbolic statues.

E. Quoted Material

1. When I find a well-drawn character in fiction or biography wrote Samuel Clemens in Life on the Mississippi I generally take a warm personal interest in him for the reason that I have known him before—met him on the river.

2. The difference between my opponent and myself the candidate declared is that he speaks for the morning newspaper of our capital city while I speak for the people of the state.

3. The passage from Ben Jonson is as follows for a man to write well there are required three necessaries to read the best authors observe the best speakers and much exercise of his own style.

4. When I came downstairs Rachel was reading the evening paper she did not look up arent we going I asked going where she said putting down the paper to see the play dont you remember Rachel Bill she said you told me you had decided not to you said you had seen the skin of our teeth once and you didnt want to see it again no I answered it was the Shaw play arms and the man or something like that that I was talking about.

5. We sang the old hymn which you remember begins on Jordan's stormy banks I stand and cast a wishful eye to Canaan's fair and happy land where my possessions lie.

6. Did the defendant say in so many words the accident was my fault

7. In a footnote on page 24 of *The Times of Melville and Whitman* Mr. Van Wyck Brooks quotes Bayard Taylor as follows I stopped at a bookstore [in Edinburgh, 1844] . . . and to my surprise nearly half the works were by American authors. . . . The bookseller told me he had sold more of Ware's letters than any other book in his shop and also to use his own words an immense number of the great Dr. Channing.

8. Samuel Clemens went to absurd lengths in claiming that Sir Walter Scott did I quote more real and lasting harm perhaps than any other individual that ever wrote.

F. Mechanics

The sentences in the following exercise are to be corrected in accordance with the rules for the use of capital letters, italics, abbreviations, and representation of numbers. Other applicable rules should also be observed.

1. Evelina is only a third or fourth cousin I am sure, but I always address her as cousin Evelina.

2. He is likely to join a fraternity, in fact, the deltas, dekes, and kappa sigmas are sure to give him bids.

3. Mr. Brown, while he was at college, was a member of the following organizations; phi delta theta fraternity, varsity football squad avon players, student christian association and the owl club.

4. The foreign equivalents of the English title mr. are; monsieur in french; señor in spanish, herr in german; signor in italian.

5. The musical abbreviation d s means go back to the sign.

6. In the letters you write me I cant tell the difference between your ms and your ws or even between your as and your os.

7. The word for is sometimes classified as a coordinating conjunction.

8. The great west of more modern times is the transmississippi country such terms as the old northwest and the old southwest therefore need to be defined.

9. The story of the battle between the Chesapeake and the Shannon was told in a ballad, and the ballad of the constitution, and the guerriere follows exactly the same model.

10. The lazy crow, a story of witchcraft very humorously related will be found in the collection The wigwam and the cabin by William gilmore simms.

11. Columbus day is Oct. 12th and there is no other holiday until the thirty-first, when halloween is celebrated.

13. The report pointed out that approximately one million of the three million five hundred thousand persons in the armed forces are under twenty-one, and that twenty-one is the voting age in all states except Georgia, where the voting age is eighteen.

14. Begin by dividing the pie into 4ths, then divide each ¼ into ½s, and you will have 8ths.

15. May I refer you to the sunday edition of the cleveland plain dealer of July twelfth nineteen fiftytwo.

16. As the nineteen thirties began the average southern farmer was reported to be receiving an annual cash income of one hundred and eighty six dollars and the average southern tenant or share-cropper seventy three dollars.

17. Of the rural negroes in louisiana seventy five % engaged in cotton farming twenty % in sugarcane growing and three % in rice farming.

18. Cleanth Brooks article a note on thomas hardy will be found in the hopkins review volume five summer nineteen fifty two pages sixty eight to seventy nine.

G. Miscellaneous

1. On board the Kon-Tiki were six men Thor Heyerdahl the author Herman Watzinger an engineer Erik Hesselberg who operated the sextant Kurt Heugland and a man named Torstein who operated the radio and Bengt Danielsson an ethnologist.

2. Lawrence then began an attack upon science through his many novels essays and poems an attack which enlisted many followers.

3. Most farmers would rather have a 2 or 3 hundred acre farm a glorified kingdom than all the money in the world.

4. Hand to hand combat of the medieval type could never attain the large scale viciousness of modern warfare.

5. During the middle part of the 1700s trade west of the Allegheny Mts. was well organized and no figure in the colonies was more important in that trade than Sir Wm. Johnston.

6. Burbage was confounded by the lords of the privy council who supported a petition against construction of the theater.

7. Printing is known to have originated in China during the t'ang dynasty which lasted from six hundred and eighteen until nine hundred and seven.

8. This country has a knack for pulling through so I think we have lost no real ground by refusing to act belligerently.

9. Naturally we associate the greeks with this building for it is an exact replica of their most remarkable work of art a temple which epitomizes hellenic culture of the fifth century b c.

10. To escape the chromatic aberration of the galilean telescope Newton turned to mirrors and reflected light for reflected light that is light which suffers a change of direction as a result of striking an object such as a mirror would not pass through a second medium and would not therefore suffer this color distortion.

11. In my edition of Shakespeare's sonnets the line reads O let my books be then the eloquence and dumb presagers of my speaking breast but from the notes of a recent scholarly edition Shakespeare's sonnets edited by Tucker Brooke I see that certain Shake-

spearean scholars prefer to emend the text and to substitute looks for books.

12. It must be his proBritish attitude that makes him affect those baggy tweeds and scorn Americanmade woollens.

13. He read off a long list of sources including PMLA some special studies made by Unesco and even the official reports of the Tenn. Valley authority I almost expected him to begin to cite passages from the hearings of the House unamerican activities committee and from the proceedings of the U.N. assembly.

14. You will find the essay in one of Thurber's books perhaps in my life and hard times or else in leave your mind alone.

VI. BUSINESS LETTERS

76. The form of business letters follows certain well-established conventions. The parts of a business letter and the conventions governing each part are explained below:

The Heading.—The heading is placed in the upper right-hand corner of the page. It should contain the address of the writer (street address, city, and state), and the date. If a printed letterhead is used, the written heading should contain only the date.

The heading may be blocked or indented; the punctuation may be open or closed. The blocked heading with open punctuation is in more common use today. If this style is used for the heading, it should also be used for the inside address.

Blocked, with open punctuation	120 North Sixth Street Elyria, Ohio January 12, 19—
Indented, with open punctuation	120 North Sixth Street Elyria, Ohio January 12, 19—
Blocked, with closed punctuation	120 North Sixth Street, Elyria, Ohio, January 12, 19—.
Indented, with closed punctuation	120 North Sixth Street, Elyria, Ohio, January 12, 19—.

The Inside Address.—The inside address is placed about one inch from the left-hand edge of the paper, at least a double space below the last line of the heading. Like the heading, the inside address may use either the blocked or the indented form, and either open or closed punctuation. The inside address should contain the name and the address of the person, company, or organization to whom the letter is being written.

Charles Scribner's Sons
597 Fifth Avenue
New York City

The Salutation.—The words used in the salutation should vary according to whether the salutation is formal or less formal.

Formal Salutations:

My dear Sir:
My dear Mr. Brown:
My dear Miss Thompson:

Less Formal Salutations:

Dear Mr. Brown:
Dear Miss Thompson:
Dear Sir:
Gentlemen:
Dear Madam:
Dear Mrs. Smith:

The Body of the Letter.—The letter should be centered on the page and should have ample margins on each side. See that the inside address, the salutation, and the body of the letter are aligned on the left-hand side. All paragraphs should be indented at the same distance.

The Complimentary Close.—The complimentary close should be placed two or three spaces below the last line of the body of the letter and somewhat to the right of the center of the page.

The form used for the complimentary close will depend upon the degree of formality implied in the communication. When

writing to persons in high office or to someone older than yourself, use the following forms:

Respectfully,
Respectfully yours,
Yours respectfully,

The common forms are:

Yours truly,
Yours very truly,
Very truly yours,

The Signature.—In typewritten letters, the signature should be typed as well as written in long-hand, if there is any possibility that it may not be readily legible.

The Outside Address.—The outside address should be centered on the envelope. The return address should be placed in the upper left-hand corner. Follow the same rules of form as are observed for the heading and inside address.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

(1) Follow carefully the punctuation given in the models. Remember that the salutation is always followed by a colon and that the complimentary close is always followed by a comma. The first word of the salutation is capitalized. The word *dear* is capitalized only when it is the first word. Only the first word of the complimentary close is capitalized.

(2) Avoid abbreviations. Use only those abbreviations that are approved for common use (see Section 74 A, B). Follow the rules given in Section 75 for the representation of numbers.

(3) The following are some of the titles of courtesy or respect which are used before the name of the person addressed:

Mrs.	a married woman (plural *Mesdames*)
Miss	an unmarried woman (plural *Misses*)
Mr.	a man
Master	a young boy
Dr.	a physician, a Doctor of Philosophy, a Doctor of Divinity

Reverend	a minister or priest
Professor	a professor
The Honorable (Hon.)	for government officials of high rank, including members of Congress, cabinet officials, governors of states, members of state legislatures, and the like.

For a complete list of titles of courtesy, see Emily Post's *Etiquette*.

MODEL OF A COMPLETE BUSINESS LETTER

3612 Cumberland Avenue
Nashville, Tennessee
February 1, 19—

The Library of Congress
Washington, D. C.

Gentlemen:

I have been informed that the Library of Congress, through one of its divisions, has made many phonograph recordings of American folk-songs as they are actually rendered by folk-singers in various parts of the United States. My understanding is that selected groups of these songs have been assembled in record albums which are available for purchase.

If you will kindly furnish me with bulletins or catalogues which will indicate the nature and scope of these albums, I shall be greatly obliged. I wish to know, also, whether these albums are sold to the general public, and on what terms, or whether they are distributed only through institutional channels.

Yours very truly,

James D. Robertson

VII. PREFIXES AND SUFFIXES USED IN THE FORMATION OF ENGLISH WORDS

77. Prefixes and Suffixes derived from Anglo-Saxon.

The following list shows the meaning and application of prefixes and suffixes derived from Anglo-Saxon and used in English words.

A. PREFIXES

Prefixes and Their Meaning	*Examples*
a-: on, in, at	aboard, asleep, across, alike
be-: about, all around, over	besiege, becalm, become, bespeak
for-: forth, away, gone, thoroughly (with the implication of "risk, disadvantage, loss")	forbid, forget, forgive, forgo, forsake
fore-: before	foretell, forebode, forenoon
in-: in	inset, inlet, income
mis-: ill, wrongly	misbehavior, mislead, misbegotten
over-: over, beyond, in excess	overload, overthrow, oversight
out-: out, outer, outside, beyond	outlay, outhouse, outlander
un-: not (with verbs it denotes "the opposite," "intensity")	unheroic, undo, unlike, uncouth, undue
under-: under	understand, undertone, underline
y-: obsolete sign of past participle, found in certain archaisms	yclept ("called")

B. SUFFIXES

Suffixes and Their Meaning	*Examples*
-dom: dominion, state	kingdom, serfdom, thraldom, wisdom
-er (*-ier, -yer*)*:* agent, the one acting	player, maker, clothier, lawyer
-ful: full of, the quantity that would fill	beautiful, awful, cupful, basketful
-hood: state, condition	neighborhood, falsehood, maidenhood, hardihood
(*-y*) *-ie:* diminutive meaning "little" or implying affection	kitty, dearie, Johnny
-ish: belonging to, like	bookish, smallish, childish
-kin: also a diminutive meaning "little"	lambkin, manikin, Watkins
-less: without, unable to	friendless, witless, helpless
-like: resembling	childlike, warlike
-ling: little (sometimes implying contempt)	underling, hireling, worldling (but also darling)

-ness: quality of	goodness, business, darkness
-ship: state, skill	scholarship, marksmanship
-ster: person	huckster, youngster, songster
-ward (*-wards*): direction to	outward, downward, forward, homeward
-ways (*-wise*): way, manner	endways, lengthwise, otherwise

78. Prefixes and Suffixes derived from Latin and Greek.

The following is a list of prefixes derived from Latin and Greek and used in English words.

PREFIXES

Latin Prefixes and Their Meanings	*Examples*
a-, ab-, abs-: away, from	avert, absent, abstract
ad-, ac-, af-: to, toward	admit, accept, affirm
ambi-: around	ambiguous
ante-: before	anteroom
bene-: well	benefit
bi-: two	bisect
circum-: around	circumference
com-, col-, con-, co-: with, together	comfort, college, condone, cohere
contra-: against	contrast, contraband
de-: down (from), off, completely, negative force	destroy, despise, denude, degenerate
dis-: apart, away, negative force	diverge, dismiss, discourage
e-, ex-, ef-: out, from, completely	evict, exclusive, effort
extra-: outside, beyond	extramural, extraordinary
in-, il-, im-, ir-: in, on, into, toward, intensive force, negative force	include, inscribe, illustrate, intend, irresolute
inter-: between, at intervals	interfere, intersperse
intra-: inside, within	intrastate
intro-: within, into, inward	introduce, introvert
juxta-: beside	juxtapose
mal-: ill, bad, badly	malcontent
multi-: much, many	multigraph
non-: not	nonage, nonadjacent

ob-, oc-, of-, op-: toward, against, upon, reversely	obstruct, occasion, offer, oppose
per-: through, thorough, wrongly	percolate, perfect, perjure
post-: behind, after	postlude, postgraduate
pre-: before	prefix, precept
preter-: beyond, more than	preternatural
pro-: before, forth, for	proceed, propel, pronoun
re-, red-: back, again	recline, refill, redeem
retro-: backwards	retrospect
se-: aside, away	secrete
semi-: half	semicircle
sub-, suc-, sup-, sus-: under, below	subagent, subnormal, succor, suppose, sustain
subter-: below, less than	subterfuge
super-: over, above	superimpose, supernatural
trans-: across, over, through	transact, translate, transparent
tri-: three	triangle, tristate
ultra-: beyond, excessively	ultramarine, ultraconservative
uni-: one	uniform
vice-: one who takes the place of	viceroy

Greek Prefixes and Their Meanings	*Examples*
a-, an-: not, without	aphasia, anemia
amphi-: around, about, both	amphitheatre, amphibious
ana-: up, back, again	anatomy, anapest, anamorphosis
anti-, ant-: against, opposite, not	antiseptic, antarctic, antisocial
apo-, aph-: from, away from, off, separate	apostrophe, aphorism
arch-: chief, prime	archduke
cata-, cath-: down, away, against, completely	catastrophe, cathode, catabolism, catalysis
di-, dis-: double, twice	diphthong, dissyllabic
dia-: through, apart, across	diagonal, diadem
dys-: hard, ill, bad	dyspeptic
en-, el-, em-: in	energy, ellipse, emphasis
epi-, ep-, eph-: upon, beside, among, above	epilogue, epidemic, epoch, ephemeral
eu-, ev-: well, good	euphony, evangelist

ex-, ec-: out of	exodus, eclipse
hemi-: half	hemisphere
hetero-: other, different	heterodox
homo-: the same, common	homogeneous
hyper-: over, excessive	hyperacidity, hyperbole
neo-: new, recent, late	neolithic
para-, par-: beside, beyond, amiss	parasite, paroxysm, parody
peri-: around	period, periphery
pro-: before	prologue
proto-: first	protocol
pseudo-: false, counterfeit, pretended	pseudonym
syn-, sy-, syl-, sym-: with, at the same time, together, like	synonym, system, syllable, symphony

SUFFIXES

The following is a list of suffixes derived from Greek and Latin and used in English words:

Noun Suffixes and Their Meanings	*Examples*
-ant, -ent: denote a person or thing acting as agent	agent, applicant, secant
-ary: engaged in, a place for	antiquary, library
-ation, -ition: denotes action, state, or quality	resignation, stagnation, ambition
-ic, -ics: pertaining to	music, civics
-ion, -sion, -tion: denotes an act, or process; also, its result; state, condition	rebellion, illusion, solution
-ist: denotes the agent	artist, physicist
-ite: native or citizen of, adherent of; a mineral or chemical, a fossil	Townsendite, anthracite, trilobite
-or: agent	doctor, sponsor, tutor
-osis: condition, state, process, physiological formation	psychosis, osmosis, thrombosis
-tude: denotes state, condition, quality	gratitude, servitude, pulchritude

Adjective Suffixes and Their Meanings	*Examples*
-able, -ible: denotes fitness, capacity, tendency	edible, noticeable, agreeable
-ac, -ic: relating to, pertaining to	elegiac, aquatic
-aceous, -acious: pertaining to, of the nature of, like	veracious, pugnacious, herbaceous
-an, -ian: belonging or pertaining to	Bostonian, urban
-ous, -ious: having the quality of, like	arduous, prosperous, seditious

Verb Suffixes and Their Meanings	*Examples*
-ate (Latin): used to make verbs from nouns and adjectives	donate, repudiate
-esce (Latin): inchoative ending	coalesce, convalesce
-fy (Latin, through French): make	amplify, pacify
-ise, -ize (Greek): to subject to; to render; in chemistry, to combine with; to practice	botanize, satirize, Christianize, sterilize

VIII. SPELLING

79. Rules for spelling. The irregularities and inconsistencies of the English language are nowhere more evident than in the spelling of English words. The student who has trouble with spelling can only be admonished to use his dictionary, to examine carefully the structure and syllabication of all words with which he has difficulty, and to use every opportunity to improve his visual memory of words. It is impossible to record here all the complex rules—and equally complex lists of exceptions—which regulate the spelling of English words. A few rules are selected for record here in order to emphasize the practical reasons that determine certain spellings. These rules have to do largely with the changes of spelling that occur when endings are added. For a more complete discussion, see the dictionary.

a. Insert a *k* in words ending in *c* when adding a suffix beginning with *e, i,* or *y: picnic, picnicking, picnicker.* The *k* is inserted in order to preserve the hard *c.*

b. Monosyllables and words accented on the last syllable, when ending in a single consonant (except *h* and *x*) preceded by a single vowel, double the consonant before suffixes beginning with a vowel. The doubling is essential to preserve the short sound of the vowel.

drum, drumming, drummed
man, mannish
run, runner

Exceptions: inferable, transferable, gaseous, gasify (but *gassed, gassing, gassy*); and derivatives in which the accent is thrown back on another syllable, as *infér,* ínference; *refér,* réference.

c. Words ending in silent *e* generally drop the *e* before suffixes beginning with a vowel.

manage, managing *live, livable*
confide, confiding *endure, endurance*

Exceptions: In certain words final *e* is retained in order to prevent mispronunciation: *hoeing, shoeing, toeing; singeing, tingeing, swingeing* (to prevent confusion with *singing, tinging,* etc.).

The final *e* is retained in words ending in *-ce* and *-ge* before a suffix beginning with *-a* or *-o* (except *mortgage, mortgagor*) to prevent *c* and *g* from having a hard sound.

notice, noticeable *courage, courageous*

d. Many words ending in silent *e* immediately preceded by another vowel (except *e*) drop the *e* when adding a suffix beginning with a consonant: *due, duly; argue, argument; awe, awful.* Before suffixes beginning with a consonant, the silent *e* is dropped in *wholly, nursling, abridgment,* and *judgment.*

e. Words ending in *-ie* generally drop the *e* and change the *i* to *y* before *-ing.*

die, dying *lie, lying*

f. Words ending in *y* preceded by a consonant usually change the *y* to *i* before any suffix except one beginning with *i.*

merry, merrily
carry, carries, carried (but *carrying*)
fly, flies
heresy, heresies

Exceptions: Adjectives of one syllable ending in *y* have comparatives and superlatives both in *-ier, -iest* and in *-yer, -yest* (*sly, slier* or *slyer*). Such adjectives usually retain *-y* before *-ly* and *-ness.* (See dictionary for exceptions.)

g. Words with the digraph *ei* or *ie* pronounced *ee* are usually spelled *ie,* except after *c.* (The key-word *Celia* provides a good mnemonic device for keeping this rule in mind):

receive	*believe*
conceive	*relieve*

Exceptions: weird, seize, either, neither, leisure.

80. LIST OF ONE THOUSAND WORDS FOR PRACTICE IN SPELLING

absence, absent
absolutely
abutting
accept
access, accessible
accident, accidentally
accommodate
accompany, accompanied, accompaniment
accustom
achievement
acknowledge, acknowledgment (acknowledgement *allowed*)
acquaint, acquaintance
acquisition
acre
across
activity, activities
actual
additional
address
adjournment
adjustment
administration, administrative
advantage
advice (noun), advise (verb), adviser
aeroplane
affectionately
affirmative

aggregate
agitation
aisle
alley (*passageway*), alleys
ally (*associate*), allies
all right
allude, allusion
already
altar (*in a church or shrine*)
alter (verb, *to change*)
altogether
ambulance
amendment
analysis, analyze
ancient
announce, announcement, announcing
annually
anticipate
antique
anxious
apology, apologies (plural of noun), apologize (verb)
apostrophe
apparatus
apparently
appeal
appearance
appetite
appointment
appropriate, appropriating, appropriation
architecture
arctic
argue, argument
arrive, arrival
artistic, artistically
ascend, ascendancy (ascendency *allowed*)
ascent (noun, *a going-up*)
assent (noun, *agreement, consent*)
aspirant
assassin
assistance, assistants
assured
athlete, athletic
attack
attendance, attendants
attorney
author, authorize
auxiliary
available
avalanche
average
aviator
awfully

bachelor
baggage
banana
bankruptcy
banquet
barbarous
bare, baring
bar, barring
barrel
basement
begin, beginning
beggar
believe, belief, believing
benefit
bidding
berth (*bed*)
birth
bicycle
biscuit
boring
born
borne
breakfast

breadth
breath (noun), breathe (verb)
bridal (*pertaining to a bride*)
bridle (*harness*)
brief
Britain, Briton
bruise
budget
buoy, buoyant
bureau, bureaus
burglar, burglaries (noun, plural), burglarize (verb)
business

cabbages
Caesar
cafeteria
calendar
campaign
candidate, candidacy
canvas (*a kind of cloth*)
canvass (*to solicit votes*)
capable
capital (*chief city*)
capitol (*building*)
captain
castle
catastrophe
caucus
cavalry
ceases
ceiling
cellar
censor (*to supervise critically, to regulate*)
censure (*to blame, find fault with*)
cemetery
century, centuries
chancellor
change, changing, changeable
chapel
characteristic
charity
chauffeur
chimney
choir
cholera
choose, choosing
Christian
circle, circular
civil
client
climate
cloths (*pieces of fabric*)
clothes (*wearing apparel*)
coarse (adjective, *not fine*)
course (noun, *way, route, path*)
coherence
collar
colonel
color
column
comfortable, comfortably
comma
commence, commencement
commission
commit, committing, committed
committee
compare, comparative, comparison
compel, compelled
compete, competitive, competitor
complement (*that which completes*)
complexion
compliment (*a tribute*)
conceive, conception
condemn, condemned
condescend
confer, conferring, conferee, conference

confident, confidence, confidently, confidentially
congressional
Connecticut
conquer, conqueror
conscience, conscientious
conscious
consequence
consist, consistency
conspicuous
contemporary
contempt
contribution
control, controlling
cool, coolly
coöperate
corollary
correlate
corps (*subdivision of an army*)
corpse (*dead body*)
counterfeit
country, countries
county
courtesy, courteous
cousin
crazy
credible
creditable
creditor
credulous
criminal
crisis
criticism, criticize
cruel
cubic
cupola
curious
current
curtain
custard
customary
customer
cylinder

dairy
damage
dangerous
deal, dealer
debauch
debris
debt
deceive, deceit, deception
decent
decentralization
decision
default
defendant
defer, deferred
definite, definitely
deity
delegate
deliberately
delivery
dependent, dependant
depth
deputy
descend, descendant, descent
describe, description
desert
desire, desirable, desirous
despair, desperate
despise
dessert
develop, development
device (noun), devise (verb)
diary
dictionary
die, dying
dine, dining
dirigible

disagreeable
disappear, disappearance
disappoint
disapprove
discipline, disciplinary
disease
dispatch
disposal
dissatisfied
dissent
dissimilar
dissipate
divide, division
divine
doctor
dormitory
dough
due, duly
duped
dye, dyeing

earnest
economics, economical
ecstasy
edge
editor
effect
efficiency, efficient
eight, eighth
electrical
elicit
eligible
eliminate
elude
embarrass
embassy, embassies
emigrant, emigrate
eminent
emphasis, emphasize
employee
encouragement
enlighten
envelop (verb), envelope (noun)
equal, equally
exactly
exaggerate
excavation
exceed
excellence, excellent
except, exceptionally
excitement
exclusively
excursion
executive
exercise
exhaust
exhibit, exhibition
existence
expedition
extraordinary, extraordinarily
extravagant
extremely

facility
fascinate
favorable
favorite
February
federal
feminine
filial
film
final, finally
finance, financial
folios
forehead
foreign
forgive
formal, formally
former, formerly

forth
fortunate
forty
fourth
franchise
fraternal, fraternally
fraternity
frequent, frequently
friend, friendliness
frontage
fulfill (*or* fulfil), fulfilled

gallantry
garage
gasoline
generally
generation
goddess
government
governor
gradually
grammar
grieve, grievous
grocery
guarantee
guard, guardian
guilt
gymnasium

handkerchief
handsome
headache
health
heavily
height
herald
hinder, hindrance
holly
holy
honorable

hop, hopping
hope, hoping
horizon
hosiery
humor, humorous, humorist
hundred, hundredth
hypnotize
hypocrisy

icicle
idea
illegal
illicit
illusion
illustration
image, imagine, imaginary
immediately
immigrant
incident, incidentally
increase, increasing
incredible
indebted
independence, independent
indicate, indicative
indispensable
individual
industrial
infinite, infinitesimal
ingenious
ingenuous
inhabitant
injunction
innocent, innocence
inquire, inquiry
install
instance
insurance
intelligent
intellectual
intentionally

interior
interlocutor
interrupt
intimate
introducing
inveigle
investigation
irrelevant
irresistible
island, isle
its (pronoun), it's (*for* it is)

janitor
jewelry
journey
judge, judgment (judgement *allowed*)
justifiable
justification

kindergarten
knight
knowledge

laboratory
language
larynx
launch
lawyer
leather
legacy
legend
legitimate
leisure
level, levelled
liberal
library
license
lightning
lighten, lightening
likely, likelihood
lily
limb
linen
literature
lively, liveliness
loath (adjective), loathe (verb)
locate, location
lonely, loneliness
loose
lose
lovable
luncheon
lynch

machinery
magazine
magnificent
maintain, maintenance
manage, management
maneuver (*or* manoeuvre)
marine
Massachusetts
mathematics
mean, meanness
meantime
medal
medicine
melancholy
memory, memorable
merchant
metal, metallurgy
mettle
military
miniature
minimum
mine, mining
minor
minority
misappropriate

mischief, mischievous
misdemeanor
Mississippi
missionary
misspell
monoplane
mortgage
mosquitoes
motorist
movable
muscle, muscular
museum
mutilate
mystery, mysterious

nation, nationality
native
necessary, necessaries, necessarily
negative
nevertheless
nickel
niece
ninety, ninetieth
ninth
notice, noticeable
notoriety
novel
nucleus

oblige, obliging, obliged
obstacle
obtainable
occasion, occasionally
occur, occurring, occurrence
officer
official, officially
omission
operate, operator
opponent
opportunity
opposite
optimism, optimist
orchard
ordinary, ordinarily
origin, original, originally
outrage, outrageous
owing

package
pageant
pamphlet
papal
parachute
parade
paradoxical
paragraph
parallel, parallelism
parenthesis
parliament, parliamentary
partial, partially
particular, particularly
partner
passage
patient
patriot
peaceable
peasant
peculiar
Pennsylvania
perceive, perception
percentage
permanent
permissible, permission
person, personally, personality
personnel
perspiration
persuade, persuasion
Philippines (*Filipino,* adjective, *a native of the Philippines*)
philosopher

phrase
physical, physically
physician
physiology
pianos
picnic, picnickers
pillar
pillow
pledge
poem
poetry
polar
polish
politician, politics
pollen
portion
possess, possessive, possession
possible, possibility, possibly
potatoes
poultry
practical
practicable
practice (noun), practice *or* practise (verb)
prairie
prayer
precede, precedence, precedents
precious
prefer, preferred
prejudice
premium
preparation
president, presidency
pressure
priest
principal
principle
privilege
probable
proceed, procedure
professional, professor
prohibitory
promenade
prominent
pronunciation, pronounce
prophecy (noun), prophesy (verb)
proprietor
psychology
punctuation
punish
purchase, purchasing
pursue, pursuing

qualified
quantity
quiet
quite

rabid
race, racing, racy
radical
realize
really
reasonable
recede, recession
receipt
receive, receiving
recognize, recognition
recollect
recommend, recommendation
recruit
reduction
refer, referred
regularly
reign
rein
reliability
relieve
religious
repeat, repetition

representative
require
residence
resistance
respectfully
respectively
restaurant
reunion
rewritten
rhetoric
rheumatism
rhyme
rhythm
ridiculous
romance
routine

sacrifice
sacrilege, sacrilegious
salary
sanitary
save, saving
scarcely
scene, scenic, scenery
schedule
science
scissors
scholar
scrutinizing
seamstress
seance
secede
secretary
sectional
security
seize
semicolon
senator
separate
sergeant
series
sew
shepherd
shoulder
siege
sieve
similar
simultaneous
skillful (skilful *allowed*), skillfully
social
socialism
society
solemn
soliloquy
sophomore
specimen
spiritual, spiritualism
standard
stationary
stationery
statistics
statue
stature
statute
stenographer
stratagem
strategy
strength
strenuous
stretch
structure
subjunctive
substance
succeed, successor
suddenness
sufficient
suicide
summon, summoning
superintendent

surgeon
surprise
suspicious
syllable
sympathize

tableau, tableaux
tailor
tariff
taxation
telephone
temperament
temperature
temporary
tempt
theater (theatre *allowed*)
thorough
through
tomahawk
topic
toured
tournament
traffic
tragedy
transitive
traveler (*or* traveller)
troupe
truly
turkey
twelve, twelfth
typical, typically
tyranny

unanimous
uncertain
unconscious
undoubtedly
unmanageable
unnecessary
unprecedented
until
unusual, unusually
urge, urgent
usual, usually

valley, valleys
valuable
variety
vegetable
vengeance
vicinity
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villain
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warrant
Wednesday
weird
welcome
whisky (*or* whiskey)
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worse
worst
wound

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