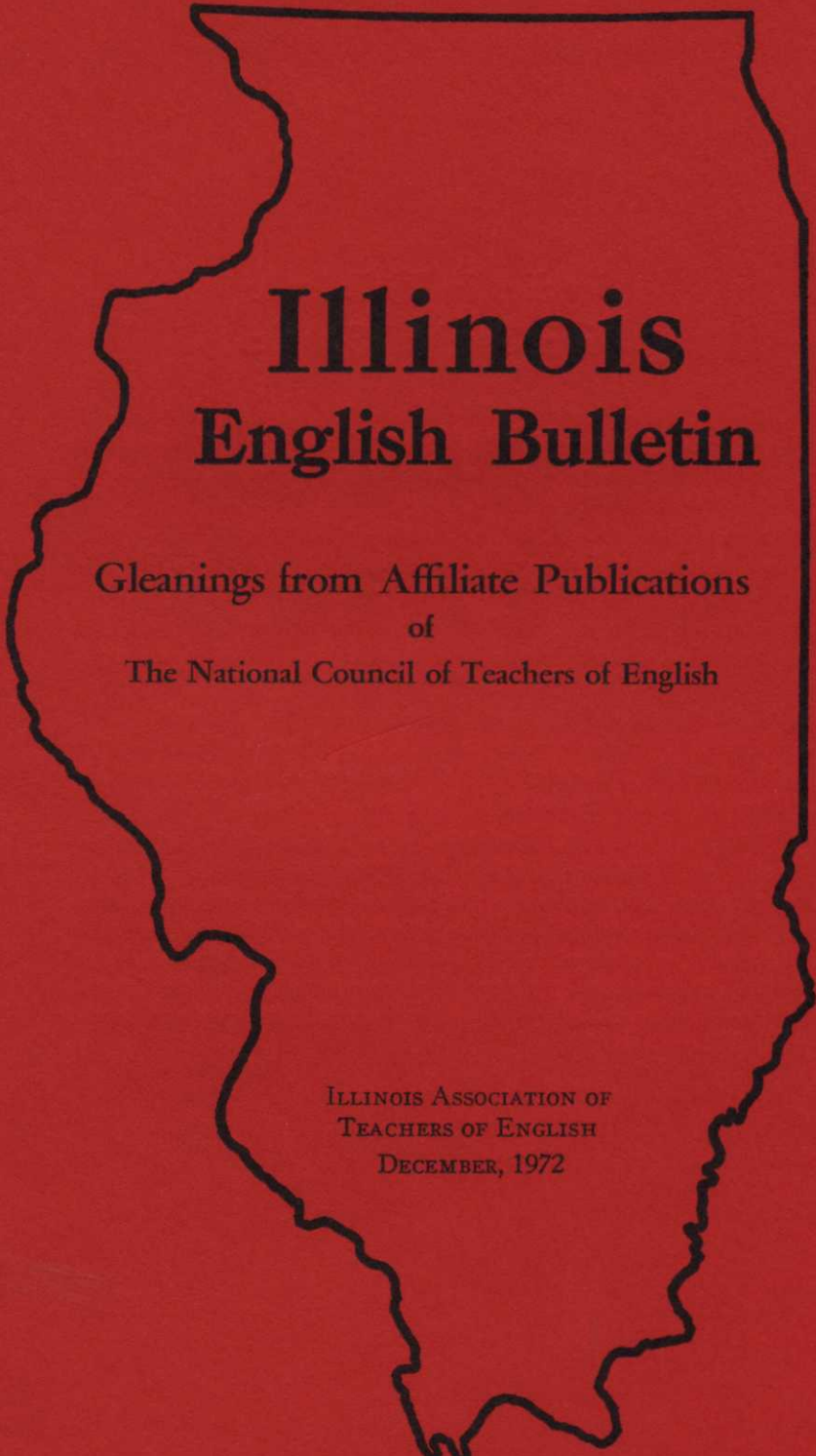


The entire cover features a large, black outline of the state of Illinois. The text is centered within this outline.

Illinois English Bulletin

Gleanings from Affiliate Publications
of
The National Council of Teachers of English

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF
TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
DECEMBER, 1972

Studies in This Issue with Original Sources

"Gifts for the Gifted" by Edwin Bruell, Chairman, English Department, Bremen High School, Midlothian, Illinois. *Statement, The Journal of the Colorado Language Arts Society*, September, 1971.

"Textual Criticism or Social Comment?" by Ted Hipple, College of Education, University of Florida. *Missouri English Bulletin*, January, 1971.

"Dialect and Usage, A Reflection on Postlapsarian Speechways" by John Algeo, University of Georgia. *The Florida English Journal*, February, 1972.

"Questions about Teaching Composition Still Being Asked by English Teachers; and Some Old but Excellent Answers" by Kenneth L. Donelson, English Department, Arizona State University. *The Florida English Journal*, February, 1972.

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Gifts for the Gifted

BY EDWIN BRUELL

Can success come to a district assessed the lowest evaluation and the highest pupil expenditure in Cook County, a district that dreams of a program for gifted boys and girls seeking an education? The answer is definitely affirmative, according to Bremen Community High School District 228.

Programs are generally plentiful for average and basic students. However, the turmoil in every aspect of our society demands a new breed of leaders — a race of people to bring a just orderliness and a new, livable philosophical tranquility to our beleaguered system.

Some people with shrill, shrieking voices would "tell it like it is" without insight into the historical perspective which tells it as it was. Others would rip up the present for a future in which men of goodwill everywhere can see only an oft-repeated reign of terror with new aspirants more tyrannical than even the proponents of the old power structure. Some would have us possessed by a monomania or two where there are scores of issues relevant to all mankind. Some would rebel without knowing what they were rebelling against. Finally there are those who yearn beyond the seas, always beyond, for what will never be — man without evil to completely replace the present hated Establishment with an Establishment nurtured on their own type of hate — rejecting existing good without first quelling the private wars within themselves.

Plainly, it is new leadership that is cried for.

In democracy it is everyone's right to voice his opinion and seek to attain rightful, personal leadership. Likewise, it is the duty

of democracy to preserve itself by helping educate opinion by basing it on facts, not on martial slogans, and to train leaders who are respected. Herein, by cultivating leadership, a program for gifted students is most effective.

Who, then, are the gifted? Those endowed by nature with certain qualities of creativity, originality, and intelligence for which they should utter a daily prayer of humble thankfulness. Like Newman's "Educated Man," the gifted student "is at home in any society, has common ground with every class, is able to listen, can ask a question pertinently, and gain a lesson seasonably." He has individuality and freedom "to do his own thing," to use a near-sacred cliché. Hopefully, even if *he* is simply inclined toward instructing in the mysteries of Sanskrit, many colleagues will venture to cure the incurables of man. Free to dangle his Phi Beta Kappa key before the eyes of awed fellows, may he choose more wisely to prove his wisdom like Salk, Gandhi, and King. If he chooses, boorishly, to establish a life-long Narcissus affection with his image, his followers will be fewer. Society sometimes surmounts the difficult obstacle of placing logic in perspective; thus, there is one broad step from giftedness to leadership. With some gifted qualities established, we take the tenuous, long steps in the quest.

In 1969, backed by funds from Illinois, a six-teacher committee from mathematics, social studies, fine arts, science, English, and guidance met with Lee Cox, administrative assistant, to think toward a program for Bremen's gifted students. A successful gifted student science seminar had existed for five years, with Lee Kaiser, Hillcrest science chairman, as program coordinator. Cox suggested that the committee think of practical and ultimate goals. He triggered their minds with moonshot nebulae — visions of closed circuit television, modular systems, architectural diversity, independent study, and seminars. Then, knowing their minds were bent on creativity, he turned them loose.

The result was a series of brainstorming sessions. Under the exploratory mentorship of Ralph Moorhouse, Tinley Park science chairman, members felt a little like astronauts trekking around in stardust.

The next meeting was like a *jai alai* festival with the team tossing around and catching ideas, except that the wagering was all on one thing — unpredictable youth. Should they emulate fantastic New Trier High School? Much discussion followed: so be like suburban housewives . . . so live within your means and still not be cruel and paltry to those for whom you are directly responsible — to those who hunger — in this case for knowledge.

Next the committee would learn what was currently available for accelerated students in the district. They enlisted teachers, chairmen, and principals by the time-honored device of a questionnaire concerning present programs. They identified themselves as helpmates, not critics. The committee members learned the most. They concluded that the conscientious, ambitious existing programs simply were not enough. There were critical questions — how to select and grade (extra points for accelerated students?), how many students to be admitted, how best to help — burgeoning into whole new concepts. Should the program furnish consultants, reduce class size, provide research, promote in-service, supply equipment, permit visits to other schools, and foster advanced placement programs? The replies were gratifyingly large. The key was simply motivation — teacher motivation. And there were the next-door problems that included the all-important students.

The members, now involved with a cause, sat through many meetings willingly. Quitting time was whenever one's already over-indulgent spouse sounded the tocsin for evening victuals. The divergent concepts ended formally, still to be harangued in the parking lot, like bull sessions in a graduate education course before the room stills at a signal from the podium.

The group took three trips. The first was to the Gifted Demonstration Center at Evanston High School, a plush complex — every educator's dream. The arts program there consists of music, drama, dance, and art, each with accelerated, advanced placement, and honors sections. A student's course differs every day. Since "everybody's gotta be somewhere," as the man in the closet said, accommodations are vast. The annual bill for stage lighting maintenance is a staggering \$10,000. Wallace Smith, director, said that the biggest problem is simply "how to identify the gifted student." He uses the Torrance Test of Creativity, a *what if* concoction, concerned with educatedly guessing causes, predicting consequences, making product improvements, finding unusual uses for commonplace objects, and toying playfully with a section called *Just Suppose* — the Jules Verne-Ray Bradbury kind of thing. Scoring the papers requires special training. (A truly creative soul should create some new tests for creativity.) Students have 35 percent unscheduled time to go to student-directed study centers or study halls.

The trip to Chicago's Bowen High School revealed *independent projects* (versus the *independent study* plan in Decatur's Lakeview High School, wherein the student goes to no class if he so desires and may take any course at any time.) Bowen has 132

students in the program (3,400 total enrollment), and the student enrolls in any humanities course with no study periods. Students are academically very bright, and no attempt is made to isolate creativity. They take five English periods a week at Bowen (the "little U.N."), with a college credit rhetoric course at nearby Southeastern Junior College. Assured grades are B or A.

The third center visited, Evergreen Park High School, has a team-taught American studies course of 50 students, with American history and literature combined and emphasis on concepts and problem solving. Students must bring specifics to support their hypotheses in free-wheeling sessions. Dale Edwards, director, allowed us to visit the class in individual reading where sixteen students come daily to read paperbacks not offered in the regular course curriculum. After finishing each book, the students have individual conferences with the bibliophile instructors.

By the time of spring vacation, the committee presided as resource personnel in five meetings with science, mathematics, English, social studies, and fine arts teachers and chairmen of accelerated classes. No experts, the committee members were greatly interested and partly informed observers. With much give and take, they learned what the keen personnel already knew of such programs without the formal visits. But then intellectual curiosity is the first gift of those who presume to teach the gifted.

Someone postulated that the creative child is somewhat less than Little Lord Fauntleroy. He loves to ask questions and confound the teacher, "fool around" with the things of his environment, be generally playful and wisecracking, get into trouble because of his offbeat ways, play the loner role, and think up clever and sage answers not necessarily found in the approved answer books. The conclusion of most teachers was that he needed discipline — the intellectual kind.

In the last hectic days of 1969-70 the final report of the sadly ungifted Gifted Committee was delivered to John Flynn, veteran administrator and superintendent of Bremen District.

Then at the start of 1970-71, an advisory council of eighteen teachers with 214 years of experience combed the report. In mid-year, for implementation in February 1971, they added and subtracted and produced a comprehensive brochure not to be filed and forgotten but to be "chewed and digested," entitled, "Proposed Outlines for Gifted Student Seminars." The broad outline, lengthy and comprehensive, has subdivisions for five disciplines.

In summary, about 250 out of 5,000 students are involved in the

program, with emphasis on creativity, originality, free expression, and challenge.

There will be guest speakers in the areas of costume design, music, and theater; field trips to theaters, schools like Goodman, museums, galleries, publishing houses, consular offices, and the metropolitan city, as well as unusual films, special programs like a jazz festival, uniquely devised student presentations, meetings at night, independent study, off-trail seminars, and a dial access language learning center.

Dreamy? Be not deceived. The final chapter is unwritten, as it will be for some time, but, by the grace of God and the help of Illinois the program will be continued.

It has not been concluded because the "Proposed Outlines" is only the blueprint — a guideline for things to come.

In the second semester of 1970-71 there are five building coordinators from each discipline for each school — people chosen not for their degrees or tenure, but for their fresh vitality. Their creative role is guided by Vilas Morte, administrative assistant.

Now the script has been proposed. The principals in the cast, the *dramatis personae*, are onstage — the students to play the roles.

The committee members must sit and watch and not hamper the creativity of the directors, the building coordinators.

Maybe they can catch a glimmer of whatever creativity truly is.

Textual Criticism or Social Comment?

BY TED HIPPLE

Largely as a result of the increased availability of paperbacks, high school students today read many more classroom sets of novels and plays than they did just ten or fifteen years ago. And this wide reading of fine literature compounds a problem that has been with teachers of English as long as they have had their students write papers connected with the literature these students read: namely, what kinds of compositions ought the teachers to require of their students related to the literature they study?

If one examines educational journals, looks at textbooks on the teaching of English, or talks with English teachers, he very soon discovers that students are currently writing themes that may be

sorted into one of two camps: either critical papers or those commenting about some problem raised by the reading but not directly covered in it. A few examples will help clarify this division. In a teacher's manual accompanying an edition of *Moby Dick* suggestions for writing include, on the one hand, such critical topics as "Satire in *Moby Dick*" and "Could Starbuck Have Stopped Ahab?" and, on the other hand, such general papers as "You Can't Fight Evil with Evil" and "To Know Yourself Is To Be Able To Cure Yourself." The teacher whose students analyze *The Red Badge of Courage* as a story of a youth's struggle for maturity may well have a colleague down the hall who asks his students, upon their completion of the book, to write on the topic "Who Is Today's Courageous Man?"

Little help is given on this question of appropriate theme assignments by college professors engaged in the training of prospective English teachers. I attended a conference not long back at which four college professors spoke on a panel about the high school teaching of literature. Inevitably, the question arose about whether high school teachers should follow the reading of a masterwork with a writing assignment of some length. All four men thought that they should, but agreement stopped there. Two argued that the high school English class was the appropriate point in a student's educational experience at which he could be asked to become a literary critic of a sort — "on his own level, of course," added one. The other two professors were equally vehement in support of the position that high school students ought to read great literature primarily to gain the "insights into life which it offers"; the writing they then do ought to reflect their ability to relate these insights to contemporary problems not discussed specifically in the book.

Both positions have merit. The high school student can do some criticism. He can find certain symbols in *Lord of the Flies* or analyze the episodes in *Huck Finn* or discuss the growth of the character Stephen Kumalo in *Cry, The Beloved Country*. He can be led to the sort of criticism that the new critics advocate — a close textual analysis — that demands that he know a work well before he attempts to say anything about it. The objectives of such teaching are that he will learn to appreciate the book he is working on through approaching it critically and that he will employ similar diligence in his other reading.

Similarly, teachers who want their students to consider literature as a revelation about life and then to relate what is revealed to some aspects of life outside those in the book can also make a

strong case. A student can, after reading *Lord of the Flies*, write more ably about the isolates of contemporary society; after *Huck Finn*, about the man today whose personal moral views differ from those of the majority of his society; after *Cry, The Beloved Country*, about the contemporary racial strife in the United States. In such writing he thinks about the problem and, if there is one, its resolution in the book he has read; he then relates the insight he has gained from the reading to something outside that reading. The objectives here are that literature becomes meaningful to the student in terms of the problems he daily sees in the world and that he is likely to perceive relationships longer than those of the literary work itself in his future reading.

Just as both positions have advantages, however, each has its bad features. High school students simply are not expert critics, at least not of the kind that criticism today demands. For the average high school student, one reading of a novel or play is all he is about to do. He may resent having to dig through a work to puzzle out symbols or find imagery; if he did not find them at first reading, they may strike him as not worth the finding. Further, teachers run the serious risk of forever lessening the student's liking for literature if they demand that he handle such terms as "structure" or "implied author" with anything approaching the ability of a Northrop Frye or a Wayne Booth. Not only does he lack their training, skill, and wide reading experience; he also, and importantly, lacks their interest. One of my most guilt-producing moments in high school teaching occurred when a very bright student told me that he had really liked a novel we had read and discussed in class — until I had made him write a piece of criticism about its continuous development of our theme.

Still, it is no panacea for such difficulties to keep all composition topics general. The chief drawback to forcing students to look at the insights literature offers about life and write about these is that the masterwork may never be seen as having any worth in its own right. The student may see a novel, for example, as valuable only relative to the magnitude of the problem it discusses. Richard Wright's *Native Son*, an exciting but second-rate novel of Negro slum life, may seem of high quality because it permits the student to leap from the book to Negro ghetto life generally. A better novel, like Lillian Smith's *Strange Fruit* perhaps, may seem drab and slow-moving by comparison; too, since interracial love and miscegenation are less common than the slum problems, this poignant novel may be considered inferior. Additionally, if literature is to be used as a window to life, the student may like

the view just as much if he looks through James Bond and may feel that he gains as much. Why should he read more difficult works — Shakespeare, for example?

The problem exists, then. Once it is granted that students ought to write after they have read, the teacher of English still has before him the demanding question of what they ought to write. The teacher may try to make of them textual critics of the social or historical or psychological or whatever type or he may demand of them that they use the ideas of the book to write about something removed from it. In either instance the teacher is not without potential troubles. The best approach, probably, is to use some composition assignments of both kinds. The teacher can be guided by the particular book read, the discussions in class, the previous assignments he has given. With such a dual approach he can hopefully make his students more expert at the task of literary criticism, while, at the same time, he can help them know themselves and their society better. Both, of course, are worthwhile goals.

Above all, the teacher must keep in mind that his students have fifty years ahead of them, during which time he wants them to be readers. To this end he must make his writing assignments in literature study as fruitful as he can, ones that reflect his very best thought and effort and demand a similar return of thought and effort from his students.

Dialect and Usage: A Reflection on Postlapsarian Speechways

BY JOHN ALGEO

While Adam was alone in Paradise, giving names to all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air, there were no linguistic problems. But trouble came with the first recorded conversation, that of Eve with the Serpent. Thereafter, the earth was not for long of one language and of one speech. The consequence of many men talking is that they do not all talk alike. And so dialects come into existence, and people begin to wonder about the funny way their neighbors use words. The result is Babel, and the melancholy consequence of God's confounding man's speech is that the confounded language has been bothering us ever since.

The primal simplicity of Adam's speechways has given place, on the one hand, to a great diversity in the way we talk and, on the other hand, to an agonized uncertainty about how we should react to that diversity. All languages are various, and all speakers worry about the variety.

Everybody knows that we use language in different ways under different circumstances, but the diversity is even greater than we may usually be aware of. People don't talk the same in Portland, Pomona, or Palatka. We don't talk the way our forefathers did, or the way our offspring will. Women don't talk like men, or adolescents like over-thirty middlescents. Musicians don't talk like bookies, Madison-Avenue hucksters don't talk like preachers, and nobody else talks like a grammarian. We don't use the same language when addressing spouses, infants, FCTE meetings, sales clerks, cronies, or supervisors. We use different language in speaking and in writing, different speech over the telephone and face-to-face, and different writing in telegrams and in letters. All of us switch the kind of English we use according to the circumstances we find ourselves in, but there are more kinds of English than any one person will ever use in a lifetime, though he surpass Methuselah in years and all the prophets in volubility. "Glory be to God for dappled things," sang Gerard Manley Hopkins, and of "all things counter, original, spare, strange . . . fickle, freckled (who knows how?)," human speech must be the most pied.

It is a curse of human nature that when faced with so rich a variety as that our language gives us, what we do mainly is worry about it. But then it is the curse of Babel that diversity of language should divide us.

Broadly speaking there are two kinds of variety in language, which we can call *dialect* and *style*. We often think of dialect as the quaint way people talk in exotic places like the Maine woods, the Florida Keys, or the Bronx, the rule being that I speak plain English and you speak a dialect. By *dialect*, however, the student of language means a way of using a language that is characteristic of any group of persons. Those persons may live together in the same geographical area and use speechways that contrast with those of neighboring areas, in which case we are dealing with a *regional dialect*. Or one group may live cheek-by-jowl with another in the most intimate geographical contact, but be separated by economics, occupation, education, habitual activities, or race, in which case we are dealing with *social dialect*. In either case, the kind of English we use and others do not—our regional and

social dialects — mark us as belonging to a place, a community, a clique.

The other kind of language variety — *style* — encompasses all those differences that speakers use depending on such factors as how well they know the persons they are talking to, how formal the occasion is, and whether they are communicating face-to-face or not. Every dialect has a variety of styles. Thus whether you say “greassy” or “greazy” depends on what regional dialect you speak, but whether you say “He’s a greasy slob” or “He is an unctuous sloven” depends on the style you are using. Dialect indicates what group we belong to; style shows how we feel about the situation we are in. Style is all those variations we share with others in our group; dialect is all those variations that define our group and thus set *us* apart from *them*.

The kinds of English we do not share with others tribalize us, showing what groups we belong to as surely as a totem or a tattoo, as surely as a pierced nose or a scarified skin. Those who want to climb to the top of the totem pole have to be accepted into the top-dog tribe, and that means speaking in the approved top-dog way, otherwise known as the standard dialect.

We have so long talked about standard English that we may be seduced into thinking we know what it is. And, indeed, it is easy enough to characterize in the abstract. Two hundred years ago, George Campbell said that standard usage is what is national, present, and reputable. That is, to be standard a usage must be found over the whole nation and not be limited to one region, it must be in use now and not be an old-fashioned expression that is on its way out, and it must be used by those groups who fancy themselves to be the important people, the style-setters of the land and who have succeeded in getting others to accept that flattering self-evaluation. Another way of putting it is to say that standard English is cosmopolitan, up-to-date, and prestigious. The problem is that it is hard to interpret such an abstract definition of “standard” in concrete terms.

Some years ago there was a great hubbub in England about what language was U (upper-class) and what was non-U (middle or lower class). In the midst of the hubbub, the *New Yorker* magazine published a cartoon showing a man and a woman, obviously tweedy English aristocrats, at tea. The woman is saying to the man, “Well, I always say, if it’s me it’s U.” I suspect that is the basis on which most of us decide what is standard — if I say it, it is standard; if I don’t, it probably isn’t. And if we can get everybody else to agree that we are the ideal exemplars of

standard English, we have certainly saved ourselves a great deal of bother. But however convenient it would be for me if standard English coincided exactly with the way I talk, the facts of usage are certainly more complex.

Indeed, as so often with human affairs, the facts are messy. In the United States there is no one standard dialect. There is no single regional or social speechway that is recognized throughout the country as the "right" way, the prestigious way, of talking. There have been efforts to get Bostonian English accepted as the standard, or Northern Midland speech (optimistically dubbed "General American" by its proponents), but nobody has been much convinced by those efforts except Bostonians and Northern Midlanders — and they don't agree. What we have instead of a single and homogeneous standard dialect is a set of multiple and ill-defined uses that cause a minimum of trouble. In pronunciation, especially, it is impossible to define a standard. Classical Southern, Brahman Bostonian, Chicagoese, Pedernales Texan, all are in good, educated, use. And apart from them there is no standard way of pronouncing American English. There are, of course, nonstandard pronunciations, like that of the radio broadcaster who announced a meeting of "state soil conversationists." But we cannot arrive at a standard dialect simply by eliminating nonstandard pronunciations because there are many right ways to pronounce. The New Englander can say "cot," the Midlander "cawght," the Southerner "co-ought," and the New Yorker "co-oght" and they are all right as the rain that falls mainly on the plain in Spain.

If Professor Henry Higgins had wanted to be a second Pygmalion in America instead of Britain, he would have tended not to Eliza's consonants and vowels, but to her nouns and verbs. For in the United States grammatical usage comes much nearer to being a generally agreed upon signal of standard English. But even in grammar there is more variety, especially in the styles we use, than our prejudices might dispose us to accept.

The three kinds of language varieties mentioned earlier — social dialect, regional dialect, and style — interact with one another. Regional dialects exported from their native territory and styles misused become social differentiators. Thus the naive Northerner thinks that all forms of Southern English are nonstandard — if indeed they are not due to some unfortunate congenital malformation of the speech organs. And Archie Bunker's Southern counterpart has pretty definite opinions about Yankee talk. Furthermore, language that is appropriate and standard in one style will be nonstandard *gaucherie* if used in the wrong

circumstance, for example one of the great bugaboos of usage: *ain't*. The word has an easy, comfortable use between intimates, but is out of place in more formal circumstances, where it can only be humorous, or folksy, or ignorant, and thereby gives rise to the peculiar impression that there ain't no such word. On the other hand, to talk like the Declaration of Independence over breakfast is to be a bore.

Styles and regional dialects are different matters from standards of usage; but, depending on the savvy of the speaker and the sophistication of his hearers, they can merge or collide.

One of the tasks of the school is to deal with the relationship between style, dialect, and standards—to give students the savvy and sophistication they need to survive in our linguistically postlapsarian world. Basically there are three ways we can seek an accommodation between standard and nonstandard usage (with nonstandard including exported dialects and misused styles). First, we can attempt to eradicate all offending uses—and aim at a single uniform standard English, in which there is no North or South, no high class or low class, no familiar or formal—just one kind of “good” English. This is to reform the language, and is what English teachers have often attempted in the past without always being conscious of it. Second, we can attempt to convert the nation to total linguistic tolerance, so that nobody will get upset at the way anybody else talks but will joyfully accept all varieties of English as a many-hued radiance. This is to reform the speakers, and is what has recently been urged by some distinguished persons, including a linguist whom I respect and some officials in the U.S. Office of Education whom I fear. I will make no effort to disguise my own opinion that both those goals are will-o'-the-wisps. They are quixotic quests for Eden. And however inspiring it may be to dream the impossible dream, we are living after the fall—both from Eden and from Babel. I do not expect that we as schoolteachers can remake either the language or those who speak it. A third, and more modest, goal is to help those students whose social dialect is nonstandard to acquire whatever standard forms are used in their region and to help all students to develop skill in using different styles appropriately. That, I think, is a big enough job. If in the process we can also help students to understand what causes language differences and why people get so upset about them, that will be to the good. We may not thereby remake Eden, but we will at least be cultivating our own garden.

Questions about Teaching Composition Still Being Asked by English Teachers; and Some Old but Excellent Answers

BY KENNETH L. DONELSON

1. *Can we really teach composition under the present circumstances?*

"Under present average conditions, English teachers are assigned more than twice as much work as they can do. Some of them try to do it by working more than twice as much as other teachers do. This is wrong, because it disables them. Others do only what they reasonably can and let the rest go. This is wrong in another way, because it is an injustice to the pupil and a waste of his time, whether he is given less work to do, or whether he is required to go thru with a full performance without the aid and advice of the teacher. The committee report shows why this is true; it shows that under present average conditions of teaching English expression, workmen must choose between over-work and bad work; between spoiling their material or killing themselves; and the end for which the committee is striving is to place these painfully simple facts before the public so that the responsibility for the continuance of present conditions, if they must continue, may rest where it belongs." (Edwin M. Hopkins, Chairman, "The Labor and Cost of Composition Teaching: The Present Conditions," *Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Fifty-Sixth Annual Meeting*, National Education Association, 1912, p. 750.)

2. *How often should kids write? Doesn't steady practice in writing help?*

"In one college every freshman wrote themes steadily through the year, with an accompaniment of sound instruction in rhetorical principles; in the other college every freshman studied Shakespeare, with absolutely no training in rhetoric and with no practice in composition. A comparison of the themes written in their sophomore year by these students showed that technically the two were fully on a par. That is weighty and most significant testimony." ("Two Ways of Teaching English," *The Century Magazine*, March 1896, p. 794.)

3. *Isn't it true that a study of grammar helps students write better?*

"A great many people seem to think that the study of grammar is a very dry subject indeed, but that it is extremely useful, assisting the pupils in writing and in speaking the language in question. Now I hold the exactly opposite view. I think that the study of grammar is really more or less useless, but that it is extremely fascinating. I don't think that the study of grammar, at least in the way in which grammar has been studied hitherto, has been of very material assistance to any of the masters of English prose or poetry, but I think that there are a great many things in grammar that are interesting and that can be made interesting to any normal schoolboy or schoolgirl." (Otto Jespersen, "Modern English Grammar," *School Review*, October 1910, p. 530.)

4. *How should we criticize or mark student papers?*

"Don't be a ferret. Overlook many errors. Take it for granted that some blunders are but the marks of youthfulness; let them alone and they will disappear in due time." (Alfred M. Hitchcock, "A Composition on Red Ink," *English Journal*, May 1912, p. 274.)

"... the most important educative value of composition is not the mere training in writing. It is the training in thinking and talking. And that teacher whose eyes are focused on the writing value is almost invariably a weak teacher of composition work and a short-sighted critic of themes. She is the teacher who pounces on the verbal mistake, who ferrets out the buried grammatical blunder, who scents from afar a colloquialism or a bit of slang—the teacher, in short, who, neglecting the broader aspects of the work, directs her eyes always to the details." (Walter Barnes, "The Reign of Red Ink," *English Journal*, March 1913, p. 159.)

"There is no need of cleaning up all discoverable faults on the occasion of any one set of compositions. The wise teacher knows he cannot convey in any hour more than a very limited amount of instruction. It seems hard, perhaps, to let defects go unnoticed ... Composition shades off into an infinitude of correctible or improvable points. To mark the stopping place too far out is to throw away valuable effort." (Samuel Thurber, "The Correction of School Compositions," *The Academy*, June 1891, p. 256.)

5. *Why shouldn't we mark all the errors in kids' papers?*

"No wonder we become intolerant. Anybody who makes his living by resetting split infinitives, changing accusatives to nominatives and nominatives to accusatives, reinverting inverted orders, tying up dangling participles, and marking awkward constructions with a red K is likely to become cocksure of almost everything. He is lucky if he doesn't go mad with certainty. He is

sure, sooner or later, to believe in the stuff that he preaches and practices. Nothing can save him from pedantry.

"Is there any hope at all, then, for him who has fallen into this blissful state of intolerance? Can he be rescued from this slough of triviality? Can he be persuaded that he is not a divinely appointed guardian of the conduct of his language? What must he do to be saved from himself?

"He must get him a new vision of his job — a new conception of his mission on earth. His intolerance is sure to slip off his neck and fall like lead into the sea the minute he discovers that language exists on earth mainly to serve the language needs of the present generation, and that it is his business to teach it on such a basis. A startling discovery, that! His salvation lies in centering his attention upon teaching the effective use of the language as that effective use is manifest in the journalism, literature, business, and social life of today." (H. W. Davis, "Intolerance in the Teaching of English," *English Journal*, June 1922, pp. 325-326.)

6. *Why do so many English teachers have trouble teaching composition?*

"... far too many of these experienced and prospective composition teachers are themselves, in the main, *unable to write*. What do I mean by that? I mean that they are unable to develop their ideas; that they refuse to organize them; that they have little feeling for words; that their diction is monotonous and flaccid; that they are afraid of independent thought and reflection. I mean, further, that they are either ignorant or, what is worse, shiftless in mechanical detail; that their sentences ramble in endless incoherence; that they frequently do not write sentences at all; that their paragraphs are largely penmanship indentations — sops to a forgotten rhetorical principle. I mean, in short, that — omitting consideration of the more subtle elements of good writing, such as individual style, imaginativeness, beauty of phrase and image — few composition teachers possess even first rate utilitarian capacity in expression.

"What is equally unfortunate is that many of these teachers and about-to-be's are lamentably ignorant of the subject matter they profess to teach. This is evidenced even in their befuddled bolstering of the doddering old standby, formal grammar. While, for my own part, I do not hold for the teaching of formal grammar at all, yet I cannot refrain from feeling that if for some mysterious reason it must be taught, then it should be presented accurately, and that the teacher should know more of it than he

finds in his junior high school text. In the main, however, neither is the case with either experienced or practicing teachers. This lack of full knowledge is shown in many little ways, particularly when pupils ask *whys* and *wherefores* and their teachers are able only to refer them to rules." (Howard Francis Seely, "Composition Work in Teacher Training Courses," *English Journal*, March 1930, p. 235.)

7. *Why is English class the only place students write? Shouldn't they write in all their classes?*

"The simple fact is that pupils write English for all their teachers. The great bulk of what is thus written cannot be read by the English teacher at all. The teachers for whom it is written rarely read it with an eye to its English . . . These considerations suggest that either all teachers should cooperate with the teacher of English by noting and bringing within the school discipline the faults of their pupils in writing on their respective subjects, or that the functions of the English teacher should be merged in all the other departments. In the latter case each teacher would be a teacher of his department *and* a teacher of English. It is well perhaps to have someone peculiarly and specially interested in pupils' writing; yet a great gain would be secured for the schools if all the teachers should be expected to feel a pride, not only in answers technically correct as to matter, but also correct and beautiful as to expression." (Samuel Thurber, "Elementary Composition in High Schools," *The Academy*, November 1889, p. 427.)

8. *Are we getting our students ready for college English?*

"The defective preparation of college freshmen in elementary English is owing to the fact that most of the high schools have undertaken the work of 'fitting boys for the active duties of life.' (I quote these words from an advertisement of one of the leading schools in this state.)" (Francis Winston, "English and the High School," *Nation*, December 17, 1896.)

"The colleges complain that the secondary schools do not send the pupils properly trained; the secondary schools have a similar charge to bring against the grammar and primary schools; and these, in turn, complain bitterly of environment and parentage." (R. S. Keyser, "The Question of English," *The Academy*, October 1890, pp. 361-362.)

