

A GUIDE TO SELECTING AND ADAPTING MATERIALS
FOR READERS THEATRE IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

A Thesis

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The basic role of theatre in society, according to Samuel L. Becker, is "to give pleasure to the members of the society and to make our world more beautiful and exciting."¹ A distinct contribution to this function is an art form called Readers Theatre. Actually its varying styles bear many names: Interpreters Theatre, Chamber Theatre, Concert Reading, Staged Readings, Platform Reading, Multiple Reading, and Group Reading. For the purposes of this study, however, the term Readers Theatre will be used to include all variants of this art form.

Readers Theatre enriches dramatic presentations by bringing to the audiences, not only plays, but also varied types of the finest literature written. Stripped of conventional theatre techniques, such as detailed stage settings, costumes, and complex lighting plans, it centers the major interest on the written word--the author's text--and seeks to stimulate the audience to become creatively involved.

I. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Statement of the Purpose

This study has sought to provide a guide to Readers Theatre for the secondary school. The first objective was to furnish procedures for selecting and adapting materials for Readers Theatre. These steps are

¹Samuel L. Becker, "The Role of Theatre in Our Society: Implications for School Curricula," The Speech Teacher, XV (March, 1966), 131.

offered as suggested guides, however, not as rigid rules.

The second objective was to provide examples of adapted scripts illustrating variety in literary genre, and in Readers Theatre technique. The following forms were selected: Prose Fiction: the short-story; Non-Fiction: biography, essay, letters; Poetry: narrative based on history. Dramatic Literature was not chosen because its natural dialogue style lessens the need for a sample script.

These examples of the more common forms can also be used to guide the adapter when choosing different or more extensive works. For example, the adapting of a novel is done in much the same manner as that of a short story.

Definition of Terms Used

Readers Theatre, as used in this study, will be understood to mean an art form which seeks to cause an audience to experience literature through the oral interpretation of an original or carefully adapted script. Two or more readers, usually without special costumes, lighting, props, or sound effects, will portray their roles, with or without memorization, by the primary means of vocal and facial expression, together with or without motivated movement. One or more narrators may be used to provide transitional expository lines for coherence.

Oral Interpretation, as used in the definition of Readers Theatre, will be understood as the art of communicating, by means of oral reading, the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and moods of an author

as recognized by the reader in the light of his own experiences.

II. JUSTIFICATION

Since the Second World War, oral interpretative activity has expanded immensely. Today Oral Interpretation is no longer the servant of Rhetoric; as a literary art, it exists on the strength of its own merits.

A significant factor in the increased popularity of Oral Interpretation is the emergence of the art form, Readers Theatre. Interest in Readers Theatre has spread rapidly from an initial professional approach in 1951, of George Bernard Shaw's Don Juan in Hell, to colleges and universities where it has become a significant part of the educational theatre program. From here, Readers Theatre has expanded to secondary schools where it is beginning to achieve an important role. In addition to classroom use in the secondary school, Readers Theatre is being performed for local audiences, for speech and drama festivals, and as touring productions.

With such enthusiasm being experienced in the high schools, teachers and students are seeking material for Readers Theatre scripts. Little has been written on Readers Theatre for the secondary schools, and few high school speech and drama teachers have adequate background in this art form. To help solve the problem of materials for Readers Theatre in the secondary schools, a guide to selecting and adapting materials for Readers Theatre is needed.

History of Readers Theatre

Readers Theatre has roots tracing back to fifth century Greece.² However, only during the past twenty years has its contemporary form experienced a new wave of interest. The most significant early professional production was the aforementioned Don Juan in Hell, the third act of George Bernard Shaw's play Man and Superman. This professional production was performed in 1951 by four well-known actors: Charles Boyer, Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Charles Laughton, and Agnes Moorehead. These talented performers shared the literature with enthusiastic audiences from New York City to California. Employing the concert or group recital presentational style, they did not costume per se, but wore conservative evening clothes. Stands, high stools, and individual manuscripts were used. No entrances or exits were made, and the performers remained seated. The drama was created through dialogue with vocal and facial expression and little or no physical movement except gestures.³

From this static or relatively motionless style of staging, Readers Theatre has moved to other literary forms. In 1952, Charles Laughton successfully used a chorus of twenty, in addition to three talented readers, in a production of Stephen Vincent Benét's narrative poem John Brown's Body. Each actor read many different roles, and a

²Leslie Irene Coger and Melvin R. White, Readers Theatre Handbook, (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1967), p. 10.

³Leslie Irene Coger, "Let's Have a Reader's Theatre," Dramatics, XXIX (May, 1958), 20.

greater freedom of movement was made. The dramatic action was carried forward by the use of musical accompaniment, and the mood was enhanced by a more complex lighting plan. A single property, a modest three-foot high railing, was used both as a place to pray and as a place to hide from the enemy.⁴

Another successful producer, Paul Shyre of New York, experimented with a third literary form, the autobiography. From Sean O'Casey's six-volume autobiography, Shyre presented the first three volumes in three separate Readers Theatre productions. After using concert style for the first two, much as Don Juan in Hell had been done, he changed the style for his third production and used greater physical movement and increased stage space.⁵

From the adapted scripts mentioned, the Readers Theatre movement spread to the compiled script. Gene Frankel, a New York director, produced Brecht on Brecht, a Readers Theatre production depicting both the life and the theatre of Brecht. To represent the life facet, he combined an assortment of poems, songs, letters, essays, and stories, and for the theatre portion, he used a compilation of excerpts consisting of speeches, songs, and scenes from some of Brecht's plays. The style employed was a modified concert form.⁶

Another style, which resembled news flash broadcasting, was used to share John Dos Passos' novel U. S. A. Simple properties, such as

⁴Coger and White, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

⁵Ibid., pp. 12-13.

⁶Ibid., p. 13.

chairs and tables, were used, and scenes from the novel were dramatized. One or two long sections were narrated directly to the audience.⁷

This growth pattern has continued for the past fifteen years in professional Readers Theatre productions. Furthermore, it is being significantly felt in colleges and universities. High schools, too, are beginning to feel the impetus of its popularity. As already pointed out, the scripts use a variety of literary forms: Drama, Poetry, Fiction, and Non-Fiction. The styles of presentation, also, vary from the initial concert or group recital approach using the manuscripts, the stands, and the high stools, to a representational style closely resembling a conventionally staged play. The variations and combinations between literary form and production style are nearly without end. Indeed, the history of modern Readers Theatre indicates strongly that it uses all types of literature and that it has no single established form of presentation.⁸ These broad attributes are, in part, the essence of the growing popularity of Readers Theatre.

In anticipating the future of Readers Theatre, Marion L. and Marvin D. Kleinau state: "We do not know exactly how or where it will finally emerge. . . . We must attempt to analyze and define this exciting medium, but let us not bind it."⁹

⁷Ibid., pp. 13-14.

⁸Ibid., p. 15.

⁹Marion L. Kleinau and Marvin D. Kleinau, "Scene Location in Readers Theatre: Static or Dynamic?" The Speech Teacher, XIV (September, 1965), 199.

Review of the Literature

Prior to 1951, little had been written on the subject Readers Theatre. Since that time, partially because of the growing popularity of professional and college Readers Theatre performances, there has been increased interest shown in this field. Still, in March, 1967, Dr. Jeré Veilleux, Associate Professor of Speech at Purdue University, reminded his readers that research in Readers Theatre, or any of its aliases, had been much neglected:

The number of masters' theses and doctoral dissertations has been abysmally small. . . . I believe, along with many others, that staged reading productions need further theoretical consideration and practical experimentation, that the teaching of interpretation is both a valuable and a necessary activity, and that research into the nature, history and practice of interpretation is urgently needed.¹⁰

The few masters' theses and doctoral dissertations that have been written about Readers Theatre are primarily concerned with the production aspect of this art form. Most of the researchers have chosen to adapt a single work of literature, produce it, and make evaluations. Biblical literature, children's literature, and prose and poetic adult literature have been used. One master's thesis provided a critical analysis of Readers Theatre production styles.¹¹ Another evaluated Readers Theatre on the basis of critiques of professional productions.¹²

¹⁰ Jeré Veilleux, "The Interpreter: His Role, Language, and Audience," The Speech Teacher, XVI (March, 1967), 124-133.

¹¹ Winnifred A. Larson, "An Investigation of the Readers' Theatre Production Style" (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota, May, 1964).

¹² Edgar Ceraso Grimm, "A Critical Analysis of Readers' Theatre" (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Maryland, 1964).

Only one master's thesis, a Readers Theatre production script of David Copperfield, was written with the secondary school emphasis.¹³

The publications of the Speech Association of America, The Speech Teacher, The Quarterly Journal of Speech, and Speech Monographs, report an increased interest in all Oral Interpretation, and more specifically in Readers Theatre. However, Oral Interpretation textbooks, for the most part, still provide only a minimum of information about Readers Theatre. The only complete source of information available on the subject of Readers Theatre is the comprehensive Readers Theatre Handbook by Leslie Irene Coger and Melvin R. White, published in 1967. This text covers the entire spectrum of Readers Theatre; and while it can readily serve as a guide to the beginner, the authors believe it has special value as a college-level textbook.¹⁴

Values of Readers Theatre

The values of Readers Theatre available at the high school level may be divided into three major categories: (1) values for the student, (2) values for the teacher, and (3) values for the audience.

Values for the student. Experiencing literature through Readers Theatre allows the student to extend his capabilities beyond those of his own observations. By re-creating the literature in his own mind, the student lives the experience vicariously, and thus, he may become better equipped to understand other people and their problems.

¹³James Franklin Bradley, Jr., "A Reading Theatre Adaptation of David Copperfield for High School Students" (unpublished Master's thesis, The Michigan State University, 1960).

¹⁴Coger and White, op. cit., Preface.

Readers Theatre can serve to motivate the students to develop expressive voices and increased ability to respond vocally and physically to the content of the literary material. Possessing the techniques of effective oral reading, together with encountering different audiences with varying reactions, can help to make the readers become more confident, poised, and creative. This training in interpretative skills can also be transferred to other speech activities and situations.

For the shy, unresponsive student with limited mental or physical ability, Readers Theatre has a special value. The security of the book and the group nature of the activity both help to give psychological support.

Readers Theatre provides a variety of creative outlets for the student. Opportunities are available as script writer, performer, and director. As a script writer, the student may write an original script; he may adapt a favorite piece of literature into script form; or he may compile a script from several works or parts thereof. In each situation the student can be stimulated creatively to make choices and original combinations. As a performer, the student can experiment with a variety of roles. The opportunity to create a believable character, a mood, or an emotion, can serve to stimulate his creativity. As a director, the student has opportunity to re-create the entire literary experience. Through his direction, he can motivate other students to respond to his concept and help them to create individual characters. To accomplish this, the student will need to explore all kinds, degrees, and

combinations of Readers Theatre techniques.

Readers Theatre also offers opportunities for the student to enrich his cultural background. Through the close reading of literature, as required in Readers Theatre, the student can achieve greater enjoyment from the literature because he is then better able to understand it. The oral aspect of Readers Theatre appeals, not only to the mind, but to the whole range of the senses. Through this appeal, the sensitivity of the student can be developed. The esthetic elements of literature, such as figurative language, alliteration, assonance, balance, symmetry, and tone color, all magnify the delight of beautiful words.

The classroom application of Readers Theatre, particularly in a speech or drama class, can provide students with a valuable exchange of constructive criticism. Those students who constitute the audience can offer what they believe to be valid criticism of the script and the performance. The students who are readers or directors should be given time to justify their concepts and interpretations. This interplay of ideas, in a supervised situation, can help all students to greater mental maturity.

Values for the teacher. Readers Theatre, as opposed to conventional theatre, allows the teacher to provide the student with an increased number and variety of plays, as well as additional literary forms, because of the simplification of its staging. The conservative production styles of Readers Theatre mean lower production costs. No longer is the drama coach bound by the limitations of small budgets and

inadequate facilities. The increased number of literary experiences possible with Readers Theatre can mean that the teacher is able to provide more students with training in drama. In addition, the simplicity of staging Readers Theatre, together with its limitless subject material, can make it an ideal solution to the teacher's problem of providing entertainment for local civic groups and teachers' meetings. Freedom from elaborate staging problems permits more time, too, for the teacher to devote to actual teaching of such things as structural analysis of the play and interpretation of character.

Another value of Readers Theatre for the teacher is the fact that it affords greater freedom in casting. Less emphasis is placed on matching physical characteristics of the reader with those of the role being read. On occasion girls have been known to read male parts, and vice versa. Frequently one student may portray a variety of roles within a single script. This greater freedom in casting allows more students to participate. Even the physically handicapped student has opportunities in Readers Theatre. It is not uncommon for a person who has physical limitations to assume a role in Readers Theatre and give a convincing performance.

For nearly every teacher, Readers Theatre can serve as a tool for instruction of subject material. For example, history may become a more realistic experience when historical events are shared through Readers Theatre. The students who participate as adapters or performers gain insight into the literature as they prepare the script and production. The people and places of another time become a kind of reality. The

past projects into the present, and the events of that age become those of the moment. In addition, the students who are audience members receive the added oral and visual aspects of this art form to strengthen the meaning of the material for them.

Another area in which Readers Theatre may be used as an educational tool is vocabulary building. In 1936, Miriam B. Booth, reporting recommendations of the Speech Association of America, pointed out that oral reading provides "an effective instrument for vocabulary building. . . . Reading a word aloud is placing it in action."¹⁵ The sound of the word, in addition to its form, helps the student to remember it as well as to understand it. As he recalls the word, the student is more likely to use it and to make it a part of his own vocabulary.

Veilleux brings up another value of Readers Theatre as an educational tool. Oral Interpretation, the basis of Readers Theatre, is "being used more and more as a positive tool in remedial work, especially with troubled or disadvantaged children."¹⁶ The experience of the investigator as a teacher has often shown that Readers Theatre can be a valuable means to motivate the under-achiever and to channel misdirected energies. The student who is experiencing self-discipline problems can often be constructively helped when Readers Theatre has provided him with the opportunity to rightfully achieve respect and

¹⁵Miriam B. Booth, "Interpretative Reading in the Secondary Schools," The Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXII (April, 1936), 272.

¹⁶Veilleux, op. cit., 124.

admiration from his peers. The thirst for attention has been satisfied. The cooperative concern of the group activity can release inhibitions of the hesitant, curtail and redirect the overtness of the extrovert, and blend the various efforts of all into a meaningful whole.

Values for the audience. Readers Theatre challenges the audience to participate in the literary experience. As members of the audience seek to re-create mentally the literary situation, they may develop personal creativity. As they experience the oral reading of beautiful words, they may likewise develop greater sensitivity. The vicarious literary experiences provided by Readers Theatre can help the audience to understand and appreciate people and situations which they have not actually known. The extent to which each audience member is successful in participating in the literary experience will depend in part on his capacity to feel the situations and to re-create them imaginatively. The literature itself and the quality of the performance will also be significant factors in determining the degree of success.

Because Readers Theatre is readily adaptable to many circumstances, it is an ideal medium for many public programs. As a result of this popularity, it affords audiences with new literary experiences heretofore unknown. In this way, Readers Theatre can help to enrich the cultural background of a whole community. The viewers may enjoy distinguished plays which cannot be feasibly produced in conventional theatre, as well as literature of additional forms, like poetry, diaries, essays, and biographies. Some scripts combine portions of several literary forms, such as the aforementioned, to develop a major

central theme. In addition, many of the audience members may be motivated to do additional reading. Some may want to read more widely about the subject of a Readers Theatre performance, and others may be inspired to read additional works by the same author.

III. PLAN FOR THESIS DEVELOPMENT

The plan for thesis development includes two sections:

(1) a preview of the organization of the thesis, and (2) the procedure for the development of the thesis.

Preview of Organization of the Thesis

This study is divided into five chapters and an appendix. Chapter I is an introduction to the study. The purpose of the study is stated, and justification for the study is shown. A brief history of Readers Theatre is given, and a review of the available literature is presented. Values of Readers Theatre at the secondary school level are shown for the students, the teachers, and the audience. The plan of thesis development is stated.

Chapter II provides a background of the subject, Readers Theatre. First, its major components are explained: the author, as represented by the manuscript, the interpreter, and the audience. Because the process of selecting and adapting literature for Readers Theatre requires a general knowledge of the production methods peculiar to Readers Theatre, the following techniques common to most Readers Theatre presentations are explained in detail: use of the manuscript, the stool, and the lectern.

Chapter III provides guidelines for selecting material for Readers Theatre in the secondary school. First, the traditional approach to selecting materials for Readers Theatre is described: universality, individuality, and suggestion. Second, the functional approach is explained. Three major functions are developed: requirements of the audience, requirements of the literature, and requirements of the interpreter.

Chapter IV presents a three-part guide to adapting material for Readers Theatre. Suggestions are made for the use of copyrighted material. Brief procedures for gaining an understanding of the literary selection are listed. General steps are provided for adapting and arranging the material in script form.

Chapter V summarizes the more important findings and conclusions developed in the earlier chapters. It provides suggestions for further research in the area of Readers Theatre.

The Appendix provides examples of Readers Theatre scripts adapted from a variety of literary genre: Prose Fiction: short story, Non-Fiction: biography, essay, letters, and Poetry: narrative.

Procedure for Development of Thesis

This descriptive research study has sought to suggest lines to future developments of selecting and adapting materials for Readers Theatre in the secondary schools. The source material consists predominantly of primary materials: SAA Journals, Masters' theses, textbooks of Oral Interpretation and Readers Theatre, particularly Readers Theatre Handbook by Cogger and White, and personal letters from

the same authors. The investigator has relied to a small degree on her personal observations as a teacher of secondary speech and English for seven years and as a graduate student in speech and drama.

Using the source materials, the investigator has read and collected the evidence. A critical analysis was made of the evidence in the light of its validity and usefulness for secondary level. Based upon the analysis of the collected data, generalizations about selecting and adapting materials for Readers Theatre in the secondary school were made.

CHAPTER II

CHARACTERISTICS AND TECHNIQUES OF READERS THEATRE

Before the speech and drama teacher or the high school student begins to select material for adaptation to Readers Theatre form, he should understand the nature of this art form. Without a general background of Readers Theatre, he is at a loss as to where or how to begin. In addition to the history of Readers Theatre, which has already been given, the teacher or student should understand its major characteristics and certain production techniques peculiar to Readers Theatre.

I. MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF READERS THEATRE

Readers Theatre is not a substitute for conventional theatre. Nor is it merely a method of literary analysis or training for the actor, the speaker, or the clinician. Readers Theatre is a valid and valuable performing art.

In the light of its major components, Readers Theatre can be described as three-dimensional. The communication of ideas in Readers Theatre involves, not two, but three parties, each giving to and receiving from one another: (1) the author, as revealed by the manuscript, (2) the interpreter, and (3) the audience.

Author

Readers Theatre begins with the author as represented by the manuscript or written word. The ideas of the author as expressed in the text are those to be understood and shared by the interpreter and

re-created mentally by the audience. Although the adapter or compiler may modify the author's text through deletion, substitution, condensation, compilation, etc., he is obligated to maintain the author's meaning, in so far as he is able to determine it through study and research. Jeré Veilleux points out that the language used in Readers Theatre is primarily emotive, rather than discursive or scientific; and the meanings conveyed through Readers Theatre are frequently deep and vague.¹ Many authorities agree that Readers Theatre in its most productive form always exhibits the presence of the author, either by means of the manuscript or by some other equally meaningful symbol.

Interpreter

The interpreter in Readers Theatre is the reader whose objective is to share with the audience the intellectual and emotional meanings of a literary work of art. The role of the interpreter calls for a keen intellectual study and a sensitiveness to the material; for the reader, like the adapter, has an ethical responsibility to represent faithfully, and to the best of his ability, the author whose work he is reading.²

Aurally, the interpreter may employ a natural or imitative voice, or utilize any special vocal effects which would enhance the interpretation. He may also use any symbolic visual or auditory stimuli which are germane to the mood and meaning and helpful to the listener's function.

¹Jeré Veilleux, "The Interpreter: His Role, Language, and Audience," The Speech Teacher, XVI (March, 1967), 124.

²Chloe Armstrong and Paul D. Brandes, The Oral Interpretation of Literature, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1963), p. 127.

The role of the interpreter further demands an understanding of audience psychology and human motivation. Through this awareness a reciprocal empathy between interpreter and audience arises.³

Audience

The audience characterizes Readers Theatre in a manner which involves both the author and the interpreter. The Readers Theatre form makes unusual demands upon the imagination of the hearer. Because many productions do not use elaborate scenery and special costumes, the author's action is usually merely suggested by the reader and completed offstage in the minds of the audience. The scenes and actions of the literature are re-created mentally, and every member of the audience is charged with the responsibility of concluding and judging the meaning of the selection.

The aural emphasis in Readers Theatre contributes to the intrinsic appeal for the audience, because its beauty of sound and oral rhythm provides pleasure not readily experienced in silent reading. In addition, the emotive language of interpretation, inspired by such devices as figurative language, stimulates a high degree of mental visualization and critical reflection for the audience. When the interpretation is successful, the audience members are motivated to join with active imaginations in the interpretative process.⁴

³Leslie Irene Coger and Melvin R. White, Readers Theatre Handbook, (Clonview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1967), p. 25.

⁴Veilleux, op. cit., 130.

II. TECHNIQUES OF READERS THEATRE

An understanding of the unique production techniques used in Readers Theatre may also help to clarify the very nature of this art form. Actually Readers Theatre employs a variety of techniques, many of which are shared to a degree with conventional theatre. These mutual techniques include the use of onstage and offstage focus, music and sound effects, scenery, costuming, properties, lighting, etc. But the three basic techniques peculiar to most early Readers Theatre productions are the use of the manuscript, the lectern, and the stool.⁵ These three techniques are still a unique part of many Readers Theatre productions and, therefore, deserve detailed explanation.

Manuscript

The manuscript, which heightens the role of the author, is usually typed double-spaced and contained in a sturdy folder, often black to facilitate its use. It may be placed on a lectern or, on occasion, some readers carry their text with them while they move freely about the stage. Directors sometimes place the manuscript in symbolic hand properties, such as newspapers, magazines, books, or even less obvious things, such as a fan. Whether the literature is memorized or not is a relative matter; usually a thorough preparation of the material results in memorization. The significant concept to remember is that the manuscript is usually present as a symbol of the source of the

⁵David E. MacArthur, "Readers Theatre: Variations on a Theme," The Speech Teacher, XIII (January, 1964), 48.

literary experience, and that the interpreter reads or appears to read from the manuscript.⁶ This, however, does not mean that every reader must hold a manuscript. Indeed, chorus members often do not. But one or more narrators usually create the illusion of sharing the literature through the reading of the manuscript.

Lectern

The use of the lectern or stand is a fairly common practice in Readers Theatre. There appears to be no standard requirements of size, height, color, or material of the lectern. The metal music stand is frequently used. The primary recommendation is that it be adjustable in height and reading position. The function of the lectern is service--holding the manuscript so that the interpreter may have ready access to the text and at the same time have greater physical freedom for expression. The lectern that best satisfies this purpose is the one to use. The director should avoid using a lectern that will hide the interpreter or tend to separate him from his audience.

Stool

The stool is likewise a conventional part of Readers Theatre. Again, the size, height, color, or material are not standardized. The stool is used as a base for the reader, one that permits him to be comfortable and at ease, and at the same time, meaningfully positioned on the stage. Its height elevates the interpreter so that he can more easily see his manuscript, and the audience can more readily see his

⁶Coger and White, op. cit., p. 57.

face. The stool also permits an easy change of position, either while seated on the stool itself, or from the stool to a standing position, and back again. The swivel stool provides the interpreter with greater ease in movement than the fixed stool, and the one with the backrest affords more comfort but somewhat restricted movement. Like the lectern, the stool which best satisfies its function is the one which should be used.

While the manuscript, the lectern, and the stool are all unique techniques of Readers Theatre, none of the three appears to be essential to every Readers Theatre production.

An examination of the nature of Readers Theatre reveals that it has three major components: the author, the interpreter, and the audience. The relationship of these components reveals a mutual exchange of stimulus and response. All three appear to be essential parts of all Readers Theatre.

A study of the techniques of Readers Theatre shows that Readers Theatre shares many techniques with conventional theatre. But the three techniques which are more commonly associated with Readers Theatre are the manuscript, the lectern, and the stool. Although these three are unique to Readers Theatre, none appears to be essential to all Readers Theatre productions.

CHAPTER III

GUIDES FOR SELECTING MATERIAL FOR READERS THEATRE

The interpreter who wishes to share literature through Readers Theatre begins by selecting material. Most authorities agree that the interpreter may choose from any literary form. In addition to Drama, for example, he may choose selections from Prose Fiction, Non-Fiction, and Poetry. Keith Brooks, Ohio State University, and John N. Bielenberg, Eastern Illinois University, describe the professional philosophy in regard to literary forms suitable for Readers Theatre in this way: "If something is found to work, if it elicits the desired response, it justifies itself."¹ This philosophy appears to be in accordance with that of the non-professional approach.

There are no set rules for selecting material for Readers Theatre. The following approaches--the traditional and the functional--are offered to the secondary teacher and his students as helpful guides in selecting materials for Readers Theatre.

I. TRADITIONAL APPROACH

As a basis for selecting material for Readers Theatre, many authorities in Oral Interpretation recommend the following traditional literary criteria: universality, individuality, and suggestion. These extrinsic factors of literary skill, set forth by C. C. Cunningham in

¹Keith Brooks and John E. Bielenberg, "Readers' Theatre as Defined by New York Critics," Southern Speech Journal, XXIX (Summer, 1964), 288.

his book entitled Making Words Come Alive, allow the reader to move beyond the limits of a given selection and relate to the whole range of human experience.²

Universality

Charlotte L. Lee, Northwestern University, states that "universality" means "that the idea expressed is potentially interesting to all people because it touches on a common experience."³ When the idea expressed evokes a common emotional response, like love or hate, hope or fear, it has universality. Basic motives, such as the need for security, the desire to be accepted by one's peers, and the need to possess material things, reflect universality. Literature expressing basic emotions, motives, and experiences holds the potential for an inherent, universal response.

Individuality

Lee says: "Individuality is the writer's fresh approach to a universal subject."⁴ Otis J. Aggertt and Elbert R. Bowen describe individuality as the combination of the unusual techniques the author uses to make his subject stand apart from the commonplace.⁵ Through word choice,

²C. C. Cunningham, Making Words Come Alive, cited by Otis J. Aggertt and Elbert R. Bowen, Communicative Reading, Second Edition, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), p. 104.

³Charlotte Lee, Oral Interpretation, Third Edition, (Boston: The Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), p. 8.

⁴Ibid., p. 9.

⁵Otis J. Aggertt and Elbert R. Bowen, Communicative Reading, Second Edition, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), p. 105.

imagery, and organization, individuality can be achieved. The beginning interpreter, because of inexperience, is likely to incur some difficulty in recognizing genuine individuality. He may gain valuable experience by reading widely from the literature which has lived for generations, by developing a keen interest in vocabulary and in figurative language, and by putting his own ideas and observations into original creative compositions.

Suggestion

Lee explains "suggestion" as that quality which "leaves the reader something to do: it does not tell him quite everything. . . . The author has chosen references and words which allow the reader to enrich the subject matter from his own background."⁶ Imagery acts as a stimulus to suggestion, and the resulting images can bring about additional responses. The ideas secluded between-the-lines often suggest greater individual meaning for the interpreter and his audience. Suggestion has the power to involve the interpreter and his audience in the literature to the point where they are held in part responsible for the degree of success in the performance.

Most authorities of Readers Theatre recognize these three criteria--universality, individuality, and suggestion--as significant qualities of any literature worthy of Readers Theatre. At the same time, they realize that these characteristics do not necessarily appear in all literature in equal amounts. Lee cautions: "If any one of them

⁶Lee, loc. cit.

is totally absent or patently weak, the interpreter will do well to look elsewhere for material if he wishes to interest and move his audience."⁷

II. FUNCTIONAL APPROACH

In addition to the traditional approach to selecting material for Readers Theatre, high school teachers and students sometimes meet the problem by a functional approach. They may find themselves asking such questions as "Will the audience like this selection?" "Is it worthwhile literature?" "Do I really like the material?" Jeré Veilloux brings up the same points when he states: "The interpreter must begin by choosing literature that fulfills three functions: it must be appropriate for his audience, it must be of high quality, and it must arouse in him strong empathy."⁸ A detailed examination of these three functions points up guidelines which should prove valuable to any interpreter searching for material for Readers Theatre.

Requirements of Audience

Before selecting the material for Readers Theatre, the interpreter should know something of his audience; for, in so far as possible, he must meet their expectations, tastes, education, and general cultural pattern. In other words, the material must be appropriate to his audience. This does not mean that the material must

⁷Ibid.

⁸ Jeré Veilloux, Oral Interpretation: The Re-Creation of Literature, (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 17-18.

be familiar to his audience, that it be easily understood by them, or that it be emotionally comforting. It does imply, however, that each audience has its own interests, and the interpreter must anticipate these interests. As the interpreter, he is responsible for choosing material that will challenge his audience emotionally and intellectually.

Requirements of Literature

The second consideration in the functional approach to selecting material for Readers Theatre is the literary quality of the literature. Veilleux states: "The purpose and value of interpretation is to bring to life that literature which needs and deserves to be read."⁹ The interpreter, then, assumes the responsibility of determining what "needs and deserves to be read."

The interpreter may make his choice by considering eight qualities of literature. Leslie Irene Coger and Melvin R. White enumerate five positive qualities which should be looked for in any style of writing that is being considered for Readers Theatre: evocative power, interesting characters, action, enriched language, and unity.¹⁰ Veilleux lists three qualities which should not be used in excessive amounts: sentiment, rhetoric, and didactics.¹¹

Evocative power. Coger and White explain evocative power as:

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Leslie Irene Coger and Melvin R. White, Readers Theatre Handbook, (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1967), p. 21.

¹¹Veilleux, op. cit., p. 19.

the quality in literature which can stir the imagination, the emotions, and the mind of the listener. It evokes a definite response from the audience; it makes them shiver, makes them cry, makes them happy. It provides a memorable moment, usually . . . a 'moment of truth.'¹²

Evocative power motivates each audience member to become involved in the action of the literature itself, to live vicariously another's experiences in the light of his own. Many authorities agree that literature does not necessarily move man in an ethical sense, but that it should portray the dignity of man.¹³

Interesting characters. Another recommended element of successful Readers Theatre is interesting characters. Characters are people, animals, even inanimate objects, who serve to propel the action of the story. To be interesting, they must possess qualities that make themselves appealing to the reader. Interest in characters may arise because they are so familiar that the audience may identify with them. On the other hand, it may stem from their differences, their uniqueness, their ability to surprise convincingly. Interest in characters can also be created from purposeful interaction, like struggle or suspense. Conflict resulting in dramatic situations can reveal insight into the ethical and mental traits of a character. He may be in conflict with another person, with a factor of society, or even with his own conscience. But any person making choices that will shape his destiny is very likely to be an interesting character.¹⁴

¹²Coger and White, op. cit., p. 22.

¹³Ned E. Hoopes, "What Literature Should Be Used In Oral Interpretation?," The Speech Teacher, X (September, 1961), 208-209.

¹⁴Coger and White, loc. cit.

Literature containing interesting characters in action is excellent for Readers Theatre, for it can hold the attention of the audience, and also provide them with a sharpened awareness of life. Often such literature makes a comment on human character that enables the audience to deepen their understanding of society.¹⁵

Action. For literature to be worthy of Readers Theatre, the ideas should be expressed through action. This action, which may be either external or internal, provides literature its interesting quality of making it appear to "go somewhere," or to "do something." Wallace A. Bacon, Northwestern University, explains action as "a progression from one position or one point of awareness to another."¹⁶ External action implies physical movement. Jack London reveals man in external action in his vivid account of Alaskan survival in "To Build a Fire." Internal action represents that which is psychological or within the character, especially when directed against a counter force. An example of internal action is provided by the character in Frost's poem, "The Road Not Taken."¹⁷

The conflict that brings about the dramatic action can result from a variety of opposing forces: character against character, character against society, group against group, character against nature, or character against self or conscience. Since the Readers Theatre style

¹⁵Leslie Irene Coger, "Interpreters Theatre: Theatre of the Mind," The Quarterly Journal of Speech, XLIX (April, 1963), 324.

¹⁶Wallace Bacon, The Art of Interpretation, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1966), p. 168.

¹⁷Coger and White, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

of production is usually presentational, the action is more likely to be suggested, vocally or physically, than to be literally represented. Therefore, there is a critical need for material that expresses clear and vivid action within the literature so that the audiences can more readily visualize the mental image. The action should be precisely revealed in evocative language and purposeful order, so that each script builds to an unmistakable climax.¹⁸ This does not mean, however, that lyric poetry and other forms that have no such "progression" cannot be successfully used in Readers Theatre. The adapter should remember that special considerations must be made in the use of such literature. Transitions can provide progression; themes can be developed to build to a climax; production techniques, such as lighting, music, and levels, can be made to create the necessary quality of action. As an example, sonnets from Elizabeth Barrett Browning's collection can be combined with excerpts of prose to create a script which not only has action, but also builds to an unmistakable climax.

Enriched language. Because language, written and oral, is the primary means through which literature is shared, its importance can immediately be seen. Literature for Readers Theatre needs an "enriched language, one with evocative overtones that extend the meaning. . . . that leaves the reverberations in the minds of the readers and their audiences."¹⁹ Such language stirs the mind, the emotion, and the imagination of the listener.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Leslie Irene Coger, "Theatre for Oral Interpreters," The Speech Teacher, XII (November, 1963), 321.

Imagery, both literal and figurative, enlarges the suggestive power of language. The language symbols stir the basic senses which act as the receptors of the image stimuli. For example, when the interpreter reads, "I wandered lonely as a cloud," each member of the audience, as well as the interpreter himself, is free to recall a moment of personal loneliness. This is literal imagery. When the listener begins to associate the moment of loneliness with the picturesque cloud, the imagery becomes figurative. Every listener is free to visualize an individual image, one that is unique to his personal experiences. Through this imagery, contrasts and comparisons are evoked and the power of language is expanded.

When selecting material for Readers Theatre scripts, the student must ask himself what pictures the audience will be asked to create. Will their past associations, experiences, either real or vicarious, be equal to a full understanding of the selection?

Figurative language--the simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, etc.--stimulate imagery:

SIMILE: One by one, like leaves from a tree
All my faiths have forsaken me.

--Sara Teasdale, Leaves

METAPHOR: Blossomed the lovely stars
the forget-me-nots of the angels.

--Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Evangeline

PERSONIFICATION: When duty whispers low, thou must,
The youth replies, I can.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson, Voluntaries

HYPERBOLE: Here once the embattled farmers stood
And fired the shot heard round the world.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson, The Concord Hymn

Language is further enriched by sound devices and rhythm.

Alliteration, onomatopoeia, and assonance are forms which are commonly studied in high school literature classes:

ALLITERATION: The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free.

--Samuel Taylor Coleridge, The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

ONAMATOPOEIA: And the plashing of waterdrops
In the marble fountain
Comes down the garden paths.

--Amy Lowell, Patterns

ASSONANCE: I arise from dreams of thee,
In the first sweet sleep of night.

--Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lines to an Indian Air

Rhythm, commonly associated with poetry, is a significant part of all literature. Otis J. Aggertt and Elbert R. Bowen in Communicative Reading provide a traditional definition of rhythm: "more or less regular recurrence of accents."²⁰ Chloe Armstrong and Paul D. Brandes, in the book entitled The Oral Interpretation of Literature, describe rhythm as a particular arrangement of word groups to convey meaning. They cite "unity of style, a coherence of ideas, and a sufficiently reoccurring emphasis to give the reader a feeling of completeness,"²¹ as elements of rhythm. This explanation points up the importance, not

²⁰ Aggertt and Bowen, op. cit., pp. 205-206.

²¹ Chloe Armstrong and Paul D. Brandes, The Oral Interpretation of Literature, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1963), p. 113.

only of having something to say, but also the need for a freshness of approach, a spontaneity, a "first time" quality.

All of these elements--imagery, figurative language, sound devices, and rhythm--are usually present in some degree and manner in literature that is worthy of Readers Theatre. Coger and White point out that "repetition establishes rhythm which, in turn, stimulates emotion and reinforces the meaning of the language."²²

Unity. The concept of unity as a necessary quality of Readers Theatre carries great importance. Charlotte Lee provides a workable definition of unity:

Unity is the combining and ordering of all the parts that make up the whole. It consists of those elements of content and form which hold the writing together and keep the reader's and the listener's minds focused on a total effect.²³

To achieve this kind of unity, the interpreter should examine three prime considerations: the purpose of the script, the length of the selection as prescribed by the time limits, and the adaptability of the material.

First, the interpreter should choose the impression or effect he wishes to make upon his reader. This is called the purpose. If the interpreter knows what he wants to accomplish by his presentation, then he is better able to select the kind of material which has the potential to fulfill his purpose. This concept of unity is broad and general and must be narrowed considerably as the adapter arranges the script.

²²Coger and White, op. cit., p. 24.

²³Lee, op. cit., p. 23.

The second consideration in selecting materials to achieve unity is the length of the selection. It must be of such a length that it can be arranged to comply with the time allotted for the performance. Although public programs may vary from thirty minutes to two hours, many authorities agree that a full-length Readers Theatre script should not exceed one and one-half hours' performance time.²⁴ Some directors conduct longer programs using one or more intermissions to break the span of concentration. Because Readers Theatre requires intense participation by the audience, the people cannot be expected to concentrate for long periods of time. The form of the script, the quality of performance, and the make-up of the audience all help to determine a satisfactory length for the script. When the program is too long, the audience will lose interest and turn away. In the classroom, the length of the class period also imposes time restrictions on material which can be satisfactorily presented within a designated time.

The third consideration which the interpreter should make when selecting materials to achieve unity is the adaptability of the material. Almost every work of theatre art must have a beginning, a middle, and an end to give it a sense of completeness for the audience. Because Readers Theatre scripts are often adaptations or compilations instead of complete original works, the unity element is of unique concern to the interpreter. As adapter and compiler modifying the original work, the interpreter has a responsibility to the author as well as the audience to maintain a unity or wholeness of idea, and one

²⁴Coger, "Theatre for Oral Interpreters," op. cit., 324.

as nearly as possible like that intended by the author. As the interpreter considers a selection, he should be able to anticipate, from those portions he desires to use, a meaningful whole--a complete unit. He must see these portions as potential elements with which to build and maintain the final unified arrangement of his script.

Before continuing with the last three qualities of literature, the investigator reminds the reader that these first five qualities--evocative power, interesting characters, action, enriched language, and unity--are positive qualities. They are marks of worthwhile literature.

On the other hand, the last three qualities of literature to be considered become negative qualities when used to excess. Veilleux lists them as follows: sentiment, rhetoric, and didactics.²⁵

Sentiment. Sentiment is the author's choice of ideas and feelings as expressed in his writings: i.e., love, grief, hate. Excessive sentiment arises from a distorted presentation of these ideas and feelings. For example, excessive sentiment can result when a poet describes only one facet of a character. An adult male might be characterized as "tender," "mild," "gentle," "sweet," "cheery," and "trustful as a child." These qualities are not unattractive singularly, but taken together they show only one side of a man's personality. They constitute a character that would be practical only in a perfect world. The excessive repetition of sentiment would make such a poem overly sentimental.²⁶

²⁵Veilleux, loc. cit.

²⁶Ibid., p. 111.

Bacon describes another equally objectionable form of sentimentality, one that arises from "a lack of congruence between the sentiment and the object calling it forth."²⁷ Such sentimentality occurs when feelings belonging to the writer himself are attributed to objects within the literature. As an example, when one describes a climbing vine as a 'stealthy, devious creeper,' he is ascribing to the vine personal qualities which it does not really possess, but which the writer himself feels.²⁸

Rhetoric. Rhetoric, which is traditionally associated with the useful art of persuasion, has a significant role in the writing of poetic arts--those designed to delight and please.²⁹ For the writer, the element of rhetoric with which he must be concerned is the manner in which he presents his ideas and feelings--the language he selects and the arrangement he chooses to create an effect upon the reader. Rhetoric becomes excessive and distasteful when the manner of expressing the thoughts and feelings of the author are exaggerated. For example, use of absolutes and generalities can result in distasteful or excessive rhetoric. The writer who repeatedly uses the word "always," or implies its meaning, is speaking in absolutes. The idea expressed may lose some of its delight and assume instead qualities of persuasion. The poet who speaks in generalities, like "love will open any door," is not only

²⁷ Bacon, op. cit., p. 113.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 113-114.

²⁹ Wilma H. Grimes and Alethea Smith Mattingly, Interpretation: Writer, Reader, Audience, (San Francisco: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1961), p. 14.

being sentimental, but also overly rhetorical. He is using generalities instead of something meaningful to describe or support his ideas.³⁰

Didactics. Didactics is the instructive or teaching purpose of the work. Veilleux states that "all poetry has moral purpose, but only a poor poet insists that he has absolute truth without feeling the need for indicating reasons or arguments."³¹ The emotive response, as provoked by the writer's reasons or arguments, is the driving force by which the poet attempts to persuade the reader to action.³² Excessive didactics results when the natural instructive function of the work becomes expressive of narrow and conventional moral attitudes; for example, when that which is possible and meaningful is overstated, when clichés are used excessively, and when too much unqualified moralizing is prepounded.

Abuse of these three qualities results in dishonest presentation of ideas and feelings. The interpreter selecting material for Readers Theatre should avoid such literature, for it is unworthy of all oral interpretation. The distorted ideas and feelings expressed provide the audience, as well as the interpreter, with a false emotional and literary image.

Requirements of Interpreter

The third consideration, as described by Veilleux in the functional approach to selecting literature for Readers Theatre, is its

³⁰Veilleux, loc. cit.

³¹Ibid.

³²Lee, op. cit., p. 359.

potential to arouse strong empathy in the interpreter. The literature should possess those qualities which convince the interpreter that the selection needs expression and communication. The intensity which the interpreter feels for the selection and its author will have a direct relationship to the intensity with which he is able to share it with his audience.³³

In addition to contributing to the quality of the performance, the empathic qualities in literature can help to satisfy the emotional and intellectual needs of the student. The greater the empathy, the more the student can identify in the situation depicted by the material. Through this identification he is better able to expand his own living and develop his personality.

Increased interest in the literature through empathy frequently motivates the student to do library work for a more thorough understanding of the selection. This interest encourages the student to investigate the larger world of literature and to learn to find its values and excellences. The responses to literature help the student, then, to develop individual and social taste.

For the teacher selecting Readers Theatre material for student use, David E. MacArthur recommends challenging the capacities of the students to stimulate them to expand their horizons and concepts:

One factor which must be kept in mind from the beginning is the students' abilities and capacities to handle the material. . . . They are encouraged to extend themselves beyond what they ordinarily can do, to attempt the interpretation of material that will be a

³³Veilleux, op. cit., p. 20.

challenge; however, it is wise to know the type of material they can handle comfortably and effectively. Some are able to handle highly dramatic material; others do exceedingly well with poetry, still others have an innate sense for comedy and timing which helps them to interpret humorous material. In the developing and training process, it is far better to have the student experience success with material that he or she can present effectively.³⁴

Challenging material can provide incentive and motivation to the students with adequate capacity. The teacher's responsibility is to recognize the abilities of his students so that he may provide them with suitable material.

The latter point made by MacArthur, that in the developing and training process the students should experience success, is well taken. At the same time, the students should remember that after some initial successes, they should not avoid a style of literature only on the grounds that they do other styles better. Readers Theatre encourages experimentation. Through imaginative approaches, both in style, form, and technique, students can more fully develop their own potential.

The information presented in this chapter has shown two major approaches to selecting material for Readers Theatre in the secondary school. The first, the traditional approach, provides guides based on the traditional criteria: universality, individuality, and suggestion. Three guides are developed from this approach: Choose literature that holds potential interest to all people; select material that has a fresh approach to its subject; and choose a selection which charges the reader with some responsibility to complete its meaning.

³⁴David E. MacArthur, "Reader's Theatre: Variations on a Theme," The Speech Teacher, XIII (January, 1964), 49.

The second, the functional approach to selecting material for Readers Theatre, also provides workable guides for the secondary school. Three areas of requirements help to divide the functions into common groups: requirements of the audience, requirements of literature, and requirements of the interpreter.

To meet the requirements of the audience, literature worthy of Readers Theatre should be appropriate. In so far as possible, it should meet the expectations, tastes, education, and general cultural pattern of the audience.

To meet the requirements of literature, the selection should possess five positive qualities: evocative power, interesting characters, action, enriched language, and unity. In addition, to meet the literary requirements, literature to be used in Readers Theatre should avoid excessive use of three qualities: sentiment, rhetoric, and didactics.

To meet the requirements of the interpreter, literature selected for Readers Theatre should possess the potential to arouse strong empathy in the interpreter.

Literature which measures up to these guides, as described by the traditional and functional approaches, is very likely to be literature worthy of Readers Theatre.

CHAPTER IV

GUIDES TO ADAPTING MATERIAL FOR READERS THEATRE

Once appropriate material has been selected, one can begin adapting the selection. Script adapting is made up of three steps: (1) obtaining permission to adapt the material, (2) understanding the selection, and (3) adapting and arranging the material in script form.

I. OBTAINING PERMISSION TO ADAPT MATERIAL

The question of obtaining permission to use material for Readers Theatre scripts is of paramount concern to the adapter. Literature which is part of the public domain, of course, is available without permission from the publisher. Such literature includes that which was published before copyright laws existed and that for which the copyright has expired. This realm of literature affords the secondary school with a large variety of worthwhile material appropriate for Readers Theatre.

A large portion of twentieth-century literature is protected by the Copyright Law of 1909. This law provides that a copyright to such literature can be secured:

for twenty-eight years from the date of first publication. . . .
[In addition], the proprietor of such copyright shall be entitled to a renewal and extension of the copyright . . . for the further term of twenty-eight years.¹

A copyright revision bill, planned to provide additional incentive and

¹United States Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on the Judiciary, Copyright Law Revision, Congressional Report No. 83, 90th Congress, 1st Session, on H.R. 2512, March 8, 1967 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967), pp. 192-193.

protection for the author, is currently pending in Congress.

Authorities in Oral Interpretation have written very little about the interpretation of the Copyright Laws. Wilma Grimes and Alethea Smith Mattingly make the following observation in regard to the use of copyrighted materials: "When the presentation [of literature used by Readers' Theatre Groups] is part of an educational program, without charge for admission, permissions are generally granted gratis."²

Leslie Irene Coger, Professor of Speech and Theatre at Southwest Missouri State College, and one of the co-authors of Readers Theatre Handbook, answers the question about the use of copyrighted materials for Readers Theatre in the following statement: "Personally, I write for permission to use materials if they are going to be used outside of the classroom or if outsiders are invited into the classroom."³

Melvin R. White, Department of Speech and Theatre, Brooklyn College, the other co-author of Readers Theatre Handbook, served during 1966 as a representative of the American Educational Theatre Association on the "Ad Hoc Committee for Copyright Law Revision."⁴ He offers the following suggestions in regard to the use of copyrighted materials for Readers Theatre.

²Wilma H. Grimes and Alethea Smith Mattingly, Interpretation: Writer, Reader, Audience, (San Francisco: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1961), p. 332.

³Personal letter from Leslie Irene Coger, Southwest Missouri State College, December 11, 1967.

⁴Personal letter from Melvin R. White, Brooklyn College of The City University of New York, March 15, 1968.

The 'fair use' provision in the Copyright Law has been interpreted to mean that a classroom teacher may use copyrighted materials in her classroom without permission and without payment of royalties. This has included poems, prose, and drama. It is also customary to interpret 'fair use' to include the performance of such materials in assemblies and other such affairs when only students and faculty are in attendance. But when the public is invited to attend, either with or without the payment of an admission fee, permission is to be obtained--and fees paid, if the copyright owner or his agent so require.

In most cases, when material is being performed on a non-profit basis . . . authors seem to grant permission (although this is less true of playwrights than it is of short story writers, novelists, and poets) with either no royalty charge or a small, greatly reduced royalty.

.....

Some interpret the 'fair use' clause to include public programs with no admission charge--but this is more often the case with nondramatic materials such as short stories and poems. More and more publishers of plays specify any [italics in the original] performance, in order to prevent this use of their materials, but educators still interpret this as not including classroom per se use. It is customary to use any and all materials in speech and drama festivals and clinics without permission or payment of royalties--again, when the public is not invited and admission fees are not paid.⁵

The interpretation of the Copyright Laws appears to be a difficult problem. From the research available, in the light of current laws, certain guides can be formulated: (1) A classroom teacher may use copyrighted materials--poems, prose, and drama--in her classroom without obtaining permission and without payment of royalties when no invited outsiders are present. (2) Copyrighted materials may be performed in assemblies and other such affairs where only students and faculty are in attendance. (3) It is customary to use any and all materials in speech and drama festivals and clinics without permission or payment of fees.

⁵Personal letter from Melvin R. White, Brooklyn College of The City University of New York, November 23, 1967.

when the public is not invited and admission fees are not paid.

(4) Permission should be obtained and fees paid for the use of copy-righted materials to be performed in public programs without admission charge. Most authors and some playwrights grant permission with either little or no royalty charge or a small, greatly reduced royalty.

(5) Permission should be obtained and fees paid for the use of copy-righted materials to be performed in public programs with admission charge.

II. UNDERSTANDING THE SELECTION

To effectively adapt literature for Readers Theatre, one must first understand the selection. Many textbooks on Oral Interpretation are available which provide detailed procedures and techniques for finding the meaning in literature. For the most part, authorities agree that the adapter should begin by reading the complete selection silently for enjoyment and over-all meaning. If the adapter chooses to use an excerpt, he should understand how the selected portion functions within the whole. In addition, he should recognize the primary form of the selection--exposition, description, narration, dramatization, etc.

Once the initial steps are taken, the adapter should look for meaning through theme and organization. The author's attitude and the tone of the selection can reveal much about the author's purpose. Understanding the literal meanings of all words and phrases, together with a study of the syntax, is a valuable guide to finding the author's intention. Imagery, figurative language, and other emotional meanings

are equally important. For further meaning, the adapter should examine factors which are intrinsic to all worthwhile literature, such as unity and harmony, variety and contrast, balance and proportion, and rhythm. Through a continual synthesis of the new discoveries of meaning with those already understood, the adapter should be able to successfully capture the meaning of the selection.

III. SCRIPT PREPARATION

When the adapter is confident that he understands the literature to be adapted, he may begin to plan the script. Basically, the form the script takes depends on the form and nature of the material to be adapted. The adapter should become familiar with the following general factors which are inherent in adapting literature for Readers Theatre: theme, cutting techniques, transitions, and introductions. In addition, he should examine the specific adapting techniques for each of the four literary genre: Dramatic Literature, Prose Fiction, Non-fiction, and Poetry.

General Factors Inherent in Adapting Literature for Readers Theatre

Theme. The theme of a Readers Theatre script may be likened to the hub of a wheel, for all other parts of the script appear to evolve from it. In a study of individual Readers Theatre programs, David F. MacArthur, Milwaukee-Downer College, found that "the programs were most successful when they had some point, some basic concept which was expressed through the material, something upon which to build some

continuity."⁶ This essential something is the theme. Grimes and Mattingly provide a detailed explanation of the theme:

In literature theme is the compound of thinking and feeling, simple or complex, arising from the inter-relationships of all the elements of the writing, but particularly from the What? How? and Why? [*italics in the original*].⁷ It is the total comment made by the writer. It may or may not be a positive belief, but it is indicative of a set of values and a view of life.⁸

As the adapter studied the literature to learn the author's attitude and meaning, he should also have discovered the author's theme. Now, as the adapter prepares the script, this theme should be faithfully preserved throughout the script. As an adapter, he should be selective in cutting and altering the text so that the author's theme is consistently preserved.

In compiled scripts, however, the general theme may be fixed by the adapter and supported by the more specific author-themes of the component selections. For example, the adapter might choose as his general theme a view of the Transcendentalists. But the individual selections or excerpts thereof will have more specific author-themes of their own. One segment might be from Emerson's essay "Self-Reliance"; another from Thoreau's essay "Civil Disobedience"; and a third from Hawthorne's fictional "The Minister's Black Veil." Each selection would have its own specific author-theme, yet together the three could

⁶ David E. MacArthur, "Reader's Theatre: Variations on a Theme," The Speech Teacher, XIII (January, 1964), 48.

⁷ Grimes and Mattingly describe what as the subject or thing being communicated; how as the manner in which what is being communicated; and why as the reason for what's being communicated., op. cit., pp. 26-27.

⁸ Ibid., p. 38.

rightfully be used to create the larger and more general theme chosen by the adapter.

Cutting techniques. Every Readers Theatre script should create a unified effect, and any cutting, addition, or change should be made with this goal in mind. As the adapter attempts to conform to time limits, he has a responsibility to edit the selection as he feels the silent reader might, attempting to eliminate detailed description and portions unapplicable to the theme. At the same time, he will want to retain sufficient description, particularly in Prose Fiction, so that the audience can set the scene and see the characters in their minds. An account of the action must be retained so that the audience may mentally see what happens.

In cutting material, Chloe Armstrong and Paul Brandes point out three common items which are subject to elimination: "parenthetical thoughts, descriptive passages, and minor plots."⁹ Most authorities agree that the explanations, such as "he said," or "with a sneer in his voice," may be eliminated, for their purpose in prose is to provide clarity for the silent reader. In dramatization, they are not needed because the interpreter should clarify the identity of the speaker, as well as convey how the line was said.

Elimination of any element should be done purposefully. The adapter should strive to retain all that is essential to the author's attitude and meaning. Using these portions, then, the interpreter, like

⁹Chloe Armstrong and Paul D. Brandes, The Oral Interpretation of Literature, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1963), p. 126.

the author, should re-weave those facets into a faithful replica of the original.

Transitions. Transitions may be considered as the bridges between ideas in literature. Their length may vary from a single word or a phrase, to one or more sentences; and they may serve to designate a change of place, a change of time, or a change in situation. When material that has been cut leaves incoherent gaps, the adapter must span these breaks with smooth transitions. In a program composed of more than one selection, a significant word or a phrase from a preceding selection can sometimes be related to the next one.

The transition is a signpost that must be appreciated by both the interpreter and his audience, for not only do the transitional remarks prepare the listener for the next idea or the next selection, but they are also moments of slight relaxation, and the interpreter should take advantage of them as such. Tense emotional moments must be relieved with a change of pace. A brief moment of reflection is always welcome. Audiences, as well as interpreters, occasionally need to shift position.

Introductions. Once the script has been arranged, an introduction can be a valuable part of a successful Readers Theatre program. Scripts adapted from Dramatic Literature or Prose Fiction frequently do not need introductions, but programs of a compiled script, or those made up of several short scripts, can be greatly enhanced by an evocative, appropriately delivered introduction.

An introduction strives to divorce the audience from their immediate thoughts and endeavors to direct their energies on the literature

about to be shared. Serving to establish rapport between the interpreter and his audience, the introduction gives the latter an opportunity to relate to the literature. The introduction may include pertinent material about the author, and it may explain important, unfamiliar terms or difficult passages within the literature. Frequently, the adapter uses the introduction to describe the setting and introduce the characters. Whatever is said in the introduction should arouse the audience's curiosity and make the members eager to share in the literary experience about to be offered.

Literary Genre Used in Readers Theatre Scripts

All literature has certain elements in common, and the basic principles of analysis and interpretation apply to all types. However, each genre imposes special problems of analysis. While one cannot say that any technique is necessarily unique to a particular literary type, the adapter will do well to examine the major literary genre--Dramatic Literature, Prose Fiction, Non-Fiction and Poetry--and the techniques which appear to be related to each of them. It should be remembered, that to adapt any piece of literature, the adapter begins by attempting to understand the author's attitude and the meaning of the selection.

Dramatic Literature. Bacon describes Drama as "that form of literary work intended for performance onstage by actors (whether or not actually performed), written in the dramatic mode, in either prose or verse."¹⁰ Because Dramatic Literature is written for oral presentation,

¹⁰Wallace Bacon, The Art of Interpretation, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1966), p. 366.

many authorities consider this form to be the easiest to adapt for Readers Theatre. However, the play does have some unique elements. Stage directions and stage settings that are described by the playwright should be considered. If such explanatory material is essential to the playwright's meaning, it may be retained as the playwright has written it, or it may be rephrased in the adapter's own language. Sometimes it can be encompassed in an introduction; also, parts of it may be successfully transformed into transitions between scenes. Action which is implicit in the performance of the script, but not in the lines themselves, such as a kiss, a blow, or a humorous antic, can be added and assigned to a narrator. The adapter will find that any lines or characters which are unnecessary to fulfill the action of the plot can usually be eliminated from the play script altogether. Sometimes essential lines belonging to minor characters can be absorbed into the explanatory passages, or they can be assigned to major characters. If the lines are distinctly different, the adapter is wise to retain the minor character. Usually, the adapter of Dramatic Literature assigns but one major role to a reader. Several minor roles, which are sufficiently different, can be assigned to a single reader. For the most part, it is preferable to keep the lines fairly well distributed among the cast, for too many characters with little to say can distract the audience.

Early in the script, through an introduction of narration, the scene should be described and the characters identified. A narrator or a minor character may be assigned these lines. Some adapters prefer to

allow the characters to read lines introducing themselves.

The adapter is free to vary the scene and act divisions. For example, the time restrictions for performing the script may necessitate an alteration of the original divisions. When the length or the mood of the play requires a pronounced break, the adapter should consider intermission periods and plan his script accordingly. As with any "continued" story, each intermission break should come at a suspenseful or climactic point in the action.

Prose Fiction. Probably the two most popular forms of literature are the novel and the short story. These are both adapted in much the same manner. However, the additional length of the novel and the larger number of characters necessitate more extensive cutting than does the short story. The complexity of the novel's plot demands careful editing so that the story line is developed and the author's attitude and meaning preserved. Sometimes a single episode can be successfully adapted; other times the interpreter may work from the author's theme and select excerpts from throughout the story to develop a unified script. Transitions, assigned perhaps to a narrator or a chorus, can be used effectively to achieve coherence.

A successful script contains variety in its length of speeches. The pattern of variety should likewise show interesting differences. Although speeches are usually divided between sentences or groups of sentences, they can be successfully divided within a sentence. For example, to achieve emphasis, the adapter might assign words or phrases in a series to different readers. Words of contrast can also be

treated in this manner.

One aspect of Prose Fiction which is especially significant is point of view. Leslie Irene Coger and Melvin R. White call it "the angle from which the story is told."¹¹ Charlotte Lee defines point of view as "the physical and psychological position and degree of involvement which the narrator takes in relation to the action and resultant plot."¹² Basically, point of view is best revealed by the three major classes of narrators: first-person narrator, omniscient narrator, and objective observer.

The first-person narrator can provide either a subjective or a relatively objective account of the action, depending somewhat on the significance of the role he is assigned. He may be either a major or minor character. In either case, he can report only what is available to him through his senses and his normal human powers of speculation. He is free to report what others say and do, and he can give an account of his own unexpressed thoughts and feelings, as well as speculating on what others are thinking and feeling, even though such thoughts and feelings are not directly expressed. Operating within the story, he is recognized and reacted to by the characters.¹³

¹¹ Leslie Irene Coger and Melvin R. White, Readers Theatre Handbook, (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1967), p. 30.

¹² Charlotte Lee, Oral Interpretation, Third Edition, (Boston: The Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), p. 208.

¹³ Robert Breen, "Point of View" (Emporia, Kansas: Interpreters Theatre Workshop, Kansas State Teachers College, Summer, 1967), 5-7, passim. (Mimeographed.)

As a major character, the first-person narrator is subjective and likely to be prejudiced. At the same time, however, this subjective account encourages the illusion that the reader himself is an eye-witness to the action. As a minor character, the first-person narrator still retains the benefit of eye-witness illusion, but his emotional involvement and responsibilities to the plot are obviously subordinate, rather than central. As a result, his view of the action of the story tends to be more objective and somewhat more reliable.¹⁴

The omniscient narrator possesses universal knowledge. Having no recognizable character, he exists entirely outside the story and nearly always speaks in third-person. Because he "knows all," he is aware of the feelings and thoughts of all characters, and he can make these feelings and thoughts known to the reader without the characters' having to express them directly. His personal comments, however, will not be stated directly, but will be reflected in the compassion he elicits for a certain character or in his dislike for or delight in a particular setting.¹⁵

A problem of the omniscient narrator's point of view is that because of the super-human quality ascribed to the narrator, the readers may become suspicious and dubious of his narration. To overcome this disadvantage, some authors turn to "limited omniscience," which restricts the omniscience to the inner life of one character so that the reader can more easily believe the narrator as a supersensitive, highly perceptive intelligence. For the most part, authors tend to limit the

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Lee, op. cit., p. 208.

omniscience of their narrators to one or two major characters.¹⁶

The objective observer speaks in third-person. Essentially, he is a reporter, telling only what he sees and hears, in the light of what the author wants him to see and hear. His position must remain outside the story, for he has no recognizable character and is never responded to by other characters. Because he has no personal view of the events, his point of view is reliable, and the interpreter or reader, thus equipped with an unprejudiced account, is left to make up his own mind.¹⁷

Point of view tells the adapter on whose authority one learns what the characters think and do in the story. Such knowledge can serve as a valid basis for assigning lines to the readers. Lines of direct discourse (dialogue set off by quotation marks) normally present little difficulty because their source is usually apparent. These lines are assigned to the respective characters. But lines of indirect discourse (narration), the source of which is not always readily discernible, are another matter. The adapter must determine their source by recognizing the point of view so that the lines can be properly assigned to the corresponding character or to a narrator.¹⁸

Some adapters hesitate to assign anything but direct discourse to a reader performing a character role. Such hesitation is unwarranted, however. Descriptive passages and other indirect discourse arising from the character's feelings can aptly be handled by the character himself, as well as by a narrator. The lines assigned to the narrator, however,

¹⁶Breen, op. cit., 5-19, passim.

¹⁷Ibid., 3-26, passim.

¹⁸Coger and White, loc. cit.

are indirect discourse. The adapter is free, though, to assign to the individual acting as narrator lines of direct discourse delegated to one or more minor character roles. While speaking these lines, the narrator would then become a character.

Non-Fiction. The literary division Non-Fiction includes such factual writing as journals and diaries, letters, essays, histories, and biographies. Lee points out that:

the content of factual writing depends for effectiveness upon authoritative statements, logical progression of proofs, and exact denotation of the words. In short, factual prose [Non-Fiction] informs, defines, explains.¹⁹

Readers Theatre can frequently utilize these various forms successfully, but such materials require special handling.

Journals and diaries can provide excellent Readers Theatre material because they reflect unique personal moments in the lives of interesting personalities. The informal style used in the journal or diary form reflects the highly subjective attitude of the writer.²⁰ The adapter can arrange the script in such a manner that the reader appears to re-create the journal entries as he speaks them aloud. Another basis for line division is found in the two elements of setting--time and place. Lines which originate from a single place or within a specific time period could be assigned to separate readers.

The adapter sharing letters must make a distinction between public and private letters. Public letters, which are usually designed to persuade a large group of hearers or readers to a course of action or to the acceptance of an idea, may be handled very much as one would

¹⁹Lee, op. cit., p. 136.

²⁰Ibid.

approach an oration. Private letters, however, are usually more complex because of the chain of events that has led up to the current letter. In addition, the private letter is usually of a more personal nature.²¹ The very purpose of the letter helps to determine the proper line division. Some letters, to be effective, must be read in their entirety. Others make their point in only a line or two. The adapter's theme is also a critical factor here, for he may require only excerpts from letters to develop his purpose.

The essay reveals through writing the ideas and personal opinions of its author. The facts he reports are but a means to making his point, for his attitude and purpose are paramount.²² The adapter has several choices in arranging an essay for Readers Theatre. If the essay is made up of several expanded metaphors, for example, he may assign each to an individual reader. If the essay is developed by illustrations, the adapter may use these as a basis for line assignment. If contrast or comparison has been the means of organization, the adapter may follow this arrangement for allocating lines. Whatever choice is made, it should be a means to help the interpreter re-create the author's attitude and purpose.

History, as literature, offers a challenge to the interpreter. Early history, which was based upon legend, myth, and fancy, was often read aloud to audiences. Some authorities today, however, do not think of history as literature.²³ To them, history is an objective, logical

²¹Ibid., pp. 147-148.

²²Ibid., pp. 136-137.

²³Bacon, op. cit., p. 266.

recording of the facts. The adapter seeking material for Readers Theatre will be interested in the kind of history which expresses a personal comment made by the writer, and in literature which is based on history. Such literature can take any literary form. Shakespeare, for example, used the poetic form blank verse to construct his plays, many of which are based on history. Stephen Vincent Benét based many of his poems and short stories on history. Truman Capote's In Cold Blood is what he calls a fictional novel based on fact and recounting actual events. In any case, the manner of assigning lines is determined primarily by the author's style and the literary form used.

In adapting literature based on history, the adapter should take into consideration the limited knowledge of his audience. To compensate for such limitations, he can provide essential background information in an introduction. Occasionally, the adapter may inject an explanation within the script itself.

Biography is a kind of history in which the biographer, assuming a unique perspective, makes personal comments about the person whose life he is recording.²⁴ Audiences find a great appeal in re-creating the lives of interesting people. The autobiography, too, can provide material worthy of Readers Theatre. The adapter can select portions of such accounts and arrange them in interesting scripts. He may choose to relate one episode from the person's life, or he may take portions of several and combine them to re-create a vivid event out of the past. Excerpts from several biographies of the same subject may be combined to

²⁴Ibid., p. 268.

show various perspectives of a given period in the subject's life. Lines may be assigned to various characters as they appear in the life of the subject, much as they might be assigned in a novel. If several biographies are used, the lines may be assigned according to the biographer. Lines from an autobiography may be arranged so that a different reader represents a different age of the subject. Another division might be made on the basis of family members and associates, each assuming a significant role, i.e., mother, father, sister, brother, spouse, children, employer, and friend.

In spite of any added problems in adapting Non-Fiction for Readers Theatre, the increased value of its realism makes it well worth the effort to adapt it.

Poetry. Poetry offers the adapter limitless materials for Readers Theatre. The emotional weight of its content and the importance of its sound pattern mark its major differences from Prose. Careful selectivity in word choice is partly responsible for the condensation which is also a significant part of all Poetry. The condensation, in turn, sharpens the emotional impact and allows the poem to move on several levels simultaneously: the literal meaning as described by the poet, the connotative meaning suggested by the poet's imagery, and the emotional meaning aroused in the reader himself. Because of this triple nature, the adapter should view the meaning and content of Poetry in a somewhat different manner from that of Drama and Prose. While the poet must have something to say, and he must say it so that his audience can understand it, this does not mean that the poem must be

as immediately clear and factual as an essay. the adapter must be willing to accept the poet's attitude and grant him the right to hold such an attitude, even though the adapter may not agree with the poet. The poet does not require an opinion from the reader; his only wish is to share his experience with the reader.²⁵

To enable the adapter to understand the techniques of adapting Poetry for Readers Theatre, three classes of Poetry, based largely on a consideration of the persona--the speaker in the poem--will be considered: narrative, lyric, and dramatic.

Narrative poetry is that which "tells a story or relates a series of events leading up to a climax."²⁶ Three types of narrative are commonly used for Readers Theatre: popular ballad, metrical tale, and epic. Each type possesses qualities which require special consideration.

The question and answer type dialogue common in such ballads as "Get Up and Bar the Door," provides little or no detail in the changes of time, place, and character development. As a result, the adapter will need to provide these transitions to retain the unity of progression. The refrain, so common to the ballad, must be arranged so that it serves the purpose of repetition without breaking the progress of the story.²⁷

The story element of the metrical tale, such as Robert Frost's "The Death of the Hired Man," is adapted in much the same manner as that of the short story. The narrator's point of view is established, the

²⁵Lee, op. cit., pp. 358-360.

²⁶Ibid., p. 361.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 362-363.

setting recognized, and the relationship between the characters and the setting understood.²⁸

The extreme length and elevated tone of the epic make its adapting more complex. More extensive cutting must be done, and the subject matter must be treated in a manner appropriate to its tone. Beowulf is an example of epic poetry.²⁹

To adapt narrative poetry in general for Readers Theatre, the adapter should discover the essential episodes, their direction, and their relationship to the main climax. Lines of narration and direct discourse, as well as transitions, are usually assigned much the same as in Prose Fiction. Refrains, or phrases used for special emphasis or rhythm, are sometimes assigned to a chorus. Individual chorus members can also take single lines or phrases.

The lyric poem, Lee states, "is most typically a short poem, though it may be a long, sustained emotional utterance. It is strongly unified poetry, for all aspects of content are shaped toward the emotional focal point."³⁰ Many of the common lyric forms can be used successfully in Readers Theatre. The adapter may use the lyric in its entirety to illustrate a larger theme in a compiled script. For example, a view of spring might be depicted by a variety of reflective lyrics describing spring flowers. In such a script, each poem would probably be assigned to an individual reader.

The persona in a lyric poem is usually a single speaker, whose

²⁸Ibid., p. 363.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 363-364.

³⁰Ibid., p. 364.

primary purpose is to show an emotional experience.³¹ The lyric gives little or no account of what leads up to or beyond the emotional experience; therefore, to help set the appropriate mood, the adapter may need to provide essential background material for his audience. The adapter must arrange the lines of the poem so that each image is complete, and the rhythm of the lines retained.

Dramatic poetry can be considered as "those works which center on a character in conflict with a force within or outside himself, one whose development is revealed without a third-person narrator."³² Both the dramatic narrative and the dramatic lyric can be successfully adapted for Readers Theatre. In both forms, "the persona is an identifiable character speaking directly to an audience, to himself as he thinks aloud, or to the other characters involved in a dramatic situation."³³

In a dramatic narrative, such as "The Prisoner of Chillon," by Lord Byron, the incidents or episodes are related by an active character who is affected by the events which he relates.³⁴ The lines may be divided by time periods within the story or by moods reflecting variety.

The dramatic lyric such as Tennyson's "Ulysses," is a reflection of the poet's subjective responses, thoughts, and aspirations, through the vividness and force of an appropriate character who speaks for him.³⁵ The adapter may assign lines by giving primary lines of

³¹Ibid.

³³Ibid., p. 368.

³⁵Ibid.

³²Ibid., p. 365.

³⁴Ibid.

progression to a chorus and those conveying the philosophical element to a major character.

Poetry in its many forms offers the adapter provocative and stimulating material for Readers Theatre. Despite the unique problems which the adapter may encounter in adapting Poetry, the additional emotive and suggestive values provided by the poetic script make all the effort well-rewarded.

From the comprehensive process of script preparation, the following general steps can be formulated: (1) The theme of the script should be determined. (2) General cutting techniques should be understood. (3) The purpose and composition of transitions and introductions should be clear. (4) The literary form of the selection should be determined. (5) Using the general cutting techniques and those appropriate to the particular literary form, the adapter should select from the original work the essential elements with which to build the script. If he is compiling a script, he should choose the selections he wishes to use. (6) The adapter should rearrange these elements, together with any necessary transitions, combining them into a unified whole. (7) An introduction should be arranged, if one is needed. (8) Line assignments should be completed.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the evidence provided in this investigation, several conclusions can be made about Readers Theatre in the secondary schools. As an art form, Readers Theatre appears to be growing rapidly as a popular choice in the secondary schools throughout the country. In addition to classroom activities, secondary schools are using Readers Theatre as program material for local audiences and neighboring schools and as favorite entries for high school speech and drama festivals.

Evidence shows that Readers Theatre is providing increased literary opportunities for students and teachers by bringing to the audiences, not only Dramatic Literature, but also Prose Fiction, Poetry, and Non-Fiction. The major interest in Readers Theatre is directed to the written word--the author's text--as a stimulus to audience involvement. Such conventional theatre techniques as complex lighting, elaborate costumes, and detailed stage settings, have been eliminated. Vocal and facial expression, together with or without motivated movement, serve as the primary means of conveyance.

Values of Readers Theatre appear to extend to the student, the teacher, and the audience. For the student, Readers Theatre can help serve to develop techniques of effective oral reading. It can provide several kinds of opportunities for the students to expand their creative capabilities: adapting literature for Readers Theatre, performing in Readers Theatre productions, and directing Readers Theatre productions. Readers Theatre can help students to enlarge their realm of living by

providing them with a variety of vicarious literary experiences. Students can enrich their cultural background through the closer reading and greater understanding of worthwhile literature associated with Readers Theatre. Growth in techniques of literary analysis can accompany Readers Theatre experiences as students learn to criticize objectively and to profit from valid criticism.

Readers Theatre holds values for the teacher, also. Greater numbers of students can be given increased literary and dramatic experience through Readers Theatre because its low cost and simplified production techniques permit more and varied productions. The teacher can provide increased opportunities for a wider range of students because Readers Theatre affords greater freedom in casting. Physically handicapped students can frequently take major roles in Readers Theatre. The under-achiever can find security in the group activity of Readers Theatre. For the student with misguided energies, Readers Theatre can provide the opportunity to achieve desired recognition from his peers. As an educational tool, teachers find Readers Theatre valuable in vocabulary building and in remedial work.

For the audience, Readers Theatre offers special values. Literary forms, heretofore primarily limited to the silent reader, can be experienced by an audience through Readers Theatre productions. Novels, short stories, diaries, letters, essays, biographies, and poetry of all kinds are being adapted for Readers Theatre presentation. These additional literary forms are providing new opportunities for the audience members to participate creatively in the production. Through

vicarious involvement, the audience members can better understand and appreciate situations which they have never truly known.

The popularity of Readers Theatre in the secondary school has created a demand for resource materials. Little has been written about Readers Theatre for the secondary school. While there exists an abundance of available material for Readers Theatre scripts, students and teachers too often do not know how to select appropriate material for Readers Theatre nor how to adapt it to script form.

An understanding of the nature of Readers Theatre appears to be an initial step to selecting and adapting material for Readers Theatre. The communication of ideas in Readers Theatre involves three parties, each giving to and receiving from one another: (1) the author, as revealed by the manuscript, (2) the interpreter, and (3) the audience. The ideas of the author as expressed in the text constitute the basis of what is being shared. The interpreter must seek to understand the author's intellectual and emotional meaning in the light of his own experiences. With this understanding, the interpreter should use his most effective oral interpretation techniques to share the literature with his audience. As the production is in progress, the audience should actively participate by mentally re-creating the scenes and actions of the literature.

For additional clarification of the nature of Readers Theatre, an understanding of its unique production techniques appears to be helpful. The three basic techniques common to many Readers Theatre productions are the use of the manuscript, the lectern, and the stool.

The manuscript or author's text is usually present as a symbol of the source of the literary experience. The interpreter may read or appear to read from the manuscript. The lectern functions as a device to hold the manuscript, thereby allowing the interpreter greater physical freedom. The stool serves as a base for the interpreter, one which permits him comfort, as well as varied position.

Once the student or teacher understands the nature of Readers Theatre, it follows that he is ready to consider seriously selecting the material to adapt for Readers Theatre. In addition to satisfying the external factors, such as time, place, and available readers, evidence shows that in selecting material for Readers Theatre two major approaches may be used. First the traditional approach provides guides based on universality, individuality, and suggestion. Guides developed from this approach include the following: (1) choose material that holds potential interest to all people; (2) select material that has a fresh approach to its subject, and (3) select material which charges the reader with some responsibility to complete its meaning.

Second, the functional approach to selecting material for Readers Theatre is directed to meet the requirements of the audience, the literature, and the interpreter. Evidence shows that guides for the functional approach can also be formulated. (1) To satisfy the audience requirements, literature worthy of Readers Theatre should be appropriate. It should seek to meet the expectations, tastes, education, and general cultural pattern of the audience. (2) To fulfill the requirements of literature, the selection should possess five positive

qualities: evocative power, interesting characters, action, enriched language, and unity. In addition, literature for Readers Theatre should avoid excessive use of three qualities: sentiment, rhetoric, and didactics. (3) To meet the requirements of the interpreter, literature for Readers Theatre should possess the potential to arouse strong empathy in the interpreter.

Although it appears that either the traditional or functional approach to selecting material for Readers Theatre may be used successfully by itself, it seems reasonable to assume that the combination of both approaches would be more likely to assure the most satisfactory selection.

After the choice of material has been made, the student or teacher can begin the process of script preparation. This can be considered as a three-facet operation: (1) obtain permission to use copyrighted material, (2) understand the selection, and (3) adapt and arrange the material in script form. The adapter is not required to obtain permission to use literature in the public domain. However, he has a responsibility to the publisher of copyrighted material. The "fair use" provision in the Copyright Law is interpreted to allow the use of copyrighted material in prescribed educational situations without written permission or payment of royalties. However, the adapter must obtain permission and pay required royalties for the use of copyrighted materials performed in public programs where admission charges may or may not be made. In the latter case, many publishers will grant permission with little or no royalty charge, or a small, greatly reduced royalty.

Once the adapter has obtained necessary permission to adapt a literary selection to Readers Theatre, his next major concern is to understand the author's meaning of the selection. Textbooks on Oral Interpretation usually provide complete techniques for such analysis. The first recommendation appears to be a complete, silent-reading of the selection to provide the adapter with the over-all view of the author's meaning. Through a study of the organization and theme of the selection, the adapter should gain further meaning. The literal and emotional meanings of the words and their syntax must be understood. As the adapter proceeds, each new discovery of meaning is to be synthesized with that already known. The end result should equip the adapter with a reliable understanding of the selection.

After the adapter understands that which he is to adapt, he can begin to plan the script. First, he will decide on a major theme for the script. The selection itself may determine this; or, in the case of a compiled script, the adapter may choose his own theme. General cutting techniques should be understood so that the adapter can be selective and purposeful in his cutting. In addition, he must understand the purpose and composition of transitions and introductions. Using the literary genre as a guide, the adapter should apply the techniques of cutting in order to select the essential portions of the original with which to build the script. Following this, the adapter should arrange these elements in a coherent and unified manner. If an introduction is needed, the adapter can prepare one. Finally, the adapter is ready to assign lines to characters and narrators.

The teacher and the student should remember that the guides provided in this investigation are not rigid rules. Instead, they are suggestions which can point the way to successful experiences in Readers Theatre.

The Appendix provides five examples of Readers Theatre scripts adapted by the investigator. As a basis for these scripts, the investigator chose selections from the literary genre Prose Fiction, Non-Fiction and Poetry. The following literary classes have been used: short story, biography, essay, letters, and narrative poetry. In making the choice of selections, the investigator sought to provide variety in literary form and adapting technique, within the physical limits of the investigation.

The short story script illustrates the importance of point of view in adapting Prose Fiction. Techniques used to adapt the short story form are commonly applicable to the novel. The script based on biography demonstrates the use of a single chapter of Non-Fiction as a basis for an entertaining and informative Readers Theatre script. The essay script, which presents an example of satire, shows one manner of dividing lines in material revealing a single personal opinion. The script compiled of excerpts from letters represents a variety of views on a contemporary subject. It also illustrates the division of a script into acts. The narrative poem script uses history as a basis for Readers Theatre. In addition, it demonstrates the use of an introduction.

Dramatic Literature was not included, first, because of the

physical limitations of the investigation, and second, because this form has natural divisions of dialogue. Because of the latter, beginning students in Readers Theatre will probably turn to this form more readily than to those which require more complex techniques of cutting and line assignment. In addition, many of the techniques illustrated in the script examples, such as introductions, transition, and narration, are equally applicable to the Drama genre.

The adapter will want to remember that most authorities agree that all types of literature can be successfully used in Readers Theatre. The values to the student--appreciation of literature, increased understanding of society, improved techniques of oral reading, psychological and mental growth, creative development, and cultural advantages--assure the art form Readers Theatre a prominent role in the secondary school.

While this investigation focused upon selecting and adapting material for Readers Theatre in the high school, additional research is needed in the area of producing and directing Readers Theatre at this level. Another facet of Readers Theatre for the secondary school, one which deserves research, is that which would collect and evaluate Readers Theatre scripts adapted and arranged by high school students themselves.

Finally, in concurrence with many authorities in this field, the investigator strongly recommends that, in whatever manner one chooses to use Readers Theatre, he should remember never to bind it, but instead keep it flexible and free.

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APPENDIX A--PROSE FICTION

SHORT STORY

ISLAND OF FEAR

By William Sambrot

A short story adapted for Readers Theatre by Dorothy Behnke

CAST OF CHARACTERS: 4 men or 3 men and 1 woman

Narrator--man or woman

Captain--Captain of Greek caique; may be read by the narrator

Kyle Elliot--art collector

Boy--shoeshine boy who rows Kyle to the garden-side of the island

KYLE: Kyle Elliot clutched the smooth tight-fitting stones of the high wall, unmindful of the fierce direct rays of the Aegean sun on his neck, staring, staring through a chink.

NARRATOR: He'd come to this tiny island, dropped into the middle of the Aegean like a pebble on a vast blue shield, just in the hope that something might turn up, and it had. Beyond, in the garden behind the wall, was a fountain, plashing gently. And in the center of that fountain, two nude figures, a mother and child, were marvelously intertwined, intricately wrought of stone.

KYLE: His professional eye moved over the figures. The detail of the woman! Head slightly turned, eyes just widening with the infinitesimal beginning of an expression of surprise as she looked--at what? And half sliding, clutching with one hand

at the smooth thigh--the child. His mind raced trying to place the sculptor. It was of no known period. It might have been done yesterday; it might be millenniums old. Only one thing was certain--no catalogue on earth listed it.

NARRATOR: Kyle had found this island by pure chance. He'd taken passage on a decrepit Greek caique that plied the Aegean, nudging slowly and without schedule from island to island, touching the old, old lands where the gods had walked like men. The islands where occasionally some treasure, long buried, came to light.

KYLE: And if it pleased Kyle's eyes, and money obtained it, then he would add it to his small collection. But only rarely did anything please Kyle. Only rarely.

NARRATOR: They had been drifting along, when Kyle had seen the dim purple shadow that was a tiny island in the distance. The glasses brought the little blob of land closer and he sucked in his breath. An incredible wall, covering a good quarter of the miniature island, leaped into view: a great horseshoe of masonry that grew out of the sea, curved, embraced several acres of the land, then returned, sinking at last into the sea again. He called the captain's attention to it.

KYLE: (With surprise.) There's a little island over there. There's a wall on it.

CAPTAIN: The smile vanished from the captain's face; his head snapped

around and he stared rigidly ahead, away from the island.

(Sullenly.) It's nothing, only a few goat-herders live there.

It has no name, even.

KYLE: (Determined.) There's a wall, here, look.

CAPTAIN: (Beginning to grow angry.) No. It's just another ruin.

There is no harbor there; it is years since anyone has gone there. You would not like it. No electricity.

KYLE: (With enthusiasm.) I want to see the wall and what's behind it.
You--

CAPTAIN: (With finality.) There is nothing behind it. It is a very old place and everything is long since gone.

KYLE: (Confidently.) I want to see the wall.

NARRATOR: They'd put him off, finally, and rowed him over in a dinghy.

KYLE: As he approached he'd noticed the strangely quiet single street of the village, the lone inn, the few dories with patched sails, and on the low, worn-down hills the herds of drifting goats.

NARRATOR: After he'd settled in the primitive little inn, he'd immediately set out for the wall, hoping to find a gate or a break in the smooth, unscalable fortress. There had been none.

KYLE: Coming back along the great wall, utterly baffled, he'd heard the faint musical sound of water dropping within, and had seen the

small aperture, no bigger than a walnut, just above his head. He had looked through the opening, and so stood, dazed at so much beauty, staring at the woman and child, unable to tear away, knowing that here, at last, was the absolute perfection he'd sought throughout the world.

NARRATOR: How was it that the catalogues failed to list this master work? Those things were impossibly hard to keep quiet. And yet, not a rumor had drifted from this island. Here on this remote pinprick of land, here behind a huge wall, here was this magic mother and child glowing all unseen.

KYLE: He stared, throat dry, heart pumping with the fierce exultation of the avid connoisseur who has found something truly great-- and unknown. He must have it--he would have it. He reluctantly turned away from the chink in the wall and walked slowly back toward the village, scuffling the deep, pale immemorial dust.

NARRATOR: Greece. Cradle of western culture. The exquisite perfection of that mother and child! But how oddly incurious, for Greeks, these few villagers are.

BOY: Back in the village, a boy, eyes snapping, popped out of the inn with a rag in one hand and some primitive shoe blacking in the other, and began cleaning Kyle's shoes.

KYLE: Kyle sat down on a bench and examined the boy.

BOY: He was about fifteen, wiry and strong, but small for his age.

KYLE: He might have been a model for one of Praxiteles' masterpieces; the same perfectly molded head, the tight curls, two ringlets falling over the brows, like Pan's snubbed horns, the classic Grecian profile.

BOY: But no, a ridged scar ran from the boy's nose to the corner of the upper lip, lifting it ever so slightly, revealing a glimmer of white teeth.

KYLE: (With sincere interest.) Who owns the large estate beyond the village?

BOY: The boy looked up quickly and it was as if a shutter came down over his dark eyes. He shook his head.

KYLE: (Somewhat impatiently.) You must know it. It covers the whole south end of this island. A big wall, very high, all the way to the water.

BOY: (Coldly.) It has always been there.

KYLE: (Dubiously.) You really don't know the name of the persons who live there?

BOY: The boy muttered a single word.

KYLE: (Excitedly.) Gordon? Did you say "The Gordons?" Is it an English family that owns that property? If so, slim chance, indeed, of obtaining that wonderful stone pair.

BOY: (Mysteriously.) They are not English.

KYLE: (Enthusiastically.) I'd like very much to see them.

BOY: (Louder.) There is no way.

KYLE: (Not noticing the boy's apparent fear.) I know there's no way from the island, but I suppose there must be a dock or some facilities for landing from the sea?

BOY: The boy shook his head, keeping his eyes down.

NARRATOR: Some of the villagers had stopped, and now were clustered about him, watching and listening quietly.

KYLE: Kyle knew his Greeks, a happy boisterous people, intolerably curious sometimes; full of advice, quick to give it. These people merely stood, unsmiling, watching.

NARRATOR: The boy finished and Kyle flipped him a fifty-lepta coin.

KYLE: (Calling loudly.) That wall, I'm interested in meeting the people who own that property. I will pay fifty--one hundred drachmas, to anyone who will take me in his boat around to the seaward side of the wall.

NARRATOR: It was a lot of money to a poor people--but they looked at one another, then turned and without a backward glance they walked away from him. All of them.

KYLE: At dusk Kyle went back to the inn and wondered about the lovely

mother and child, standing there behind that great wall with the purple night clothing them. A vast surge of sadness, of longing for the statues swept over him.

He was standing on the outskirts of the darkened village, gazing unhappily out to sea, when he heard a soft scuffling. He turned quickly.

BOY: It was the shoeshine boy, eyes gleaming in the starshine, shivering slightly, though the night was balmy. The boy clutched his arm. (Softly and with an air of mystery.) I will take you in my boat.

KYLE: (Overjoyed.) Thank you! Of course, I should have thought of you. When can we leave?

BOY: (Whispering.) Before the ebb tide--an hour before sunrise. Only--I will take you, but I will not come any closer than the outer rocks between the walls. From there you must wait until the ebb tide and walk--and walk--. Tonight, when you go back to the inn, you will not tell the others that I am rowing you there?

KYLE: (Wonderingly.) Not if you don't want me to.

BOY: (Urgently.) Please do not! They would not like it if they knew--after, that I---. An hour before sunrise, I will meet you at the wall where it goes into the water to the east.

NARRATOR: The stars were still glowing, but faintly, when Kyle met the

boy, a dim figure sitting in a small rowboat that bobbed up and down, scraping against the kelp and barnacles that grew from the base of the wall. He climbed in and they shoved off, the boy strangely silent. The sea was rough, a chill predawn wind blowing raggedly. The wall loomed up alongside, gigantic in the mist. Out onto the pitching water, they headed slowly around the first of a series of jagged, barnacled rocks, thrusting wetly above the rapidly ebbing tide.

KYLE: (With curiosity.) Who built this wall?

BOY: (Softly.) The old ones. It has always been here.

KYLE: (In deep mental speculation.) Always. Very old. It might well date back to the beginning of Greek civilization. And the statues--the mother and child--all of it a riddle.

NARRATOR: As they drew slowly around, the ends of the thick walls rose out of the swirling sucking sea.

KYLE: (Meditating.) This island is remote, but surely, over the many, many years that wall has towered, it must have been visited by people as curious as I. Other collectors. And yet, not a rumor.

NARRATOR: The boat rasped up against an enormous black rock, its tip, white with bird droppings, startlingly luminous in the half light. The boy shipped his oars.

BOY: (Fearfully.) I will come back here at the next tide. Will you

pay me now?

KYLE: (Pleasantly, but with surprise.) Of course, but aren't you at least going to take me farther in than this?

BOY: (Great frantic.) No, I cannot.

KYLE: (Optimistically.) How about the dock? (Surprised.) Why there isn't a dock!

NARRATOR: A considerable expanse of shallow, choppy surf lay between the rocks and the narrow sloping beach. There was nothing between the walls but sand, dotted with huge rocks, and inland, a tangled growth of underbrush with an occasional cypress rearing tall.

KYLE: (Smiling.) I'll tell you what. I'll take the boat in and you wait here. I won't be long. I just want to get a chance to meet whoever owns the place and arrange--

BOY: (Shocked.) No! There was a sharp panic in the boy's voice. He half rose, leaning forward to shove off from the rock.

NARRATOR: At that instant a swell raised the boat, then dropped it suddenly out from under the boy. Over-balanced, he swayed, arms waving wildly, then went over backwards, hitting his head on the rock. He slipped under the water like a stone.

KYLE: Kyle made a quick lunge, and missing, immediately dived out of the rowboat after him, rasping his chest on the barnacled shelf

of a rock a few feet beneath the boat. He got a firm grip on his hair, and stroked for the surface. He held him easily, treading water, looking for the rowboat. It was gone. No time to waste looking for it now. He swam to shore, pulling the boy easily, carried him well above the tide mark and sat him down on the sand.

BOY: The boy opened his eyes and peered at him, puzzled.

KYLE: (Comfortingly.) You'll be all right. (Reassuringly.) I'd better get your boat before it drifts too far.

NARRATOR: Kyle walked back down to the surf line, kicked off his shoes and stroked off to where the boat rose and fell, nuzzling another of the large rocks that littered the space between the towering walls. He rowed the boat back, facing the sea and the swift-rising sun. The wind had dropped to a whisper.

KYLE: He beached the boat and gathered up his shoes.

BOY: The boy was leaning against a rock, looking inland over his shoulder in an attitude of rigid watchfulness.

KYLE: (Calling.) Feeling better now?

BOY: The boy didn't move. He remained staring back into the tangle of trees, back to where the massive walls converged in the distance, stark, white, ancient.

KYLE: Moving closer, Kyle touched the lad on the bare shoulder. He

pulled his hand away, fists tightly clenched. He looked at the sand. Here were the marks where the boy had risen, here the dragging footsteps where he'd come to lean against this rock. And here he still stood, glancing over his shoulder toward the trees, lips barely parted, a look of faint surprise just starting on his face.

NARRATOR: And there, coming out of the tangled trees, a delicate tracery of footsteps led toward this rock and behind. Footsteps, slender, high-arched, as though a woman barefooted, scarcely touching the sand had approached for just an instant.

KYLE: Looking at the strange footprints, Kyle understood completely what he should have guessed when first he'd peered through that chink in the wall, gasping at the unimaginable perfection of the woman and her child.

Kyle knew intimately all the ancient fables of early Greece. And now, looking at the footprints in the sand, one of the most terrible leaped into his mind: The Gorgons.

NARRATOR: The Gorgons were three sisters, Medusa, Euryale, and Stheno, with snakes writhing where their hair should have been. Three creatures so awful to look upon, the legend said, that whosoever dared gaze upon them instantly turned to stone.

KYLE: Kyle stood on the warm sand, with the gull cries, the restless Aegean sea sounds all about him, and he knew, at last, who the old ones were who'd built the wall; why they'd built it to lead

into the living waters--and whom--what--the walls were meant to contain.

NARRATOR: Not an English family named the Gordons. A much more ancient family, names--the Gorgons. Perseus had slain Medusa, but her two hideous sisters, Euryale and Stheno, were immortal.

KYLE: (Dismayed from the realization.) Immortal. Oh, God! It was impossible! A myth! And yet--His connoisseur's eyes, even through the sweat of fear, noted the utter perfection of the small statue that leaned against the rock, head turned slightly, an expression of surprise on the face as it peered over one shoulder in the direction of the trees. The two tight ringlets, like snubbed horns above the brow, the perfect molding of the head, the classic Grecian profile. Salt water still flecked the smoothly gleaming shoulders, still dripped from the torn shirt that flapped about the stone waist.

NARRATOR: Pan in chalcedony. But Pan had a flaw. From the nose to the corner of the upper lips ran a ridge, an onyx scar that lifted the edge of the onyx lip slightly, so that, faintly, a glimmer of onyx teeth showed. A flawed masterpiece.

KYLE: Kyle heard the rustle behind him, as of robes, smelled an indescribable scent, heard a sound that could only have been a multiple hissing--and though he knew he mustn't, he turned slowly. And looked.

APPENDIX B--NON-FICTION

BIOGRAPHY

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN

By Frank B. Gilbreth, Jr., and Ernestine Gilbreth Carey

A chapter from a biography adapted for Readers Theatre by Dorothy Behnke

CAST OF CHARACTERS: 3 men, 2 women

Father--Frank B. Gilbreth, Sr., the efficiency expert

Mother--Lillie, wise, patient, and kind (May be read by Ernestine)

Frank, Jr.--son, 1st narrator telling story

Ernestine--daughter, 2nd narrator telling story

Bill--son, young and mischievous (May be read by Frank, Jr.)

SON: Roads weren't marked very well in those days, and Dad never believed in signs anyway.

FATHER: "Probably some kid has changed those arrows around. Seems to me that if we turned that way, the way the arrow says, we'd be headed right back where we came from"

SON: The same thing happened with the Automobile Blue Book, the tourist's bible in the early days of the automobile. Mother would read to him:

MOTHER: "Six-tenths of a mile past windmill, turn left at brick church and follow paved road."

FATHER: "That must be the wrong windmill, no telling when the fellow who wrote that book came over this road to check up on things.

My bump of direction tells me to turn right. They must have torn down the windmill the book's talking about."

DAUGHTER: Then, after he'd turned right and gotten lost, he'd blame Mother for giving him the wrong directions. Several times, he called Anne up to the front seat to read the Blue Book for him.

FATHER: "Your Mother hasn't a very good sense of direction. She tells me to turn left when the book says to turn right. Then she blames me when we get lost. Now you read it to me just like it says. Don't change a single word, understand? And don't be making up anything about windmills that aren't there, or non-existent brick churches, just to confuse me. Read it just like it says."

SON: But he wouldn't follow Anne's directions, either, and so he would get lost just the same.

DAUGHTER: When things looked hopeless, Dad would ask directions at a store or filling station. He'd listen, and then usually drive off in exactly the opposite direction from the one his informant had indicated.

FATHER: "Old fool. He's lived five miles from Trenton all his life and he doesn't even know how to get there. He's trying to route me back to New York."

SON: Mother was philosophical about it. Whenever she considered that Dad was hopelessly lost, she'd open a little portable ice box

that she kept on the floor of the car under her feet, and hand Jane her bottle. This was Mother's signal that it was time to have lunch.

FATHER: "All right, Lillie, guess we might as well stop and eat, while I get my bearings. You pick out a good place for a picnic."

DAUGHTER: While we were eating, Dad would keep looking around for something that might be interesting. He was a natural teacher, and believed in utilizing every minute.

SON: If Dad found an ant hill, he'd tell us about certain colonies of ants that kept slaves and herds of cows. Then we'd take turns lying on our stomachs, watching the ants go back and forth picking up crumbs from sandwiches.

FATHER: "See, they all work and they don't waste anything. Look at the teamwork, as four of them try to move that piece of meat. That's motion study for you."

DAUGHTER: He insisted that we make a habit of using our eyes and ears every single moment.

SON: But it was Mother who spun the stories that made the things we studied really unforgettable. If Dad was motion study and teamwork in an ant hill, Mother was a highly complex civilization governed, perhaps by a fat old queen who had a thousand black slaves bring her breakfast in bed mornings.

DAUGHTER: If Dad stopped to explain the construction of a bridge, she would find the workman in his blue jeans, eating his lunch high on the top of the span.

SON: It was she who made us feel the breathless height of the structures and the relative puniness of the humans who had built it. Or if Dad pointed out a tree that had been bent and gnarled, it was Mother who made us sense how the wind, beating against the tree in the endless passing of time, had made its own relentless mark.

DAUGHTER: We'd sit there memorizing every word, and Dad would look at Mother as if he was sure he had married the most wonderful person in the world.

SON: Before we left our picnic site, Dad would insist that all of the sandwich wrappings and other trash be carefully gathered, stowed in the lunch box, and brought home for disposal.

DAD: "If there's anything I can't stand, it's a sloppy camper. We don't want to leave a single scrap of paper on this man's property. We're going to leave things just like we found them, even more so. We don't want to overlook so much as an apple peel."

DAUGHTER: Apple peels were a particularly sore subject. Most of us liked our apples without skins, and Dad thought this was wasteful. When he ate an apple, he consumed skin, core, and

seeds, which he alleged were the most healthful and most delectable portions of the fruit.

SON: He didn't actually forbid us to peel our apples or waste the cores, but he kept referring to the matter so as to let us know that he had noticed what we were doing.

DAUGHTER: Sometimes, in order to make sure that we left no rubbish behind, he's have us form a line, like a company front in the army, and march across the picnic ground. Each of us was expected to pick up any trash in the territory that he covered.

SON: The result was that we often came home with the leavings of countless previous picnickers.

FATHER: "I don't see how you children can possibly clutter up a place the way you do."

DAUGHTER: "That's not our mess, Daddy. You know that just as well as we do. What would we be doing with empty whiskey bottles and a last year's copy of the Hartford Courant?"

FATHER: "That's what I'd like to know."

SON: Neither Dad nor Mother thought filling station toilets were sanitary. They never elaborated about just what diseases the toilets contained, but they made it plain that the ailments were both contagious and dire. In comparison, leprosy would be no worse than a bad cold. Dad always opened the door of a public

rest-room with his coattail.

DAUGHTER: Once he and Mother had discarded filling stations as a possibility, the only alternative was the woods. Perhaps it was the nervous strain of enduring Dad's driving; perhaps it was simply that fourteen persons have different personal habits. At any rate, we seemed to stop at every promising clump of trees.

FATHER: "I've seen dogs that paid less attention to trees."

DAUGHTER: For family delicacy, Dad coined two synonyms for going to the bathroom in the woods. One was "visiting Mrs. Murphy"; the other was "examining the rear tire." They meant the same thing.

SON: After a picnic, he'd say:

FATHER: "How many have to visit Mrs. Murphy?"

DAUGHTER: Usually nobody would. But after we had been under way ten or fifteen minutes, someone would announce that he had to go. So Dad would stop the car, and Mother would take the girls into the woods on one side of the road, while Dad took the boys into the woods on the other side.

FATHER: "I know every piece of flora and fauna from Bangor, Maine, to Washington, D. C.

DAUGHTER: On the way home, when it was dark, Bill used to crawl up into a swivel seat right behind Dad. Every time Dad was intent

on steering while rounding a curve, Bill would reach forward and clutch his arm. Bill was a perfect mimic, and he'd whisper in Mother's voice,

BILL: "Not so fast, Frank, not so fast."

DAUGHTER: Dad would think it was Mother grabbing his arm and whispering to him, and he'd make believe he didn't hear her.

SON: Sometimes Bill would go into the act when the car was creeping along at a dignified thirty, and Dad finally would turn to Mother disgustedly and say:

FATHER: "For the love of Mike, Lillie! I was only doing twenty."

SON: He automatically subtracted ten miles an hour from the speed whenever he discussed the matter with Mother.

MOTHER: "I didn't say anything, Frank,"

DAUGHTER: Mother would tell him.

SON: Dad would turn around, then, and see all of us giggling into our handkerchiefs. He'd give Bill a playful cuff and rumple his hair.

FATHER: "You'll be the death of me yet, boy."

SON: Dad would lean back against the seat and cock his hat on the side of his head. Mother would snuggle up against him as if she were cold. The babies were asleep now. Sometimes Mother turned

around and said to us:

MOTHER: "Right now is the happiest time in the world."

ALL: And perhaps it was.

ESSAY

THE MOTHER GOOSE REPORT

By Jack Roche

A satirical essay adapted for Readers Theatre by Dorothy Behnke

CAST OF CHARACTERS: 3 men, 3 women

Caseworkers:

Readers 1 and 3--women

Readers 2 and 4--men

Character Readers:

Reader 5--woman:

Hubbard--Reader 5

Woman in Shoe--Reader 5

Bo Peep--Reader 5

Muffett--Reader 5

Jill--Reader 5

Reader 6--man:

Horner--Reader 6

Tom--Reader 6

Jack--Reader 6

READER 1: In this inquisitive era almost everybody with a social
problem has been

READER 2: tracked down,

READER 3: questioned,

READER 4: investigated

READER 1: and filed with some agency or other.

READER 3: Until recently, however, a group of problem people whose peculiar conduct has been familiar to all of us for several generations has been left untouched by the social investigators.

READER 1: This oversight has now, fortunately, been taken care of, as is evident from the following report which was dropped on my desk recently by an itinerant carrier pigeon.

READER 4: TO: Director,
Department of Social Assistance,
Bureau of Investigation,
Second District Regional Office.

READER 3: FROM: Investigator No. 42745
Ref. No. 28594/66-238

READER 2: SUBJECT: Mother Goose Rehabilitation Project.
CODE: B472-999/790C

READER 1: Preliminary investigative activity has been finalized in connection with the Mother Goose Area Social Survey.

READER 3: The purpose of the project was to ascertain the need for supportive structuring in anti-poverty, medical, psychiatric and social assistance as recommended by the Senate Subcommittee on Anti-social Behavior.

READER 1: The area covered is a tightly organized community under the leadership of a Mrs. Goose, known to the residents as "Mother" Goose. Investigation revealed a deeply ingrained pattern of unusual habits, psychological maladjustment and symptoms of mental instability.

READER 2: CASE NO. 433. HUBBARD, MOTHER: Age unknown. Lives alone in small house in good repair, neatly maintained. No visible evidence of financial support.

HUBBARD, READER 5: Subject has difficulty keeping her dog nourished. States that cupboard is bare. Wishes to receive welfare allowance in support of dependent pets, but dog is not eligible for dependent-support funds unless mentally or physically disabled.

READER 2: Tests indicate neither condition present. However, bareness of cupboard may eventually result in dog's physical deterioration. Mrs./Miss Hubbard was advised to continue observation of dog's physical condition and, if symptoms of substandard nutritional condition become evident, to apply for aid to the nearest Humane Society clinic.

READER 4: CASE NO. 734. HORNER, JACK: Boy of indeterminate age. Parents report failure to motivate him toward normal participation in family life. Boy sits constantly in corner with pie. Occasionally sticks thumb in pie, pulls out plum and shouts,

HORNER, READER 6: "What a good boy am I."

READER 4: Conduct indicates guilt psychosis. Boy's obvious compulsion to prove his "goodness" indicates extra-rigid behavioral standards set by parents. Condition could induce hyperemotional penitential psychosis with potential suicidal tendencies. Recommend adult educational program in child supervision for parents to orient them toward relaxation of abnormal disciplinary techniques. Boy should be given dietary motivation toward foods other than pie.

READER 3: CASE NO. 981. OLD WOMAN: No record of family name. Lives in shoe. Has so many children she doesn't know what to do. Numerous children present in shoe, but total uncountable due to constant movement.

WOMAN IN SHOE, READER 5: Subject employs simple disciplinary methods. Gives children porridge without any bread, whips them all soundly and puts them to bed.

READER 3: Subject was referred to Health Department clinic for family-planning information. However, subject stated

WOMAN IN SHOE, READER 5: She was not concerned about number of children, but wanted new living quarters.

READER 3: Shoe is old-style structure with high cloth upper, open at top and with several buttons missing. Premises damp from rain leaking through top and open buttonholes. Subject was offered

space in new high-style shoe, but states

WOMAN IN SHOE, READER 5: She prefers to live in house.

READER 3: Recommend referral to Department of Housing for relocation and action against landlord to replace missing buttons on shoe.

READER 2: CASE NO. 372. PEEP, BO: Mature girl, employed as shepherdess. Suffering severe disorientation, induced by loss of sheep. Refuses to incept search for missing flock. Says,

BO PEEP, READER 5: "Leave them alone and they'll come home, wagging their tails behind them."

READER 2: Apathetic attitude indicates need for psychiatric therapy.

READER 4: CASE NO. 248. TOM, TOM: Adolescent boy.

TOM, READER 6: Son of piper.

READER 4: Incipient juvenile delinquent. Recently arrested for stealing pig. Evidence of felony as noted on polic blotter:

TOM, READER 6: "Stole a pig and away he run."

READER 4: Father unable to provide proper financial support, due to scarcity of employment opportunities for musicians.

TOM, READER 6: Was promised job with Doddletown Pipers, but no opening has yet occurred in group.

READER 4: Father was urged to learn to play the guitar, but states

TOM, READER 6: He cannot play any instrument professionally until he pays his union dues, which are now 12 years overdue.

READER 4: Recommend foster care for boy to divert him from juvenile delinquency to other-oriented activities.

READER 2: CASE NO. 003. MUFFET, MISS: Adolescent girl. No parents on premises. Subject suffering from undernourishment and neurotic hysteria. Inadequate diet, consists of curds and whey. When interviewed, subject was in state of shock.

MUFFET, READER 5: States she sat on tuffet to eat curds and whey, when along came a spider and sat down beside her and frightened subject away.

READER 2: Recommend removal of subject to juvenile shelter for psychiatric therapy and nutritional supervision.

READER 3: CASE NO. 723. JACK AND JILL: Two adolescents prone to accident due to substandard housing. Constantly sustain severe contusions when making daily trip up hill to fetch a pail of water.

JACK, READER 6: Boy falls down hill.

JILL, READER 5: Girl comes tumbling after.

READER 3: Necessity to climb hill for water indicates lack of adequate residential water supply. Recommend referral to Department of Housing and scheduling of daily visits by boy to outpatient

clinic for treatment of broken crown.

READER 1: This concludes preliminary stage of Project Mother Goose.

Request assignment to Project Wonderland for socio-psychiatric survey of erratic behavior among residents of area reported by Alice (last name unknown).

LETTERS

LETTERS FROM VIETNAM

Edited by Glenn Munson

A collection of personal letters adapted for Readers Theatre

by Dorothy Behnke

CAST OF CHARACTERS: 5 men who represent symbols, rather than individuals

Officer--the view of commissioned leaders

Private--the view of the little guys

Optimist--the view of the servicemen who view the whole thing
with some degree of optimism

Pessimist--the view of the servicemen who approach all of life
with a dark outlook

Non-Com--the view of the leaders among the ranks

ACT I

EARLY VIEW OF VIETNAM

OFFICER: It is difficult to explain one's feeling in terms of the Vietnam war. The thing is so important to the United States and to the Vietnamese people. With them it is particularly tragic because they don't really know the meaning of freedom anyway. They have been living with this war now for twenty-five years, and all they really want is to be left alone . . .

OPTIMIST: There is one saving grace, no matter what the cost. The fight is a worthwhile fight, and the free life that we have in the United States is a worthwhile goal. Perhaps the only goal

worth the price.

NON-COM: When people think of Vietnam, they think of war. Let's stop and think of Vietnam in another sense. I am a Marine, nineteen years of age, stationed in Vietnam. I have seen her from the air and from the ground. Through my eyes, Vietnam is a beautiful country.

PESSIMIST: I don't think the people or the country are beautiful. I wish whoever said it was could walk with me through this village and tell me it's beautiful.

OPTIMIST: You'd be absolutely amazed at the picturesque beauty of this country. In all directions, with the exception of east, lush green rolling hills and mountains surround the lowland plains. Majestic white clouds settle down on the mountain tops and seep into the creases between peaks, giving the impression that a large glacier is slowly creeping downward. Wildlife here carries the rich colors common to an equatorial climate. Dragon flies, so long unnoticed because of drab coloring, sport trimmings of bright red, deep turquoise blue, and distinctly mottled green and black. Small fish in a stagnant pond shimmer with irridescent streaks of yellow, pink, and light green. Only pictures can approach the color here, and even then something is lost in the transformation.

PRIVATE: As with all things of beauty, there is a flaw--war. Bombs, napalm, artillery, small arms, and soldiers lay waste and

disfigure the countryside. War has taken a near-paradise and clouded its peculiar charm.

OFFICER: As seen from the air, except for the high lands in the center, South Vietnam is mostly flat delta country of swampy rice paddy and jungle, consisting of creeping vines, swamps, plains, old rubber trees, and what have you. What isn't, is dry, sandy soil overgrown with bamboo thickets, where the friendly local Viet Cong love to hide. The delta is farmed for rice, the staple food of all Asians. In the mountains very little or nothing is grown. Along the coast the people fish, and this provides the other staple food. They eat pine bugs, crushed crabs, fishheads, and all kinds of stuff made out of rice and rice jello. Waterbuffalo is eaten when it is too old to work.

PRIVATE: The thing I miss most is good cold milk. That's going to be the first thing I buy when I get back to the States.

NON-COM: Since we got here the temperature has been very near or over 100 degrees every day. To make the heat doubly bad is the humidity, which stays near 95% all the time. One of the big headaches around here has been the dust and sand. You eat food with dust on it, you sleep in beds with dust, drink water with dust, and breathe dust constantly. We may be about to get a taste of the other extreme, however; for last afternoon it started to rain, and hasn't stopped yet. From what I hear, the winter monsoon is about to start. Then we'll be living with wet

dust--mud, that is, for the next four or five months. O happy day!

OPTIMIST: The humble masses are born into pain and poverty. Yet these people have a profound love for their families, and especially for children. They are friendly and very proud of their heritage, what little they do have.

PESSIMIST: You can't trust the people at all. One minute a man or a woman might shake your hand, and the next minute he might stab you in the back--literally.

NON-COM: TB runs rampant among the old and young alike. Ulcer-type sores are as commonplace as pimples on American kids. The people have no concept of cleanliness. For the most part, they have never heard of soap or medicine. The children are infected with worms because of not washing their food. Most adults chew an herb nut called betel to kill the pain of decaying teeth. Betel leaves the lips red and the teeth black.

PRIVATE: The young girls comb fleas from their hair, never thinking to rid themselves of them. Venereal diseases of every description infest over half the people. They live on the ground and drink from the fields, which also serve as sewers.

OFFICER: The figures and faces of these people are typically of an Oriental background. They can be and often are industrious. The average intelligence seems to run around the fourth grade; few

read or write.

NON-COM: The people are always looking for a little extra money. They sell their teen-age daughters or dive in front of a jeep and claim damages.

PESSIMIST: More often than not, the young boy you treat for a sore in the village by day is the V. C. you kill at night trying to blow up an aircraft. They owe little or no allegiance to anyone save surviving.

OPTIMIST: Saigon is mostly a veritable garbage dump with the familiar rats, fleas, and mosquitoes; however, the more financially developed areas of town are like the north side of Indianapolis. Some areas of Saigon are extremely beautiful and have fine restaurants, nightclubs, and bookstores, tailor shops and bars. Other areas reek with abject poverty, and believe me, smell like decay and nauseating putrefaction. One can find anything in this town, from Mozart concerts at the Saigon Conservatory of Music to the bubonic plague and starvation of people living in five-family, one-room flats. It's an experience to behold.

PRIVATE: Vehicles are chiefly bicycles, motorcycles, scooters, old-model cars and cycliles (a one-passenger taxi made of a closed-in seat and a bicycle frame, the seat forward for the driver). You can hire a cyclile for about three hundred piasters a day (about \$2.80). You can also rent bicycles and scooters for a reasonable fee.

NON-COM: From the political and moral obligation aspect, we are physically fighting the Viet Cong, but we are politically fighting Communism. We're fighting, in particular, Red China and Russia. We've promised to help the Vietnamese win their war against the threat of Communism just as we've made our promise to the entire world to fight Communism. Vietnam is the Guadalcanal of the war against Communism.

OPTIMIST: All in all, I'm very satisfied with my assignment in Vietnam, and I think my decision to come here will be very worthwhile. The twelve months will go before you know it. Write me often, as all letters will be greatly appreciated.

ACT II

IN THE THICK OF IT

PRIVATE: People don't realize what's going on over here. It is horrible, believe me, just plain rotten. These poor Army and Marine troops are living like animals and fighting for their lives every day that they are in the field. Some come back, but some don't. I've carried some of the ones that didn't and it makes me sick. Every time I carry these bodies in canvas bags and wounded G.I.'s, I get sick inside. You may think I'm a baby when I tell you that I have cried when I've carried these guys, but it's not a lie, and I'm no baby for doing it. No living person that I know could possibly see the suffering that some of these Americans and Vietnamese are going through and not break up

a little bit. You read one side of the story in the paper, but believe me, there is another horrible side that the people in the State's don't get.

OFFICER: By the way, thanks for the wonderful letter--no, it won't be a Merry Christmas or a Happy New Year for many of us here, but maybe next year it will be, and for years to come, for the work we are doing here now.

PESSIMIST: It's depressing out here. I'd give anything to be home with you, and a roaring fireplace. Man! It's scary out tonight. Everytime a branch moves, I wonder how long it will be before I get it. Everybody talks about girls and home, but most of us talk about seeing tomorrow, because that's one day closer to you and home and college again.

NON-COM: Don't forget, only eleven more months and I'll be home, God willing. Don't worry, I'll be home if I have to go by way of hell, which I probably will.

OPTIMIST: I'm a door gunner on a helicopter and I am strapped in the side door of the chopper with an M-60 machine gun chained in front of me. We fly at tree-top level and look for the Viet Cong. When we spot them, the pilot hovers over them, and then I go to work. I spray the area pretty good, and then we get out of there fast, because a chopper hovering in one spot is a sitting duck for a machine-gun nest. I am getting another \$65 a month hazardous-duty pay for it. This is the most exciting thing I

have ever done. I thought jumping was exciting, but this makes jumping look like child's play.

PRIVATE: I said a silent prayer for God not to make me try to kill anyone, because He's the only one who has the right to take a life--after all, He put us here. He can take us when He wants. I fired a few rounds in their direction, so I might have hit one. But, Nancee, it was either him or me . . .

OFFICER: While I am at it, I had better give the devil his due. I cuss the youngsters out in the States, but it seems that when we get them over here, where they work 24 hours a day, go without baths for days on end, and eat canned salmon and boned chicken day after day, so far I haven't heard a murmur. I guess they are all lonely and homesick and feel out of place, but you can't tell by the way they act.

NON-COM: I'm going to put a bar of soap in my pocket, 'cause there's a fast-running stream about 20 feet wide in the middle of the swamp, and I'm going to hang that radio on a tree and take a bath and wash my pants.

PRIVATE: Some of my buddies didn't make it back. Why did they die? Is it worth all this hell? A machine gun opened up. When all was quiet again, I started thinking again of our country and our way of life. Of people like you, and the kids like the ones you teach, and it answered my question. My buddies did not die in vain, and if I don't make it, I know that it was worth all the

hardships and the price of life for the freedom that we have.

Let's hope and pray that the kids who sit in your classrooms will never have to know the meaning of war.

PESSIMIST: It's a crazy way to fight a war. We can't fire unless we're fired on first.

NON-COM: I've got nine months and twenty-one days left over here, and I can't wait to get back to civilization.

OPTIMIST: All I can do is to sit up here all day and all night hoping for something to come along I can shoot at to relieve the monotony. At this point if some diabolical Oriental crawled up the side of the mountain to slit my throat I would probably ask him in for tea.

PRIVATE: We've got some "legs" (non-paratroopers) from the eight-inchers working in here and I've seen some sorry people, but these fat slobs are something else again. Should have seen this fat first lieutenant yesterday. When the shooting started, he drops to his belly and does the low crawl out of the tent and then lies there with his mouth open groping for air like a fish out of water. He didn't even have enough sense to get his .45 out.

OFFICER: As we drove our way through the V. C. hamlets, written on the peoples' faces was a look of fear, frustration, helplessness, and hate. This place is starting to get on my mind--the heat,

bugs, dirt, etc.--but the time seems to be passing pretty fast, so I guess I'll survive.

NON-COM: I lost a real good buddy of mine while we were out there today. One of our own men shot and killed him. Some of these guys are really trigger happy.

OPTIMIST: No one knows the lonely feeling of the boys who lie out in the field, shot and waiting to die. I don't think any of them ever feel pain. They just lie there and think what their best girl is doing at that moment. Or they go back in their mind and recall what they were doing last year. They remember all the good times, no matter how long ago. Out in the hot sun, they go back to everything that was cool to them: the swimming hole, a cool drink of water when one first got through with a chore, or sitting in the swing with one's girl in the evening. Then as the end grows near, the memory of the times one went to sleep on his mother's shoulder.

PESSIMIST: We're killing the hell out of these Viet Cong, though, and I enjoy seeing every one of them fall to the ground.

NON-COM: They are getting our mail out to us pretty fast. Only took seven days for your last letter to get to me out here in the field. I've hit the half-way mark, and now I begin the short end of the hitch. Only 182 days till I come home.

PRIVATE: I'm an unknown factor in this war called support. I know they

can't get along without me, but I want everyone to know it, too. What do I do? I unload ships so the heroes can have ammo, food, and clothing. I'm the one who's winning this war. I'm an enlisted man. I work 12 hours a day, seven days a week. I'm 80% of the servicemen in Vietnam. I get sick and take aspirin, and I even try to brush my teeth after meals. I'm doing the job Uncle Sam thinks I'm best qualified for and spent some money training me to do. I'm helping my country to help another country to help itself. I'm the muscle in the arm that took the bull by the horns. I'm support, and don't you forget it!

PESSIMIST: The worst thing about this war is the politics. We just aren't given a free hand to work. It's like telling someone to dig a hole in sand with a thimble.

OPTIMIST: I am 100% against pulling out of Southeast Asia. To do so, in my opinion, is to quit halfway through a job, and I'm not made of that kind of stuff. China must be stopped. If not, it will be all-out invasion of India, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, and other, and we'd better expect it.

OFFICER: Many of the troops who work with me are in reality boys, just boys filling men's combat boots. They are kids when they come here, but they leave here real men. It doesn't take long to mature here.

PRIVATE: Most of the people we treat are Vietnamese soldiers and civilians. You can see any kind of wound you want to see, from

a bullet wound to a face that has been slashed with a machete. Some of them are days old by the time we can get in to evacuate them, and do they stink! You've probably smelled rotten old blood. It's so bad that you have to leave to throw-up a couple of times.

NON-COM: I once said duty here isn't bad. I was wrong. It's HELL! I hope to leave this place and never see it again.

ACT III

THE FACE OF WAR

OFFICER: It is surprising how little the people in the States know about what is going on over here. We have many battles--one with bullets and explosives, and one to win the people over to the government of South Vietnam. If we don't do this, the country will collapse as soon as we leave.

PRIVATE: One battle is against ignorance.

PESSIMIST: Another is against disease.

OPTIMIST: Also one against land.

NON-COM: I volunteered to remain here and move to another battalion. I realize that this increases your worry for me, but I just can't leave, not now. Just hold your head up high and be proud. I'm doing this for my country. Just a very small part, but my effort will not be wasted. I've a job to do and a score to settle, and

so help me God, I and my country will not come out second best. I'm a Marine, and my job is here.

OFFICER: I only wish I could do something to encourage the boys that are burning their draft cards to stand up and take their responsibilities for their country, family, and friends. You can't defeat Communism by turning your back or burning your draft card.

PESSIMIST: In the many wars gone by, people at home looked up to the fighting man, the soldier who fought and died for freedom. But in this day and age, there is only hatred for those of us who are fighting and dying for what our fathers and forefathers fought and died for. I ask you, is it worth returning to a people and a land which hold no regard for their freedom? We have forgotten what it means to be an American!!!

NON-COM: Two shiploads of troops returning from Vietnam that reached San Diego found a welcome committee was waiting for them with signs like "Go back, killers!" and others of the same nature.

OPTIMIST: Don't you let anyone talk about the United States because there is no better place in the world to live in.

PRIVATE: As I neared Graves Registration, a copter came swooping down with a gust of wind. I stood there watching as the wind died down, and from the copter a flashing light seemed to be the only movement about. Then I saw at first two men, then four, all

bearing litters. Another copter landed. The men then carried two more litters bearing lifeless young soldiers, and loaded them aboard. The copters lifted, then circled and flew over the area occupied by their comrades. They paused for a moment, then flew out of sight.

PESSIMIST: This damned war seems so senseless at times; I kill a man, and it doesn't bother me any more.

PRIVATE: All the dirty fighting isn't on one side. I've seen things done that I know are war crimes. I have seen people killed that had their hands in the air. I have seen a man killed that was already hurt and had no weapons; the sergeant just cut off his head. Also, a lot of people here are carrying around ears of people. The policy here is anyone killed is a Viet Cong.

OFFICER: We are actually fighting for the entire world in the hope that some day the whole world will be free.

NON-COM: I know it's hard, Mom and Dad, to keep from worrying, but as I told you earlier, I know that I will be returning home, for the Lord has told me so. When I was treating these injured men of my company, one of the guys I was treating accepted the Lord. A moment of brightness in a lot of darkness.

PRIVATE: It's no fun out here. I feel lost and all alone out here so far from home.

PESSIMIST: You asked me if I am bitter. I'm afraid so. Someday I'll

explain in detail what this place is like with the smell of the dead all over a landing zone. I hope that you get violet, red, blue, green, sick to your guts. I pray that you vomit until there is nothing left but the hurt. I've got the hurt. The hurt of the kid dying in my lap trying to tell me how good and sweet Sally used to be to him. I've got the hurt of all the burnt-out villages and the naked kids and the lepers and the stink of the dead. I've got the hurt of living like an animal while you and all the others are nice and warm at home. So you and the Sallys and Joes and the Dean of Men, go paint your stupid signs. Go parade in all your ignorance.

OPTIMIST: Many, many happy returns for your birthday, Mother, and don't worry about me. I'm as safe or safer with the Marines as on the highways in the U. S. A.

NON-COM: Today is Christmas Day, and the forces have agreed to a cease-fire until midnight tonight. This morning, on a patrol in the jungle, we came face to face with four Viet Cong on a patrol on the same trail. Because of the cease-fire, neither side could shoot, so we each went on our way. As we walked away they waved and said, "Cha'o ahn" (goodbye) and we waved back and left. That was the first time I ever saw a Viet Cong up close. Somehow I expected them to be different from me, but they're not. Maybe, someday, we can make every day like today, so that people will just wave and let each other pass. But until that day I guess people will just have to fight for what they believe is right.

PRIVATE: Don't take your eyes from me, Dear God. Don't forget my existence. I don't need the fires of Hell to teach me.

PESSIMIST: I hope someone from general staff asks me if I'm bitter. I will say, "Yes, sir. I am sick of War. I vomit until my guts cry. I use an M-60 because I can kill more of the Charlies than with a rifle." I'll say, "Yes, sir. I enjoy seeing my enemy in the same shape as he left some of my friends in."

OFFICER: I hope I die here. I hope I have the blessing never to see the people I once loved and cherished giving to some Communist the money that is killing us over here. I hope I'm here long enough to see every V. C. rotting in his own blood.

NON-COM: All day long the planes have been bringing in bodies. Some still warm, and some stiff and cold. Some are listed, and some are nameless. They all come in by helicopter. Some are put in the back of a jeep, and some, more than others, are piled into the bed of a six-ton truck. Piled and stacked like a bunch of dead fish. A blast of wind removed a shroud. It stays that way. No one bothers to give a man a little privacy even in death.

OPTIMIST: Right now I'm bitter, hurt, and so damned twisted up inside that I don't know what to think any more. Just bear with me, and one of these days I'll be back to myself. I guess I've said enough for now. Thanks for "listening."

APPENDIX C--POETRY

NARRATIVE POETRY

THE SURPRISE

By John Masefield

A narrative poem, based on legendary history,
adapted for Readers Theatre by Dorothy Behnke

CAST OF CHARACTERS: 2 narrators (men or women); 10 men to be read by
5 male readers

Narrator 1--3rd person narrator

Narrator 2--3rd person narrator

Five Greek soldiers who speak in the 1st person plural:

Soldiers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Greek Captain, read by Narrator 2

Greek soldier A, 1st person singular, read by Narrator 1

Greek soldier B, 1st person singular, read by Narrator 2

Odysseus, Itacina King, read by soldier 1

Diomed, Leader of an advance party of Grecian warriors, read by
soldier 3

INTRODUCTION

NARRATOR 1: Among the most popular legends that have come down to us from ancient Greece are those that recount the stirring events of the Trojan War. For many years this war was waged by the Greeks against Troy, the capital of a powerful empire in Asia Minor. Its events were recorded in rare old manuscripts, but for centuries, the Trojan War legends were primarily passed down from one generation to another by the singers and storytellers,

who found eager groups of listeners wherever they went.

NARRATOR 2: Paris, son of Priam, who was King of Troy, was encouraged by the promise of Aphrodite, goddess of love and beauty--that he should have for his wife the most beautiful woman in the world. Prompted by this promise, Paris sped to Sparta and there paid suit to the fair Helen. Although Helen was married to Sparta's king, Menelaus, Paris persuaded her to flee with him to Troy. Menelaus, vowing vengeance, roused his allies and set forth with a mighty fleet for Troy.

NARRATOR 1: For nine years, the Greeks laid siege to Troy. But Troy stood fast.

NARRATOR 2: In the tenth year of the war, force having failed, the Grecian leaders decided to try craft. Led by Ithaca's king, Odysseus, who is better known by his Roman name, Ulysses,-- the Greeks secretly constructed a huge image of a horse. Made of wood, it was hollow inside and furnished with a cleverly concealed trap door. Through the door climbed a band of well-armed Grecian soldiers and the two leaders, Menelaus and Odysseus. All the other Greeks now boarded their ships as though they intended to sail home. Actually they sailed only far enough to get out of sight of the Trojans, who were watching from their towers. As night came on the ships were halted behind the island of Tenedos.

NARRATOR 1: When the Trojans saw the enemy ships disappearing over the

horizon, they believed that the Greeks had given up at last. The entire city of Troy went wild with joy. The long-closed gates of the city were flung wide open, and the Trojans swarmed over the plain outside. There they spied the wooden horse and, proclaiming it a trophy of war, dragged it into the city.

NARRATOR 2: Meantime the Greeks on Tenedos Island awaited the right moment to play their part in the ruse that had been planned to surprise the Trojans.

POEM

SOLDIER 3: You have heard the story of the Horse of Troy.
 We left him on the sea-beach when we sailed.
 We sailed all day, but when the darkness fell
 The captains ordered all the fleet ashore.
 We beached the black ships out of sight of Troy.

SOLDIER 1: Then quietly the captains of the hundreds
 Were told that a surprise would be attempted.
 Orders were given: then most stringent watch
 Was made, lest any traitor should give warning.

SOLDIER 5: We supped and slept, till somewhere after midnight,
 Then roused, and tied bleached linen on our arms,
 And took short spears and swords: no other weapons;
 And forth we went by fifties toward Troy.
 Absolute silence upon pain of death

The order was: we crept along like ghosts.

SOLDIER 2: Soon we were in the Plains among the graves
Of men half-buried, whom we used to know,
And how they died, a dozen known to me.
And Trojan bodies, too; familiar landmarks.
It was all cold and windy, with bright stars,
No moon, dry summer going, and the wind
Beating the withered grass and shriveled leaves.
Then we were at the ford and passing through.

GREEK SOLDIER A, NARRATOR 1:

I remember water gurgling at a flag-root.

SOLDIER 4: Beyond the ford we were in Trojan land.
There was the black mass of the walls of Troy
With towers (and a light in one of them).
No other sign of life, except a glow,
Before Apollo's temple as we judged.
Some sacrificial fire not yet quenched.
The city was dead still, but for the wind.

SOLDIER 5: They halted us below the wagon track
Between the Spartans and the Ithacans.
And there we huddled in the bitter cold
Wondering what had happened in the city
And why the city should be still as death:

- SOLDIER 5: Whether the Horse were burning in the fire
With all our men inside it sacrifice:
- SOLDIER 1: Whether the trap door in the Horse had jammed
So that they could not leave it:
- SOLDIER 2: Or perhaps,
(We thought) the Horse is guarded in the temple,
Surrounded by men praying all night long.
- SOLDIER 4: Or had they ventured out, and all been killed?
- SOLDIER 3: And if the men were killed, the stratagem
Was surely known, and we half-armed and freezing,
Would be attacked at dawn and ridden down.
- NARRATOR 1: A temple bell jangled within the city,
A lesser bell tinkled; then all was silent.
- SOLDIER 2: And all this time the little owls from Ida
Came hooting over us; and presently
A mighty, savage owl perched upon Troy
And snapped his iron lips, and flapped, and screamed,
Almost one saw the yellow of his eyes.
Then he launched forth, stealing into the air.
- NARRATOR 2: It seemed like many ages in the cold
Before the whisper reached the Ithacans
To creep a little noarer to the wall.

When they had passed, unchallenged, others went.
Word passed that there were sentries on the wall.

SOLDIER 5: And though the orders were against all speech,
Yet whispers let us know that Diomed
Was at the South Gate underneath the tower,
With the picked fighters.

SOLDIER 3: Hours seemed to pass
While we froze slowly in our companies.

GREEK SOLDIER A, NARRATOR 1:

My eyes were so accustomed to the dark
That I could see the great wall with its ramparts,
A tower, and a gate, close-fastened, brazen,
With men of ours heaped near it like to stones.
Then there was whispering in the ranks behind me:

CAPTAIN, NARRATOR 2:

A captain whispered, "Who knows Diomed?
Do you?"

GREEK SOLDIER A, NARRATOR 1:

I whispered, "Yes."

CAPTAIN, NARRATOR 2:

"Why, then," he whispered,
"Creep forward there, and find him by the gate
Under the tower with the forward party.

Tell him King Agamemmon is convinced
That this has failed, and that we must withdraw.
Be ready to fall back as we retire."

GREEK SOLDIER A, NARRATOR 1:

I crept the seventy yards up to the front.
One whispered,

GREEK SOLDIER B, NARRATOR 2:

"Diomed is on the right,
Nearest the wall."

GREEK SOLDIER A, NARRATOR 1:

I found him lying there
And whispered him the message of the King.

DIOMED, SOLDIER 3:

"What?" he said. "What? Withdraw from where we are?
Who says so? What authority have you?"

GREEK SOLDIER A, NARRATOR 1:

I told him, "Verbal orders from a captain."

DIOMED, SOLDIER 3:

"Lie still," he said, "and not another word.
I'll learn of your authority when day dawns."

NARRATOR 2: Then suddenly there came a little noise.

Someone within the gate was lifting down

The heavy bars that barred it, one by one.

SOLDIER 4: Each of us nudged his fellow and drew breath.

SOLDIER 3: Diomed stood:

SOLDIER 4: We others raised ourselves.

One half the narrow brazen door moved back,
Showing a dark gash that grew wider and lighter:

SOLDIER 2: A lamp wavered and flickered in a lane,
The damp glistened on a wall work: a man peered
Round the half-opened door; and

ODYSSEUS, SOLDIER 1:

"Sst, Sst, Sst,": he hissed.

SOLDIER 2: It was Odysseus, from the Horse.

SOLDIER 4: Diomed signaled to us; he himself
Was first within the gate: I helped him there
To lay the gate wide open to our men.
Then we pressed in, up the steep narrow lane
Past the still flickering lamp, over a Trojan
Sentry or watchman, newly murdered there,
Killed by Odysseus: no one challenged us.
We were in Troy: the city was surprised.

SOLDIER 1: The dogs had all been killed some weeks before,
There were no watchdogs. When we reached the Ways,

The Wide Ways running round within the walls,
Some horses, tethered there, whinnied and stamped,
And drowsy horse-boys mumbled in their sleep,
But no one challenged: Troy was in a drowse
In the deep morning sleep before the dawn
Now faint upon the distant tops of Ida.

SOLDIER 5: And we were seen by watchmen on the tower
On that side Troy, but none of them suspected
That we were Greeks:

SOLDIER 2: They thought that we were Lycians,
Old allies of the Trojans, mustering
Up to the temples for a sacrifice
Before we marched from Troia to our homes.

SOLDIER 3: We were within the second ring of road,
Outside King Priam's palace and the temples,
Before a sentry challenged us, and then
It was too late for the alarm to help.
The man paused at the turning of his beat,
Looked around and saw us, gave a cry, then challenged,
Then died, stabbed through the throat by Diomed.

GREEK SOLDIER A, NARRATOR 1:

My party rushed into Apollo's temple
And burst into the palace to the guards
Sleeping in quarters, some of them half drunk,

All without arms:

SOLDIER 5: We herded them like sheep.
And by the time the guards were bound, the city
Was lit with blazing thatches, and awake,
Dawn coming, fire burning, women screaming,
And war-cries, and loud trumpets and clashed armor.
There was hard fighting in a dozen spots.

SOLDIER 2: We came out of the guard-room by a gate
Into a blaze all red with fire flying:

NARRATOR 2: A palace court it was, the inner court,
Where Menelaus and his Spartan spearmen
Were killing Priam's sons.

SOLDIER 2: Just as we reached the court a dozen spearmen
Were all attacking young Deiphobus.

GREEK SOLDIER, NARRATOR 1:

I know the lad by sight, for he had come
On embassy to Agamemnon once,
And Menelaus meant to have him killed
And flung to the camp-dogs, because of Helen.
There he was, fighting for his life with twelve.
A fine young man, like Hektor in the face,
A bright, clean-cut face, tanned with sun and wind,
Smiling and cool and swift with parry on parry.

He had been surprised: he had no body-armor
Nothing but spear and shield, and there he stood.
Checking each thrust, swift, marvelously.
One minute he stood, matchless in skill in the red glare,
Then someone crept above and stabbed him down.

SOLDIER 5: The city was all ours in the hour.

SOLDIER 4: Many were killed in fighting:

SOLDIER 1: Many more escaped, during the burning and confusion,
Out, to the mountains, by the Eastern gate.

SOLDIER 2: The rest we kept: young women skilled in crafts
The men who might make slaves. We made them quench
The fires that were burning here and there
And then we sacked the city utterly.

SOLDIER 1: When we had sacked her utterly, we forced
Our Trojan slaves to lever down the ramparts
Over the walls, until the city seemed
A mound of fallen stones and roofless houses.
We lit the wreck.

SOLDIER 3: Then as we sailed for home with slaves and plunder,
We saw the ruins burning, and the smoke
Streaming across the sunburnt Trojan plain.
With all that world of murder on our backs
We bore our load of misery from Asia.