

RESEARCH CONCEPTIONS OF ADULT AND COLLEGE READER RESPONSE TO  
LITERATURE

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## ABSTRACT

"Response to literature" is an educational notion which generally refers to an oral or written reaction to a non-expository published work such as a short story or poem. This historical analysis investigates conceptions of response to literature in research with adults and college students.

The dissertation problem derives from an apparent shift in emphasis from the text towards the reader in research on response to literature (Purves, 1985). The underlying assumption of this suggestion is that there are historically predominant research conceptions. This dissertation documents these ideas with adult and college readers' responses to literature.

The procedure was first to establish foundation conceptions of "response" and "literature" from theoretical considerations of these terms. Next, studies derived from major bibliographies were examined in order to determine the general emphasis based on the research purpose, literary work, and response task. Predominant research conceptions of both "response" and "literature" were delineated by decades, from the first cited study in 1912.

Results of the analysis concerned conceptions of both "literature" and "response". First, research conceptions of "literature" generally focused on print, rather than oral performance. In addition, there was a general research move from the use of meaningless syllables and fragments of poetry

(1910-39); through the use of a diversity of genres such as newspaper articles, comprehension test items, and novels (1940-69); to a contemporary focus on short stories and poems (1970-89). Second, research conceptions of "response" supported the suggestion of a general shift from conceptions which focused on textual elements such as rhythm, sounds of language and literary merit (1920-39); through those which focused on aspects of the reader such as personality changes, preferences and developmental differences (1940-69); to those which emphasized elements of response itself such as process, stance, and context (1970-89). Possible reasons for the shifts in emphasis were explored in relation to general societal conditions and the changing image of the college student.

From an educational perspective, the observed changes suggest a move towards empowerment of the learner in the classroom. This trend corresponds to the increasing pedagogical emphasis on holism and collaboration.



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### I. Introduction

"Response to literature" is a general pedagogical notion or concept referring to a reaction (usually expressed verbally or in writing) to a published work, often a short story, novel, poem or play. It is the argument of this dissertation that, although researchers effectively explore the myriad issues involved in response to literature, an examination of the ways in which underlying theoretical perspectives have framed their research has been missing. The purpose of this analysis is to explore these underlying theoretical perspectives. This will be done through an examination of conceptions of response to literature in

research exploring the responses of adults and college students.

## II. Significance

The pedagogical significance of this dissertation will be explained on three levels: 1) general significance of response to literature; 2) the significance of research on the responses of adult readers; and 3) the significance of an examination of research conceptions of the terms, "literature" and "response to literature".

### A. Significance of response to literature

Response to literature is considered of pedagogical value for three reasons. First, it is of utilitarian value. Responding to literature is an important means of developing, nurturing and insuring literacy (Bleich, 1985). The importance of its value as a means to literacy has been acknowledged from earliest (Altick, 1957) to most recent times (Brody, DeMilo, Purves, 1989). Purves (1971) observes that, "as a behavior to be cultivated, it is considered by many curriculum writers the most important of all" (p. 708). Response to literature is thus of fundamental importance.

Second, as Langer (1989) suggests, "the process of understanding literature is a natural and necessary part of the well-developed intellect" (p. 1). Response to literature

provides a means to self-actualization and personal growth (Rosenblatt, 1938; Dixon, 1975).

Third, response to literature is of pedagogical importance in a social and cultural sense. Rosenblatt (1938) suggests that: "the study of literature can have a very real, and even central, relation to the points of growth in the social and cultural life of a democracy" (p. v). Suggesting a larger context, Purves (in press) states:

literature learning in most societies in the world involves the acculturation of the individual to the social norms of readership as established by the society. (p. 22)

Thus concern with response to literature is pedagogically significant because it can foster literacy, personal growth, socialization and knowledge of cultural heritage.

#### B. Significance of research on the responses of adults and college students

Research on response to literature is generally recognized as important. Klemenz-Belgardt (1981) cites the "widely acknowledged assumption" that:

the more the teacher of school and college English knows about what student readers do, the easier it will be for him to achieve with them traditional objectives of literary study, such as willingness to read literature or insightfulness in reading. (p. 358)

Further, Hansson (1985) observes:

considering the time and efforts that are spent in teaching how to interpret and appreciate literature, we



know shockingly little of what constitutes response to literature. (p. 226)

The subjects studied in research on response to literature range from children to adults. This dissertation explores only that research done with adult readers. The arbitrary delineation will be people who are eighteen years of age or older, both within and outside of school. Thus the criteria is those studies which describe the subjects as either eighteen years of age or older as well as those which explicitly identify grade twelve students.

The major reason for selecting research with adults and college students derives from the belief that there are developmental constraints on literary response (Applebee, 1978; Svensson, 1985; Hillocks and Ludlow, 1984). In addition, research with this group of subjects reveals the result of public education systems (Purves, Harnisch, Quirk and Bauer, 1980). Thus, from a developmental, pedagogical and cultural point of view, adult and college readers are a point of reference for studies with children and high school students.

### C. Significance of an examination of research conceptions

A study of key constructs is important in any field. Rosenblatt (1989) states that:

the emphasis on making our underlying assumptions explicit provides the basis not only for agreement but also for understanding the tacit sources of disagreement. (p. 16)

It is useful for the educator to clarify the meaning of fundamental concepts such as literature and response to literature in order to facilitate effective discussion of these ideas.

Thus the significance of this dissertation ranges from general to specific pedagogical importance: from the general pedagogical importance of response to literature, through the significance of research with adult readers, to the significance of an exploration of fundamental conceptions of the research.

### III. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this dissertation concerns: 1) the nature of perception as it relates to terminology in a field; 2) the method of clarifying the phrase, response to literature; and finally, 3) the educational significance of examining researchers' conceptions of response to literature in light of theoretical perspectives.

#### A. Nature of perception

Terminology, Kenneth Burke (1966) points out: "is not just a reflection of reality but a way of seeing, a way of making distinctions that would be made differently if a different terminology were employed" (p. 46). As well:

even if any given terminology is a **reflection** of reality, by its very nature as a terminology it must be a

**selection** of reality; and to this extent it must function also as a **deflection** of reality. (p. 45)

Much that we take to be true about reality is merely the "spinning out of possibilities" implicit in our conceptions of terms. Thus conceptions will be considered as a source of a "feed-forward process" (Ford, 1987, p. 288). It is an assumption of this dissertation that initial underlying research conceptions of response to literature help shape the results of the research.

#### B. Method of clarifying the concept "response to literature"

It is a second assumption of this dissertation that the concept "response to literature" is clarified not only by juxtaposing its terms, "response" and "literature" with certain arbitrary constant definitions, but also by observing the historical context of the research.

#### C. Pedagogical value of examining conceptions

The third assumption of the thesis is that there is pedagogical value in examining research conceptions in light of both dictionary definitions as well as changing societal conditions and pedagogical values. By means of such an examination, constant and changing research priorities, as well as possible causes for change, become clearer.

Thus three assumptions constitute the theoretical framework of the proposed dissertation: 1) terminology shapes

perception; 2) research conceptions of "response to literature" can be made clear by an analysis which compares research conceptions with contemporary dictionary meanings as well as general societal and pedagogical conditions; and 3) the resulting comparison will be of use to the educator.

#### IV. Problem formulation

The coupling of the words, "response" and "literature", has a long history in the titles of research studies (Sussams, 1933; Patrick, 1939; Meckel, 1946; McKillop, 1951; Buehler, 1952; Matson, 1953; Boyd and Mandler, 1955; Squire, 1956; Scribner, 1960; Squire, 1964; Stout, 1964; Monson, 1966; Kaiser, 1967; Curtis, 1968; Holland, 1968; Livingston, 1968; Purves with Rippere, 1968; Skelton, 1968; Cooper, 1969). The meaning of the phrase "response to literature" seems to have changed or evolved through the century. Even though today "response to literature" is considered to be a phrase which excludes such aspects as physiological reaction and literal comprehension of text (Beach and Hynds, 1989; Cooper, 1971), this has not always been the case.

##### A. Foundation conceptions

The term "response", according to the Oxford English Dictionary (1989), encompasses physiological, psychological,

intellectual, ecclesiastical, and recreational dimensions of an answer to some stimulus.

The term "literature" is equally amorphous. According to Webster's Dictionary (1984), the word "literature" has three principal meanings: 1) everything in print; 2) great books of whatever subject; and 3) imaginative writing. Thus the meanings of these terms appear almost too vague to be useful in discussion or research without greater specification.

#### B. Research conceptions

The special difficulties of empirical research in an area as "subjective, ineffable and relative as a reader reading a book" (Beach, 1979, p. 134) seem almost insurmountable. Many researchers (Cooper, 1985; Petrosky, 1985; Holland, 1985; Klemenz-Belgarde, 1981; Rosenblatt, 1985a) have concluded from their work that "response to literature" as a concept seems to be as large as human understanding itself: "understanding the process of reading or interpreting is, in the final analysis, understanding understanding" (Chabot, 1985, p. 24). There is a vast range in the types of research questions. These range from questions concerned with literal comprehension (Hillocks and Ludlow, 1984) to those concerned with psychoanalytic exploration (Holland, 1975a) to those detailing the formulation of literary analyses (Kintgen, 1986).

Correspondingly, research conceptions of literature are equally diverse, ranging from pure sounds and rhythm of poetry (Givler, 1915) through single words (Downey, 1928), exposition (Black, 1954), researcher-devised stories (Wolfenstein, 1946) and newspaper articles (Gray, 1947) to novels (Wilson, 1966), drama (DeVries, 1973), published short stories (Dollerup, 1971), film (Weber, 1973) and poetry (Svensson, 1985). This enormous variety is also suggested in the myriad results, about which Cooper (1976) cautions that "there is no need to despair because so many studies tell us so little with absolute certainty" (p. 88).

### C. Suggestion of conceptual shifts

Purves (1985), in his discussion of aspects of response to literature, proposes that

early research was based on I.A. Richards' (1929) Practical Criticism which, while not explicitly theoretical, nevertheless tended to follow from the premise of hermeneutics that the literary text contained a verifiable essence. (p. 54)

Next, Purves points out, following the influence of Wellek and Warren, came the Freudians and the ensuing shift in attention to the reader. These observations suggest that a careful examination of research should reveal shifts in predominant conceptions from the text to the reader.

In addition, Froese (1990a) has suggested a recent move towards a fundamental paradigm shift in the concept of literacy, which corresponds with a general movement towards

holism in areas as diverse as medicine and business. This dissertation suggests that the shift towards the increasing priority placed on literacy has already extended to the area of research on response to literature.

#### V. Statement of the problem

The suggestion of a general shift in emphasis from the text towards the reader in research on response to literature has not been fully documented. Its underlying assumption, that there are historically predominant research conceptions, as well as possible reasons for these shifts also has not been detailed. Finally, speculation of a general movement toward holism also has been unexamined in the area of response to literature.

#### A. Questions

1. Are there shifts in research conceptions of response to literature? The following sub-questions will be addressed:

a. What are research conceptions of response to literature?

i. General dictionary meanings will provide a foundation from which to discuss theoretical ideas about response to literature. The following sub-questions will be addressed:

a. What are dictionary or foundation conceptions of "literature"?

b. What are dictionary or foundation conceptions of "response" as it relates to "literature"?

b. Are some research conceptions more predominant than others in certain periods?

c. Does a cursory overview of societal and pedagogical conditions suggest reasons for these predominant conceptions?

2. What are some different ways of interpreting possible shifts in research conceptions? This will be addressed by means of the following sub-questions:

a. What are the strengths, limitations and pedagogical implications of various metaphors or ways of interpreting general shifts in research conceptions?

b. On the basis of the above answers, what speculations can be made of future research directions?

## VI. Methodology

Methodology concerns the specific approach, either philosophic or scientific. The choice between these centres on the positivist notion that there is an objective truth which can be discovered and the relativist position which argues that truth is made, not found. This dissertation attempts to be both positivist, in the retrieval and analysis of sources, and relativist, in the synthesis of its information.



## A. Procedure

1. The first step is to delineate benchmark conceptions of the terms "literature" and "response to literature". Standard dictionary definitions will be used for two reasons. First, when there is dispute over the meaning of a word, the dictionary is usually considered the definitive authority. Second, the meanings provided in the dictionary can be considered a foundation from which to approach both theoretical and research meanings of the concepts.

2. The second step is to determine research conceptions of the responses of adult and college students to literature. This will be accomplished in four intermediate steps.

a. The first task is to identify those studies which constitute the research on adult and college readers' responses to literature. These are derived from published, and thus generally sanctioned bibliographies of research on response to literature. The Purves and Beach (1972) bibliography is the only one to extend the span of research covered more than twenty years. The two main bibliographies used in this dissertation are as follows:

Purves, Alan and Beach, Richard. (1972). Literature and the reader: research in response to literature, reading interests and the teaching of literature. National Council of Teachers of English.

Beach, Richard and Hynds, Susan. (1989). Research on the learning and teaching of response to literature. Center

for the teaching and learning of literature. Albany:  
SUNY<sup>1</sup>.

These were supplemented by other bibliographies:

Cooper, Charles. (1976). Empirical studies of response to literature: review and suggestions. Journal of aesthetic education, 10, 77-93.

Applebee, Arthur. (1978). ERIC/RCS Report: the elements of response to a literary work: what we have learned. Research in the Teaching of English, 11, 255-71.

Klemenz-Belgardt, Edith. (1981). American research on response to literature: the empirical studies. Poetics, 10, 357-80.

Galda, Lee. (1983). Research in response to literature. Journal of research and development in education. 16, 1-7.

In addition to these major critical bibliographies, which explicitly address the topic of research on response to literature, a supplemental list of studies was derived from the following sources:

Cooper, Charles. (1971). Measuring appreciation of literature: a review of attempts. Research in the Teaching of English, 5, 5-23.

Petrosky, A.R. (1977). Response to literature: research roundup. English Journal 66, 86 -8, 96-9.

Galda, L. (1982). Assessment: Response to literature. In A. Berger and A. H. Robinson. Eds. Secondary School Reading. Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English.

Beach, R. and Appleman, D. (1983). Reading strategies for expository and literary text types. In A. Purves and O. Niles. Ed. Becoming readers in a complex society. Eighty-

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<sup>1</sup> This will be supplemented with additional studies from Richard Beach's (1988) paper, "New directions in research on response to literature", which was delivered at the NCTE Conference in St. Louis, Missouri.

third Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cooper, Charles. Ed. (1985). Researching response to literature and the teaching of literature. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.

b. The second step was to retrieve those studies from the above bibliographies whose titles specified high school<sup>2</sup>, college, and adult readers, as well as those studies which did not specifically exclude these groups. Examples of general titles included in this step are: 1) "Enhancing the black self concept through literature" (Arnez, 1972), which explored the responses of elementary students; and 2) "Group talk and literary response" (Barnes, 1971), which explored the responses of grade eleven students. Both of these studies had to be eliminated because they did not include adult or college readers. Theoretical articles concerning research as well as reviews of research on response to literature, as listed in these bibliographies, were included. Articles which referred to high school students in a general sense were excluded. A reading of each of these 248 studies identified those studies which used grade twelve students, college students, or adult readers outside of academia, resulting in a list of 214 relevant studies<sup>3</sup> (see Appendix Two).

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<sup>2</sup>The reason for including grade twelve students was the arbitrary cutoff point of eighteen years of age as definition of adult reader.

<sup>3</sup>In the case of one study (Fowler and McCormick, 1986), where the age group of the subjects was not specified either in the title or in the report of research itself, that study was included because it contained works of literature which would be considered

c. The third step was to read, chronologically, each of the reports of research with a view to determining the primary conceptions of both "literature" and "response to literature". For the conception of "literature", note was taken of the genre of literature, its author and title, as well as the criteria for its selection. For the conception of response, note was taken of the title of the research article, the research purpose, and the specific response task. A holistic judgment was made of whether the study tended more towards the text, the reader, or aspects of the response itself. It is important to point out that results were not considered a component of the conception of the terms unless these results contradicted the initial conception and thus needed explanation in terms of the original conception<sup>4</sup>.

d. The fourth step was to list and then discuss the studies by decade, for sake of convenience. This discussion was preceded by an overview of societal and pedagogical conditions.

3. The final section of the dissertation explores the changing emphases in research conceptions of "response to literature". Different ways of seeing the shifts were derived from metaphors suggested in Morgan's (1989) Images of

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appropriate for adult readers.

<sup>4</sup>I.A. Richards (1929) is the most notable example.

organization. The strengths, limitations and pedagogical implications of the metaphors relevant to research conceptions of "response to literature" were delineated. Finally, speculation was offered on the move towards holism and future directions.

## VII. Overview of dissertation chapters

The following is an overview of the eight chapters in the dissertation. The first chapter, the introduction, specifies the significance of the dissertation, the theoretical framework, problem formulation (statement of the problem, questions to be answered; methodology and procedure), and an overview of the dissertation itself.

Chapter Two presents conventional conceptions of "literature", beginning with a summary of dictionary meanings, followed by a discussion of the importance, characteristics and modes of literature in both its nonhonorific sense as physical artifact and its honorific sense as aesthetic artifact.

Conceptions of "response" as it relates to literature are taken up in Chapter Three. As in Chapter Two, this chapter begins with a summary of the dictionary meanings of "response", followed by a discussion of three conventional response orientations. These essential preliminaries (Chapters Two and Three) provide the constant light or

framework from which to examine the changing research conceptions.

Chapter Four considers the early research phase, from its beginnings in 1912 to mid-century, characterized by a growing diversity of conceptions concerning both literature and response to literature. The research conceptions are presented in light of both the conventional conceptions developed in Chapters Two and Three as well as changing societal and pedagogical conditions.

Chapter Five documents the transitional research phase, from the fifties through the sixties. This period illustrates a transition stage in the narrowing of conceptions from the peak in diversity evident in research of the forties.

Chapter Six explores the new direction since the early seventies, in which research conceptions of response to literature most fully exemplify a pedagogical awareness of the transactional or dynamic nature of the reading event, along with an increasing concern for general literacy skills.

Chapter Seven presents a summary of the dissertation chapters as well as a conceptual summary which compares research conceptions with: 1) foundation conceptions; 2) changing societal conditions; 3) changing images of the college student; and 4) changes in the college English classroom.

Chapter Eight provides a conceptual synthesis of ideas presented in the previous chapters by looking at the shifts in research conceptions through various metaphors: mechanistic, cultural-political, and organic. It also includes speculation on the future.

Three appendices are included at the end of the dissertation. Appendix One provides an overview of the general aims, scope and conclusions of the major critical bibliographies used in the dissertation. Appendix Two provides a list of those studies which were unavailable, either through the University of British Columbia Library or its Inter-library Loan Department. Appendix Three provides summary tables of research characteristics.

## CHAPTER TWO

## FOUNDATION CONCEPTIONS OF LITERATURE

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## I. Introduction

This chapter begins the foundation from which research conceptions will be examined. It presents a theoretical discussion of dictionary meanings of the word "literature". The following chapter, Chapter Three, completes the foundation in its exploration of meanings of the phrase, response to literature. Thus Chapters Two and Three approach the situation of the literary transaction from opposing perspectives: the first has literature and the second, response, as their respective centres of gravity.

## II. Overview

The discussion of the concept "literature" begins with a brief etymology of the word, followed by a look at



contemporary dictionary meanings. This is succeeded by an exploration of literature considered first as physical and then as aesthetic artifact; that is, as printed matter and as work of art. For both conceptions, the importance and general characteristics will be discussed. The chapter closes with a summary and conclusions.

### III. "Literature": dictionary meaning

#### A. Historical

Rene Wellek provides a full description of the changing meanings of the term, literature, in Wiener's (1973) Dictionary of the history of ideas. He points out that the word itself derives from the Latin **litteratura** which, in turn comes from the root **littera**, letter. According to Quintilian (Institutiones, lib 2., cap. 1), Wellek points out, it is a translation of the Greek **grammatike**, which meant "a knowledge of writing and reading". Generally, throughout history the term was used to refer indiscriminately to all kinds of writings including those of an erudite nature, history, philosophy, theology, etc.: "only very slowly was the term narrowed down to what we today call 'imaginative literature' and imaginative, fictive prose".

The view that "literature" distinguished imaginative from scientific writing was the result of a central problem posed by Baumgarten in his 1735 Reflections on Poetry. In this work, Baumgarten set about to supplement the Cartesian

view of ideas as restricted to conceptual rather than intuited knowledge. He proposed the importance of the sensory and perceptual cognition of the kind found in poetry and the other arts. Drawing upon the Greek word for perception, **aisthesis**, Baumgarten coined the word aesthetics for the science of perceptual cognition. The basic conclusion of his analysis is that the aesthetic value of a poem is proportional to the intuited vividness of the fused quality of the experience that it evokes. Wellek points out that Kant's later (1790) Critique of Judgment also distinguished the good, the true, and the useful, from the beautiful. Slowly through the twentieth century, with the increasing distinctions concerning scientific, ordinary and literary language, the purely didactic and mimetic conception of literature receded, and fiction increasingly became a quality of literature.

To summarize briefly, the term "literature" signified first, in classical times, both the knowledge of letters and writings as well as the actual body of writings themselves. During the eighteenth century, the term retained these senses, while also adding that of "a knowledge of belles lettres" as distinguished from erudition, thus suggesting the exclusively aesthetic sense of literature and foreshadowing its use in pedagogical circles as being restricted to purely imaginative as distinguished from scientific writing.

Several related terms, specifically: "world literature" (used first by Goethe in 1827 to refer to writings of all cultures); "general literature" (used first by James Montgomery in 1833 to refer to principles of criticism); and "comparative literature" (used first by Hutchison Posnett in 1886) arose in the nineteenth century. A more recent related term, "oral literature", is described by Wellek as a "contradictio in adjecto, in view of the derivation of literature from litera". However, he points out that it is "a needed term since the oral tradition is a necessary component of any meaningful history of the verbal forms of art" (p. 86). Wellek does not mention the history of the meaning as referring to all those works printed on a particular subject, as in the phrase, "reviewing the literature".

## B. Contemporary

The discussion of contemporary meanings will begin with dictionary definitions. These definitions not only provide a foundation from which to view uses of the term but they also serve the function of providing "some agreement among users of the language about the generally accepted meanings of words" (Kister, 1977).

The Oxford English Dictionary (1989) defines

"literature" as:

- 1) acquaintance with 'letters' or books; polite or humane learning; literary culture. Now **rare** and **obsolescent**. 2)

literary work or production; the activity or profession of a man of letters; the realm of letters. 3) a. literary production as a whole; the body of writings produced in a particular country or period, or in the world in general. Now also in a more restricted sense, applied to writing which has claim to consideration on the ground of beauty of form or emotional effect. b. the body of books and writings that treat of a particular subject. c. **colloq.** printed matter of any kind.

The Webster's New World Dictionary of American English (1988) includes the meaning of literature as "printed matter of any kind, especially those (writings) of an imaginative or critical character **without regard to their excellence**" (emphasis mine). The World Book Dictionary (1987) and The Random House Dictionary of the English Language (1987) also include "writings of a period, language or culture" and "printed matter of any kind" respectively. However, they both omit reference to imaginative works, emphasizing instead the "beauty or excellence of style or thought". The World Book Dictionary is unique in citing as a synonym for literature the term "belles-lettres", which Wellek had observed was an archaic association of "literature".

To summarize, the meaning with the greatest consensus among major general dictionaries is "printed matter of any kind". "Excellence in writing" is a second important meaning. The meaning with the least consensus in general dictionaries, although it is the most popular in pedagogical and research circles, is the reference to aesthetic, imaginative writing. The discussion now turns to a more

detailed consideration of these three meanings of the word "literature".

#### IV. "Literature" as all printed matter

##### A. Importance

Print seems to pervade modern-day culture. The printing industry has the largest number of production plants of any industry in the world (Academic American Encyclopedia, 1983). The 1985 UNESCO Statistical Yearbook put world book production in 1983 at 772,000 titles, of which some 80 per cent was produced in the developed countries. The Library and book trade almanac: 1989-90 puts 1987 publishing industry sales at 11.4 billion in the United States. It also adds that 1988 book titles reached a record overall total of 56,027 for a single year. Large (1984) estimates that the total of all printed knowledge today doubles every eight years. June Callwood (1990) concludes:

in this half of the century North America has become a world of forms and documents and instructions, written warnings, posted rules, leaflets, and vital information circulated in brochures. (p. 36)

Print has its very roots in economic necessity. The earliest forms of written language, that of the Sumerians, arose out of the increasing complexity of their business dealings. Finnegan (1988) points out that both the Reformation, which relied on universal access to the Bible, and the Industrial Revolution, which underlies modern

industrial society, were highly dependent on printing and ensuing widespread literacy:

much that we think of as characteristic of the modern world - economic, social, religious, political - is built on the foundation provided by print as a medium of communication. (p. 30)

## B. Characteristics

Literature, at its most fundamental, is merely printed words. W. H. Gass (1970) suggests that "a word is a concept made flesh . . . the eternal presented as noise" (p. 29). De Beaugrande (1988a) proposes that discourse is

neither a mere reflection of the world nor a mere vehicle of personal imaginings . . . (it) allows us to discuss and organize our actual experiences, as well as to mediate among those we have not yet encountered. (pp 3-4)

Thus literature, in a fundamental sense, is language itself. It is the means by which we make sense of the world. In addition, in contemporary Western culture, an ability to cope with literature as printed matter is virtually essential for physical survival. Without the ability to read, it is difficult to earn a living.

In the areas of pedagogy and research, however, the meaning of literature is usually restricted to its special sense as aesthetic and imaginative writing. Two points of view will be considered in the following section. The first, perhaps more traditional, proposes that aesthetic language exists as an inherent textual quality. It is the author's special use of language. The second argument proposes that

aesthetic language is a quality created by the reader in the transaction with the text. It is a way of reading. The first idea to be explored is that aesthetic language exists as an inherent quality of the text.

#### V. "Literature" as aesthetic language

Frye (1957) describes the aesthetic roots of language in words themselves,

. . . what we think of as typically the poetic creation, which is an associative rhetorical process, most of it below the threshold of consciousness, a chaos of paronomasia, sound-links, ambiguous sense-links, and memory-links very like that of the dream. Out of this the distinctively lyrical union of sound and sense emerges. (p. 271-2)

Urmson (1977), suggesting the similarities between print and spoken language, proposes that literary style itself is commonly criticized in terms of sounds:

even in the case of works which would not normally be read aloud it is a commonplace to speak of assonance, dissonance, sonority, rhythm . . . We criticize the writing in terms of how it would sound, if it were spoken. (pp. 339-40)

Even though the roots of aesthetic language can be perceived to exist in mere words and bare sounds themselves, it is more usual to think of literature as some form of connected discourse, such as a poem, novel or essay.

#### A. Importance

Many would argue that referential language, as far as it can be considered an inherent textual quality, is more

important than aesthetic language. Taxonomies of human goals generally do not include aesthetic needs (McDougall, 1933; Murray, 1938; Maslow, 1943, 1970<sup>1</sup>; McClelland, Atkinson, Clark and Lowell, 1953; Vroom, 1964; Ford and Nichols, 1987). The suggestion is that it may be possible to survive comfortably without ever being aware of the beauty of language:

we face the prospect that the use of anything but immediately functional or diversional texts (newspapers, magazines instructions and the like) may lose currency in our society. (De Beaugrande, 1988a, p. 1)

Like the study of Latin and Greek, a self-conscious awareness of the beauty of language seems to be relegated almost exclusively to the pedagogical domain. However, it is perhaps especially here where some argue that the notion of "aesthetics" has recently undergone serious assault. In his War against the intellect (1989), Peter Shaw argues that on contemporary university campuses,

. . . (literary works) are being subjected to a system of interpretation that is extinguishing their spirit quite as effectually as if they were again literally under assault by Vandals and Goths. (p. 167)

However, others such as Falck (1990) insist on the continuing ontological necessity of an aesthetic language that "gives us our purest and most essential way of grasping reality or truth" (p. xii).

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<sup>1</sup> Maslow posits but does not include categories of aesthetic needs in his hierarchy.



## B. Characteristics

Literature, considered in its meaning as aesthetic language, refers to the intrinsic beauty of written text. Theories of aesthetics are diverse. The simplest is the hedonistic idea that beauty is inherent in that written language which merely gives pleasure. This idea is derived from Santayana's aesthetics, described in his (1896) The Sense of beauty, which proposes that aesthetic value is "taken as intrinsic pleasure or the liking of a thing for itself, as against liking it as a means to an end" (Wiener, 1973, p. 151). Thus, literature which does no more than please could be considered "aesthetic". Examples would be rock lyrics, cartoon dialogue, and clever advertising slogans. A different philosophy of aesthetic language is derived from Kant. He stresses a "higher" type of pleasure: disinterested, universal, necessary in a uniquely specified way, and one which gives the effect of being purposeful without actually satisfying a purpose (Wiener, p. 152). Other theories of aesthetics include Croce's emphasis on the intuition of quality and William James' aesthetics of fusion, which proposes that, like the taste of lemonade, the aesthetic quality lies in the fusion of separate elements which, in isolation, are commonplace. Although there is now no single dominant theory of general aesthetic value, the various conceptions have similar features, each holding as dominant features that others would accept only as

subordinate. The most popular conception of the beautiful in literary and pedagogical domains seems to be more closely related to Kant than to Santayana. "Good literature" is that text which requires effort:

our perception of what is aesthetic and what is not . . . is radically molded by our values . . . the arousal boost we derive from a work judged to be art is therefore larger and more rewarding than that from one judged to be kitsch. (Nell, 1988a, p. 8.)

Similarly, Davis (1973) observes,

to perceive more richly . . . and think more vigorously . . . we must have recourse to the products of minds superior to our own . . . which must initially bring more pain than pleasure . . . This pain is one of the symptoms by which the critic recognizes great writing. (p. 21)

The current idea of literature as aesthetic artifact, rather than merely printed matter, has a long history. It began with Aristotle's suggestion that poetry offers special insight because it describes "a kind of thing that might be" rather than a "thing that has been". Ransom (1941), too, stresses the ontological dimension of aesthetic rather than ordinary language:

Poetry intends to recover the denser and more refractory original world which we know loosely through our perceptions and memories. By this supposition it is a kind of knowledge which is radically or ontologically distinct. (p. 281)

The concept of literature as aesthetic artifact, distinguished from other printed matter, is closely related to the idea of literature as referring more to the world of imagination rather than "reality". Pratt (1977) points out

that this distinction has its modern beginnings in the early decades of the twentieth century with a growing awareness of distinctions among literary, scientific and ordinary languages (pp. 128-9).

She explains that in the twenties and thirties, the Russian Formalists, the New Critics (led by I.A. Richards), and the Prague School (led by Roman Jakobson), all emphasized the concept of "literature" as a superior use of language:

No word in the poem (I mean here every "and" or "the") is identical with the same-sounding word in common use and conversation . . . the constellation it occupies in verse or artistic prose, changes it to the core of its nature, renders it useless, unserviceable for mere everyday use, untouchable and permanent. (Rilke, 1922, p. 326, in Pratt, 1977, emphasis mine)

This special quality of poetic as distinct from ordinary language resulted in a dichotomy of non-literary and literary language: "it has either a communicative function . . . or a poetic function." (Cercle Linguistique de Prague, 1929, p. 14, Pratt's 1977 translation, p. xvii). Nell (1988a) points out the ensuing implication of such a view:

the ultimate test of critical competence is to be able to distinguish reliably between literary and non-literary works (or between art and fakes) on textual grounds alone. (p. 41, emphasis mine)

Pratt cites reasons for the impossibility of this feat by pointing out the similarities between traditional literary conventions and oral language narratives of personal experience using Labov's (1972) research on oral narrative of personal experience. She illustrates, with examples of

specific literary works, that these two different uses of language, oral narrative and literature, are formally and functionally very much alike:

all the problems of coherence, chronology, causality, foregrounding, plausibility, selection of detail, tense, point of view, and emotional intensity exist for the natural narrator just as they do for the novelist, and they are confronted and solved (with greater or lesser success) by speakers of the language every day. (pp. 66-7)

She concludes with the observation that "the formal similarities between natural and literary narrative [must] derive from the fact that at some level of analysis, they are utterances of the same type" (p. 69).

De Beaugrande (1988a) also points out that the idea that literature has distinctive features that deviate from "ordinary language"

. . . presupposes an objectified text with independently given features . . . no provision (in this premise) is made for . . . "found poems" or for using ostensibly literary features in other types such as advertising and political oratory. (p. 7)

The argument that literature is intrinsically aesthetic is, as has been mentioned, closely related to the third major dictionary conception of literature as fictional rather than factual writing. Reichart (1981) states that

when a reader assumes a text to be a literary work, this includes the negative assumption that it is not to be construed as serving any of the normal, goal-directed functions of language . . . we assume that the statements in a literary work have lost their assertive function. (p. 66)

In fictional writing, he proposes, the referential value is diminished. The connotative, rather than the explicit meaning, is the focus of attention for both reader and writer. Ryan (1980) specifies two weaknesses in the distinction:

- 1) if we view fiction as discourse concerning invented events, we will be unable to account for the presence in fictional works of statements describing accurately real world states of affairs.
- 2) the above definition (i.e. that "a fiction is a statement that refers to a made up event that has been invented or feigned rather than having actually happened") fails to make a distinction between fiction on the one hand and other types of utterances concerning alternate worlds such as reports of dreams, philosophical examples and counterfactuals. (p. 404)

In addition, many would argue that the truth factor is equally important in narrative and exposition. Nell (1988a) observes:

the most striking evidence that fact (exposition) grips us as strongly as fiction is the self-evident but almost entirely unremarked phenomenon that the way we lose ourselves in a newspaper (especially when a big story runs: the assassination of a president or a great pollution threat) cannot be distinguished from the way we lose ourselves in a novel. (p. 51)<sup>2</sup>

Examples of blurred categories come easily to mind. A first is Truman Capote's (1962) nonfictional novel, In cold blood: a true account of a multiple murder and its consequences. A second is Michael Herr's (1990) Walter Winchell: a novel, "a biography in the form of a screenplay

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<sup>2</sup>This suggestion is supported by Langer's (1989) recent study with exposition and narrative.

that calls itself a novel (Rascoe, 1990, p. 12). A third example is Dennis McFarland's (1990) Music Room which, "constructed like a detective story . . . is nevertheless an opposite of that genre" (Humphreys, 1990, p. 11). It thus follows that "(w)e have no real standards to distinguish a verbal structure that is literary from one that is not" (Northrop Frye, 1957, p. 303). Further, it would seem that "any text . . . can be read either way (that is, efferently, for information, or aesthetically, for pleasure)" (Rosenblatt, 1985, p. 269). Why then, does the belief persist that a canon of literary works is readily identifiable by its intrinsic excellence? This problem will be approached first from a social, then from an individual perspective.

As concerns the communal valorization of "literature", Richard Ohman (1971) observes that

our readiness to discover and dwell on the implicit meanings in literary works - and to judge them important - is a consequence of our knowing them to ~~be~~ literary works, rather than that which tells us they are such. (p. 6).

Thus, as Pratt (1977) points out, the body of texts considered to be literary works have in common the following issues: 1) they were composed with the idea of being published; 2) they are thus deliberative and polished; and finally, 3) they have passed through "a process of selection carried out by specialists" who screen out poorer works in order to "ensure the distribution and preservation of the more successful" (p. 118). The published work as physical

object "symbolizes this selection and ratification procedure" (p. 118).

Van Rees (1987) suggests that the judgment that a text is of sufficient aesthetic quality to be judged as "literary" is arrived at by consensus among those who have published in the highest-ranking journals. Once a growing number of analyses by these "agents of consecration" (p. 282) agree about the aesthetic value of a given literary work, Van Rees points out that:

by continuously adding to existing comments, essayists and academics may subsequently appear to be refining previous interpretations and to be adducing more precise grounds in support of the specific value they believe to be attributable to the works that form part of this canon. (p. 280)

Explicit criteria of literary merit are not easily measurable. For example, Fiedler (1984) describes a literary work as

at best a skilful and sophisticated arrangement of words, a pleasantly intricate web of sensibility, which is judged good or bad in terms of how complex and various though finally unified, in its abstract pattern. (p. 155)

Beardsley (1970) offers similar criteria:

. . . a poem must bring together some different meanings and include elements of contrast or opposition or tension. It must unify them so that its tension is contained within a whole that possesses a notable degree of integrity and independence. And it must take on, as a whole, a pervasive quality, or set of qualities, which I call regional qualities: its melancholy, its wit, its vigour, its vitality, etc. The more complexity it infolds, the more thoroughly it is unified, the more intense its qualities, the better it is as a poem. (p. 91)

Van Rees (1987) argues that the criteria for admittance into the prestigious interpretive community are numerous and stringent. However, Nell's (1988a) study (pp. 148-66) reveals the surprisingly similar judgments of literary merit and preference rankings among critics, librarians and average readers. These results suggests that perhaps "professional critics are not the possessors of an arcane right . . . , (instead) their judgments of literary excellence are closely emulated by lay readers" (p. 160). In addition, his study (supported by Foster, 1936 and Schmidt, 1980) suggests that for critics, librarians and average readers, not only are merit and difficulty closely related, but these qualities correlate negatively with reading preference. That is, in support of Kant's aesthetic theory, the more difficult the literary work, the greater will be the perception, among both critics and lay readers, of its literary merit and the less readers will voluntarily choose to read it. The idea that "literature is an ideal form of communication because it has the most powerful examples of verbal skill" (Duncan, 1953, p. 93), is thus a tautology. As a community of readers, we revere that which has been considered special.

However, the conception of literature as aesthetic artifact is also an individual as well as a public conception. What characteristics identify literature as



aesthetic in a personal sense? Bogdan (1990a) points out that in order to undergo the literary experience,

the reader must first **see** the literary object, and in order for that to happen, she or he must be able to distinguish it as itself, as something that is not "life": literary structure, then becomes both the means of separating literature from life and of conjoining literature to life once that separateness has first been discerned through what we call aesthetic distance. (p. 117)

Literature thus provides the cushioning of experience: "knowledge accrues from our perception of it as objectified 'out there'" (Bogdan 1990a, p. 117). This cushioning from personal concerns is perhaps what constitutes both the inspirational and healing power of literature in a personal rather than communal sense.

## VI. Summary

The discussion of foundation conceptions of literature began with a summary of the etymology of "literature". It then moved to an exploration of contemporary dictionary meanings. There were three primary dictionary meanings: printed matter, the body of great writings of a culture, and fictional works. The cultural importance of literature as print was discussed. Next, the argument was made for the idea of literature as an intrinsically-identifiable aesthetic artifact. This argument was then contrasted with the idea of the aesthetics of literature being a way of reading, in addition to, or even instead of, a way of writing.

## VII. Conclusion

Underlying this discussion was the idea of an objective or subjective reality: the question of whether literature is "found" or "made" by the reader (Fish, 1980, p. 11). These problems are implicit in the researcher's selection of the literature to be used with his subjects. If a researcher considers literature to be "found", he may tend to select examples of literature which are conventionally revered, such as the works of major nineteenth century poets. If the researcher considers literature to be "made", rather than found, he may select examples of literature which are less canonical.

In any case, even if he considers only dictionary meanings of the concept, the choices of the researcher are many. He can use any one of the following as "literature": 1) single printed words, since they are the fundamental building blocks of literature in all of its senses; 2) any "excellent" writing, regardless of genre; 3) any connected discourse, regardless of quality or genre; or 4) fictional rather than factual material. A final possible option goes beyond foundation or dictionary meanings. The researcher also has the choice of disregarding dictionary meanings and using other interpretations of the concept such as performance, oral stories and film.

## CHAPTER THREE

## FOUNDATION CONCEPTIONS OF "RESPONSE TO LITERATURE"

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## I. Introduction

This chapter constitutes the second perspective from which research conceptions of response to literature will be examined. It centres on the perception of literature less as an external physical artifact and more as a concept in the mind of the reader, allowing for the transience of such a distinction.

## II. Overview

Like the exploration of foundation conceptions of literature, the discussion of conceptions of response to literature begins with dictionary definitions of "response". This is followed by an overview of the prevalent forms of response to literature in daily life. The central emphasis of the chapter follows: a theoretical description of the major conceptions of response to literature.

Although there are numerous continua on which to examine the research, a central one seems to be the respective importance accorded the text, the reader and the response itself. These three components constitute different points of emphasis on the reader-text continuum: text-oriented, reader-oriented, and response-oriented. An example of each orientation or focus will be illustrated by arguments commonly associated with critical schools which emphasize the text, the reader or the transaction of response itself. The chapter closes with a summary and conclusions concerning possible research choices.

## III. "Response": dictionary meaning

### A. Historical

The Oxford English Dictionary (1989) states that the word "response" was used first in the simple sense of "an answer; a reply" in about 1300: "In a chambre fast iloke alle hi were ibroust. That hi ne scholde ascaie nost er hi

response sede". It was used for the first time explicitly as opposed to a stimulus by J. B. Watson (1919) in his Psychology: "having now examined at some length into the general nature of both stimulus and response, we should be prepared to understand the object of a psychological experiment". In addition, response has ecclesiastical, musical, psychological and even recreational overtones. The word's most constant sense is an answer to some question or stimulus.

#### B. Contemporary meaning

The Oxford English Dictionary (1989) defines

"response" in the following ways:

1. a. an answer; a reply. b. an action or feeling which answers to some stimulus or influence; spec. in psychol. (frequently opposed to stimulus); an observable reaction to some specific stimulus or situation; the fact of such reaction. c. the way in which an apparatus responds to a stimulus or ranged stimulus. d. Bridge. a reply to a partner's opening (or subsequent) bid.
2. Eccl. a=responsory. b. a part of the liturgy said or sung by the congregation in reply to the priest.
3. an oracular answer.
4. Mus. 'In a fugue, the repetition of the given subject by another part'.
5. pl=responsion.
6. attrib. and comb.; as response function, rate; esp. in psychol., as response bias, movement, pattern, probability, set; response-contingent adj.; response time. Electr., the time taken for a circuit or measuring device, when subjected to a change in input signal, to its change in state by a specified fraction of its total response to that change.

The Random House Dictionary of the English Language

(1987) defines "response" as:

1. an answer or reply, as in words or in some action. 2 (Biol.) any behavior of a living organism that results from an external or internal stimulus. 3.(Eccles.) a. a verse, sentence, phrase, or word said or sung by the choir or congregation in reply to the officiant. b. responsory. 4. (Bridge.) a bid based on an evaluation of one's hand relative to the previous bid of one's partner.

The World Book Dictionary (1987) defines it as:

1. an answer by word or act; 2. the words said or sung by the congregation in answer to the minister; 3. the reaction of body or mind to a stimulus.

Thus, the phrase "response to literature", based on the conventional dictionary definition of response, encompasses any and all aspects of what happens to a person when she or he reads literature. The discussion will now turn to specific definitions of response to literature used by educators.

Chabot (1985), in Cooper's Researching response to literature and the teaching of literature, emphasizes the vast range of the concept of "response to literature":

it is necessary to ground understanding of the reading or interpretive process in a conception of the entire **interpretive situation**, that is in the full interplay between reader and book, between any subject and its object. (p. 24)

Cooper (1985), similarly, defines "response to literature" as the full complexity of the reading process, from decoding to inference, as well as the particular demands of the uniquely aesthetic, globally contextualized reading which fictional literature requires. (p. xi)

Purves (1971) defines the phrase as referring to: "the perceptual, cognitive, affective and psychomotor behaviours

and the reading and hearing of a work, as well as watching one" (p. 708). He continues:

response begins the moment one first confronts the work and ends - well, in some cases it ends only when the individual dies. It includes reading, thinking, feeling, and acting in some relation to the stimulus of the literary work . . . (p. 708)

Acknowledging the difficulty of measuring neural and unconscious psychological processes involved in the response of the reader, Purves distinguishes between "response" and "expressed response": "if response cannot be wholly and directly measured or taught, its articulation can be" (p. 709). The next section treats response to literature at a fundamental level of articulation: the ability to make sound-symbol correspondence.

#### IV. Importance of literacy

As was mentioned in Chapter Two, the ability to read or respond to printed letters is an increasing priority. Of the past three to four decades, Tilak (1989) reports:

the world has experienced an education explosion . . . world enrolments in all levels of education, from the primary to the tertiary, expanded from about 250 million in 1950 to 906 million in 1985 . . . More than half of the population of the age group 6-24 in the world are presently in schools and colleges . . . between 1960 and 1985 . . . adult literates in the world doubled from 1,134 million to 2,314 million . . . (p. 1)

Of his review of current research, Tilak concludes that education (and the emphasis is on primary education or basic literacy) is the key to a country's prosperity. Education

contributes significantly to economic growth; as well, it is significant in reducing poverty (p. 60). This is suggested in individual as well as national survival. Keefer (1990) suggests:

That very abstract term, literacy, has the connotation of bringing light into darkness, of educating millions in the Third World - and thousands in our own country - who live impoverished and oppressed lives, deprived of the skills that would allow them to find the work and to assert the rights that might give them the chance for a decent and dignified life - or for life at all. (p. 119)

And Bruce (1990) observes:

it is as hard . . . to imagine what it's like to be illiterate as it is to imagine what it's like to be mute, blind, and deaf. Being illiterate must be life imprisonment in a dark hole. (p. 21)

The importance of being able to read and write is compounded by the fact that literacy is a criterion with increasingly higher standards. In Victorian England, literacy was defined as "the ability to sign the marriage register"<sup>1</sup> (Altick, 1957, p. 169). As recently as 1950, UNESCO defined literacy as no more than the "ability to read and write one's own name" (UNESCO, 1957). The current criterion is no less than a person "who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life" (UNESCO, 1983). In addition, Applebee, Langer and Mullis (1987) suggest that this criterion for minimum survival is today

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<sup>1</sup>Altick (1957) explains that Victorians, not proud of the level of literacy, proposed that the large number of "x" signatures on the marriage register revealed, not genuine illiteracy, but merely apprehension about the impending commitment.



expanding to include also: "the ability to reason effectively" (pp. 7-8).

It would be unusual if the cultural importance of literacy had no effect on contemporary research conceptions of the responses of adults and college students to literature, especially since much of the research is concerned with a pivotal segment of society, the college student. This age group marks both the official end of childhood and the beginning of adulthood. It signifies the end of mandatory education and usually, the beginning of preparation for a career. It would seem that research on response to literature with adults and college students should represent the pinnacle of success in literacy.

#### A. "Response to literature" in daily life

Although it is important to remember that articulation is the primary pedagogical assurance of literacy, this is not the most conventional form of response in daily adult life. Beginning with the idea of literature as referring to all printed matter, response to literature in daily life is usually inarticulate. The words on a cereal box, print on billboards and unbidden graffiti are often read without comment, or even recognized without accompanying thought.

A second type of inarticulate response refers to what Rosenblatt calls "efferent" and what Hunt and Vipond classify as "information" reading: the reading of cooking directions,

application forms, library catalogues, assignment directions, and traffic signs.

A third type of response in daily life, also inarticulate, refers to aesthetic or pleasure reading. Nell (1988a) suggests that it is solely the lack of expressed response which distinguishes pleasure from work reading:

. . . the moment evaluative demands intrude, as in the case of an absorbed reader suddenly told that he or she is to produce a critical review of the book, ludic reading, in obedience to a variety of mechanisms (Apter, 1979; Deci, 1976), at once becomes work reading: the response demand triggers a perceived effortfulness. (p. 75, emphasis mine)

Thus, he suggests that once a reader knows that a response is expected, the pleasure of reading suddenly becomes work.

Bogdan (1986) elaborates a different view of response to literature which, if not characteristic of most response in daily life, is at least beyond pedagogy. It is the highest type of aesthetic response, "stasis":

. . . an intensely personal and private experience best expressed by silence, it [stasis] is usually marked by a recession of cognitive faculties and a near paralysis of linguistic powers . . . it may be defined as that ideal state of imaginative identity with the literary object, typified by the fusion of intellect and emotion, which literature teachers always aim at but only rarely succeed in triggering. (p. 52)

In a moderate statement which offers a balance between these two latter examples, Rosenblatt (1978), who generally stresses the value of expressed response, also acknowledges the worth of inarticulate reading of "popular" materials. She refers to

the mass-production of popular texts which make few demands on their readers and whose readers make few demands on the texts or on themselves . . . it is probably among these readers that the freest, most honest and most personal literary transactions occur. (p. 140, emphasis mine)

Thus inarticulation is characteristic of both the special response of heightened literary insight as well the bulk of non-pedagogical reading. However, the only proof of literacy is a response which is articulated through a demonstration or test. An initial criterion of pedagogical conceptions of response to literature is that the response be articulate. Hansson (1985) underlines the challenges:

The meaning of a work may be vividly present in our response, but the words to describe the meaning are not available, or they are felt to be insufficient or partly misleading. The expressed response is not an adequate representation of the clearly felt or grasped response. (p. 212)

#### V. Pedagogical "response to literature": mechanistic and new paradigm views

Mechanistic and new paradigm world views, deriving from scientific theories are the foundation from which pedagogical theories of response to literature derive. The discussion will turn briefly to these influential scientific theories.

Contemporary world views, supported by the thinking of Descartes and Newton, generally emphasize a mechanistic view of reality. Mechanism is defined as "the view that all natural processes are explicable in terms of Newtonian

mechanics" (Webster's Dictionary, 1980). Capra (1988)

explains:

in Newtonian mechanics all physical phenomena are reduced to the motion of material particles, caused by their mutual attraction, that is, by the force of gravity . . . material objects moved, and were thought to account for all changes observed in the physical world . . . the mechanistic view of nature is . . . closely related to a rigorous determinism, with the giant cosmic machine completely causal and determinate. All that happened had a definite cause and gave rise to a definite effect . . . (p. 66)

Theories resulting from three scientific experiments at the beginning of the century (Einstein's general theory of relativity, 1915; Bohr's quantum mechanics, 1913; Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, 1927) offered scientific evidence to challenge the prevailing common-sense world views. Bleich (1978) emphasizes that "in each case (i. e. the formulations of Einstein, Bohr, and Heisenberg) the role of the observer is paramount" (p. 18). Bohm (1986), from the area of theoretical physics, describes the basic features of quantum mechanics which contradict mechanism:

1. One is that movement, energy and momentum are no longer continuous as classical physics says . . . all energy is transferred in discrete quanta that are not analyzable. This already implies the indivisibility of the universe because all parts of the universe are interconnected by quanta that cannot be divided.
2. It says that everything is both wave-like and particle-like . . . according to the experimental environment. So it is rather like an organism whose basic characteristics depend on the environment, rather than like a fixed mechanical system.
3. There is another quality of wholeness in quantum theory due to a peculiar connection of distant things called non-locality, which means that things that are far from each other can be strongly connected. They are not

necessarily connected by things that are physically close to them. (p. 7)

Thus, although not proposing a viewpoint which was entirely new<sup>2</sup>, discoveries in science which defied logical explanation began to attract attention in diverse areas. Dewey and Bentley (1949), in Knowing and the known, derive philosophical implications from these scientific experiments. They use the word "transactional" to describe the "interrelationship between the knower and what is known" (p. 128). Rosenblatt (1978) borrows their term to describe a new way of thinking about reading, the Transactive or Organic orientation of response to literature. Bleich (1978) also explores the implications of scientific discovery. He mentions specifically the work of Kuhn, Einstein, Bohr and Heisenberg. He proposes epistemological implications leading to a subjective paradigm which extend to the area of response to literature. The New Critics, by comparison with these others, seem to hold firmly to the idea of a mechanistic view of the reading experience, in which there is a clear boundary between text and reader.

Leading from these discussions, conventional pedagogical conceptions of articulated response to literature can be considered to centre around three general emphases: 1)

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<sup>2</sup>Capra (1988) points out that "before 1500 the dominant world view in Europe, as well as in most other civilizations, was organic. . . the scientific framework of the organic world view rested on two authorities--Aristotle and the Church" (p. 53).

Objective or New Critical, which focuses on a reality "out there", in the text; 2) Subjective or Psychoanalytic, which focuses on a reality "inside", in the reader; and 3) Transactive or Organic, which focuses on the moment of response itself, "the oscillating dynamics of reading" between external and internal reality (Straw and Bogdan, 1990). These orientations are generally recognized as distinct perspectives of "response to literature" (Purves, 1985; Rosenblatt, 1978; Probst, 1989 [New Critical]; Chabot, 1985 [Psychoanalytic]. It should also be noted that each of these general orientations towards the reading experience is based on theory-laden observations of real readers. Although recognizably distinct, and often used as glosses on each other, these differing orientations share many features, which are generally overlooked. The major components to be discussed are those of: 1) the author; 2) the text; 3) the reader; and 4) the response situation.

#### A. Text-orientation: associated critical school

The text-oriented view of response to literature is often associated with names such as Brooks, Warren, Wellek, Ransom (Straw, 1990). The I.A. Richards of (1929) Practical criticism is often included. New Criticism is rooted in that aspect of the Cartesian view which conceives of human knowledge as a progression toward absolute truth. Culler (1988) dates New Criticism as originating from 1920,

in an argument that "poetry is not the expression of personality but the escape from personality" in T.S. Eliot's The sacred wood, and as a conservative Southern resistance to values associated with science, industrialism and urbanization. (p. 9)

Culler suggests that "Eliot's early criticism provided a theory of poetry which could be linked with the close analysis of verbal texture practised by I.A. Richards" (p. 10). However, Purves (1985) specifies important distinctions between the thinking of Richards (1929) and Wellek and Warren (1956), the latter authors asserting "that the poem is a 'structure' of norms which can be approximated by the reader-critic, but not fully apprehended" (p. 54).

The popularity of this text-oriented approach during the late twenties arose primarily in opposition to both the prevailing emphases on impressionistic and biographical criticism as well as an increasing faith in the language and truth of science<sup>3</sup>.

Hunt (1990) observes the paradox that although the New Critics were attempting to offer a balance and thus were opposed to a "scientific-technological world view", their approach to literature is solidly positivist "in (the) assumption that there is an exterior, theoretically knowable "truth" (the text) out there" (p. 100, emphasis in original).

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<sup>3</sup>The characteristically defensive attitude is suggested even in Tate's Preface to the (1942) Language of poetry: "The symposium comes to a unanimous decision on . . . the main question: that poetry, although it is not science, is not nonsense" (p. viii).

The New Critics attempted to balance prevailing views by emphasizing the rational rather than emotional.

Rosenblatt (1978) sees Wellek and Warren's (1949)

Theory of literature as contributing

probably the clearest and most influential theoretical framework for concentration on "the poem itself" as against its study as a document in literary or social history. (p. 103-4)

"Emphasis should be kept on the poem", Wellek and Warren proposed (p. xi). Rosenblatt (1978) describes this orientation as "dominated by the notion of something non-personal, something apart from particular readers, which 'is' the poem" (p. 104). Probst (1989) remarks of New Critical views: "perhaps the most significant of these is the notion that the literary work sets the standard by which a reading may be judged" (p. 2). In addition, Rosenblatt (1978) describes the New Critical "concern for formal values", "analytic skills", "notion of poem-as-object, and the neglect of both author and reader" (p. xii).

#### 1. Concept of the author

For the New Critic, the author is the shadow behind the text. Straw (1990) goes even further in his observation of the New Critical viewpoint. The author is "not only invisible, but nonexistent" (p. 56). He points out that contributors to New Critical thought such as Wimsatt and



Beardsley, criticize those who attribute the meaning of a work to "the intention of the author" (p. 56).

Gerber (1967) describes the New Critical focus on the text, apart from the author:

We are to keep away from the author because we must remember that the author is only playing a role, and so the author is not really the author. We are to forget our own experience because the action of the narrative is probable or improbable only in terms of the narrative itself. (p. 355)

E.D. Hirsch (1967) condemns the New Critics for their "banishment of the author" (p. 1). Thus the New Criticism, as an illustration of a text-oriented approach of response to literature, centres on the importance of the text rather than the author.

## 2. Concept of literature

For the New Critics, literature often takes the form of poetry. Ransom (1941) suggests that "poetry intends to recover the denser and more refractory original world which we know loosely through our perceptions and memories" (p. 281). Correspondingly, "the theory and criticism of poetry" are far superior "in both quantity and quality" to that of prose, for example, the novel (Wellek and Warren, 1956, p. 212). For the New Critics, the text looms larger than poet or reader: "the real poem must be conceived as a structure of norms, realized only partially in the actual experience of

its many readers" (Wellek and Warren, 1956, p. 150). Hunt (1990) observes that for New Critics,

the individual reactions of actual readers are of little interest . . . to study such responses . . . would be to abandon literature in favor of psychology. (p. 99)

A final characteristic of the New Critical approach to literature concerns the nature of the text itself. Since texts are entities with fixed qualities, there is a hierarchy of texts with a canon at the top.

### 3. Concept of response

During the twenties, New Critics seemed to posit the importance of the reader in their proposal that the reader interpret the text directly rather than through the intermediary of critics. However, seen in light of subsequent orientations, the emphasis is decidedly on the text itself.

For the New Critics, the function of reading literature is to give "pleasure in a higher kind of activity, that is, non-acquisitive contemplation" accompanied by a "pleasurable seriousness" of "perception" (Wellek and Warren, 1956, p. 31). Thus, this text-based "pleasure" is arrived at by hard work.

The New Critic places cognition over affect; external over internal reality. Wimsatt and Beardsley (1949) emphasize a text-orientation of response in their observation that

the Affective Fallacy is a confusion between the poem and its results . . . It begins by trying to derive the standard of criticism from the psychological effects of

the poem and ends in impressionism and relativism. (p. 345)

Straw (1990) explains the text-based emphasis of the New Critics in his observation that they were not only "unconcerned about the affective effect" of the literary work, but they also believed that "the reader should not be concerned with the emotional effect of the poem or the literary work" (p. 56). Jones (1977) observes:

The New Criticism . . . saw the ideal reader as a sort of Lockean tabula rasa to whom the text, upon careful scrutiny, revealed its complexities. Interpretation then became essentially a discovery of meanings already encoded in the text. (p. 205)

Purves (1985) comments that in this perspective:

one is, in sum, examining error and its causes . . . researchers may legitimately use such techniques as the rating of papers or interviews or multiple-choice tests on a text, and the attendant criterion-based modes of analysis. (p. 55)

Response, for the New Critic, is more often than not a test of the reader's ability. The answer will be right only to the extent that it approximates a full interpretation of the meaning in the text. Thus, the focus of response is on convergent, public interpretations, rather than divergent, more subjective impressions. Gerber (1967) points out that:

Paradoxically, while formal analysis presumably requires the reader to concentrate upon the literary text to the virtual exclusion of other considerations, it at the same time sets up a cordon sanitaire between the reader and the work that distances the work almost as successfully as the historical approach. In fact it is the basic theory of the New Criticism, that literature should be kept separate from life. (p. 354)

For the New Critics, the reader's response is judged against the standards set by the poem. However, the subjective roots are unmasked in practice. Since the poem can not actually "speak", New Critics rely on the evaluations of literary critics or teachers to speak for the poem. Not surprisingly, and certainly not disappointingly for the critic and teacher, the response of the average reader, or the student, is often found to be lacking in the general hierarchy of responses.

#### B. Reader-orientation: associated critical school

The reader-based orientation of response to literature is concerned with psychological aspects of reading literature. Jones' (1949) work on Hamlet which was first published in 1910 under the title, "The Oedipus complex as an explanation of Hamlet's mystery", was an early foundation for the connection between psychological theory of Freud and literature. Jones' works explored the relation between the psychology of the writer and his fictional characters. Jones went "through the work to the mind of the writer, treating the text as if it were an account of a fantasy" (Purves, 1985, p. 54).

During the fifties, Simon Lesser made a major contribution to a reader-oriented approach to literature. Lesser's (1957) Fiction and the unconscious proposes that "fiction speaks to us in a language which effortlessly

conceals many things from conscious awareness at the same time that it communicates them to the unconscious with extraordinary vividness" (p. 175). He suggests that in reading, "we **unconsciously** understand at least some of a story's secret significance; to some extent our enjoyment is a product of this understanding" (p. 15). Goldsmith (1979) observes that in this work, Lesser

attempted to account for the psychological appeal of fiction based on the interaction between form and content (which he insisted are really inseparable but which he separated in his study for the sake of convenience) and the psychological needs and conflicts of the reader. (p. 78)

Lesser explores fundamental aspects of the relationship between psychology and literature. These include the issues of why fictional conflict is pleasurable, the function of form in giving pleasure, and the mithridatic effect of art. He suggests that the reading of great literature is distinguished by the temporary experience of "a certain amount of anxiety, just as a vaccination gives us a small and controlled case of the disease it is meant to prevent" (Lesser, 1957, p. 260). Purves (1985) explains that later Freudians such as Norman Holland (1968) focused more centrally on the reader, "taking the text as a relatively neutral phenomenon, a Rorschach blot to which the reader reacted according to the reader's ego-structure" (p. 54). An extreme of this position, Purves proposes, is suggested by Berkeley in his (1774) Siris, which theorized that "natural

phenomena are only natural appearances. They are therefore such as we see and perceive them" (p. 140). All these theoretical approaches of response to literature are united in the focus on the personality of the reader or writer rather than on the work itself.

Subjective criticism provides an illustration of a reader-oriented approach to response to literature. This criticism is conventionally associated with names such as Bleich and Holland, (and sometimes Fish) as well as practices such as bibliotherapy and the use of literature in psychotherapy. Chabot (1985) remarks of this approach:

. . . [it] claims, or assumes that the processes it finds central to reading - whether they be termed "the subjective paradigm" or "DEFT" - are, in fact, definitive of human cognition in general. (p. 22)

Thus, where the text-oriented conception of response finds its centre of gravity in the text itself, the response of the reader-orientation, as represented by subjective criticism, focuses on the role of the personality in the reader's transaction with the text. Proponents of reader-orientations seem to emphasize that literary texts are perceived and understood in the same way as life itself. It is thus feeling rather than cognition which is fundamental. Bleich (1969) illustrates this emphasis:

. . . no matter who makes the critical judgment - no matter how impeccable his reputation for "objectivity" - there is an unarticulated emotional basis . . . (p. 30)

Further:

the most that a reader can do with the real object, the text, is to see it . . . discussion of the work must refer to the subjective synthesis of the reader and not to the reader's interaction with the text. (Bleich, 1978, p. 111)

### 1. Concept of the author

In the reader-oriented Subjective criticism, the author, like the reader, is a responder. Bleich (1969) makes the point that:

the text represents the author's **response** to his own personality, much as our meaning represents our response to our own personalities . . . (p. 40)

Thus, as concerns the literary transaction, the author, in creating the work, is reading his own personality just as the reader, in reading the work, is also reading his own personality. Both perspectives seem hermetically-sealed.

### 2. Concept of literature

In Subjective criticism, the text is a fluid entity, determined and controlled by the reader's response: "a literary work is not a fixed stimulus" (Holland, 1975a, p. 43). Rosenblatt (1985) describes the reader-based aspect of "Subjective criticism" in its perception of the text as "passive" or "secondary" (p. 36). Purves (1985) describes the Psychoanalytic conception of text "as a relatively neutral phenomenon, a Rorschach blot" (p. 54) and refers to its "fragility" (p. 56). Holland (1975a) explains:

stories . . . do not present unities - only so many marks on a page . . . it is readers who provide the unity . . .

there seems to be built into the mind a press towards unity. (p. 14)

In discussions of the reader-orientation, the text referred to is often narrative, in the form of short stories or plays, rather than poetry, which seems to be more characteristic of New Criticism. "Literature" for the Subjective critic is much like life itself: "an organic experience in the minds of men and a part of the great continuum of human experience" (Holland, 1973, p. 134).

### 3. Concept of the response

Feeling, in Subjective criticism, is more fundamental than cognition. Jones (1977) describes this change in perspectives (which he ascribes to Fish) from the New Critical orientation:

the epistemological order of the universe is reversed, and the reader is no longer a passive observer on the outside looking in, but rather the one who constitutes meaning in the interpretive process . . . (p. 205)

In the Subjective orientation of Berkeley (1744):

the response is individual and implies that one must first examine individuals, seeing them as particular cases. Little may connect one reader to another . . . few generalizations about readers may be made common because of the idiosyncratic world of each reader. (Purves, 1985, pp. 55-6)

Although founded more on the democratic leveller of feeling rather than skill-oriented cognition, the requirement of reflective response remains. As in the text-oriented approach, there is an implicit hierarchy. For example, in



Poems in persons (1973), one of Holland's criteria for subjects is that they be those who give evidence of having experienced a heightened sensitivity.

In addition, if the text-oriented view of response to literature conceived of reading as problem-solving with the text as the problem, the reader-orientation often sees reading as problem-solving with the reader, specifically his personality, as the problem. Bleich (1978) says that understanding a work of literature can be seen as an "expression of the personalities of the readers" (p. 292). A reader who is "learning more about literature" also "learns more of his own inner dynamics" (Holland, 1973, p. 134).

The reader-orientation of response to literature, consistent with its idea of the fluid, dynamic nature of the text, tends to focus on the process, rather than the product. Thus this orientation is distinguished from the text-orientation, which espouses the text as fixed reality and tends to focus more on the product rather than the process of response. Holland (1968) proposes:

. . . all of us, as we read, use the literary work to symbolize and finally, to replicate ourselves. We work out through the text our own characteristic patterns of desire and adaptation. We interact with the work, making it part of our own psychic economy and making ourselves part of the literary work - as we interpret it. (p. 816)

The idea of response, in the reader-orientation, is not to persuade others but to learn about oneself. And it involves effort:

this model of literature as transformation suggests that the inanimate literary work is not that, not a work in itself, but the occasion for some person's work (in the sense we give the word when we speak of the "dream-work" or creative "work"). (Holland, 1975a, p. 17)

Although the reader-orientation is conventionally conceived as personal and idiosyncratic, Holland (1975a) proposes this aspect as a means to a larger end which seems to encompass both consensus and "objectivity":

the fact we perceive the world in the terms of our own subjectivities has a positive, freeing side. It is only by being different from one another that we can have the experience of sharing . . . only by beginning with different subjectivities can we arrive at that consensus about experience that constitutes all the objectivity subjective beings can have . . . It is only by having our objectivity limited that we can have any objectivity whatever. (p. 231)

Bleich (1986b) also suggests the underlying social, rather than personal ends of reader-oriented response. He argues that readers gain "intersubjective knowledge" through participating in the "thought collective, or community in which the reading takes place" (p. 418). In addition, although Bleich criticises Holland for merely displacing the objectivity to the reader from the text and assuming that the reader's personality is fundamentally constant, De Beaugrande (1988a) points out that Bleich himself is guilty of a similar tendency:

Sometimes, he [Bleich] singles out students' "misinterpretations", remarking that "the 'real' parts of the poem got distorted", "exaggerated", or, "altogether misinterpreted" (p. 29, 30, 31). Other times, he decides the "poem" has been "perceived correctly" (p. 24) (all

the "poem" has been "perceived correctly" (p. 24) (all from Readings and Feelings). (p. 238)

Thus, the reader- and text-orientations of response to literature, as illustrated by proponents of Subjective criticism on the one hand, and by New Critics on the other, have several traits in common. The first is the idea of movement towards closure in response. For those who propose a text-orientation, response emanates from the text and is complete when the underlying unity is perceived in all its complexity. For reader-oriented critics, response flows from the reader's personality and is considered "correct" when the reader is filled with a "sense of plenitude, of a full understanding of a coherent text" (Belsey, 1980, p. 104). Second, the goal of the reader-orientation, like that of the text-orientation of response, is that literary response can alter, rather than merely reflects the personality of the reader; proper reading can make the reader a better person. Indeed, the commonality between the two opposing orientations is emphasized in Zaccaria and Moses' (1969) explanation of the goals of bibliotherapy:

. . . (to) help the individual assimilate the cultural pattern by acquainting him with the superstructure of attitudes and expectancies which he must erect on the basis of fundamental human impulses. (p. 10)

It would seem that even proponents of a text-orientation would agree with the statement. A final similarity, shared by both the reader- and the text-

nature of the reading event. The New Critics were the first to suggest that the reader interpret the work directly, and determine its meaning without the aid of critics and critical writings and historical and biographical knowledge of the period and the author. Similarly, reader-orientations propose the importance of the moment of response. Holland (1973) suggests:

these principles urge us toward a literary criticism that takes as its subject matter, not a text, but the transaction between a reader and a text . . . the true focus of criticism has to be the relation between oneself and the text . . . transactive criticism. (p. 247-8)

Thus, as well as noting the differences, it is also important to note the common ground shared in the ideas of what are often presented as opposing orientations.

#### C. Response-orientation: associated critical school

The response-orientation of "response to literature" is associated with labels such as "audience-oriented criticism" (Suleiman and Crosman, 1980; Johnson, 1988), "transactional criticism" (Rosenblatt, 1978) and "reader-response criticism" (Tompkins, 1980). It became popular in the early seventies, with Rosenblatt recognized as its first proponent (Suleiman, 1980; Tompkins, 1980). This focus on the response as distinguished from a focus on the text itself or the reader's personality, is also associated with names such as Fish (Leitch, 1977; Tompkins, 1977; Jones, 1977) and Iser. Hynds (1990) proposes that "reader-response criticism and research"

represents a move (which she ascribes to Rosenblatt) from text to reader which is more than simply relocating the source of meaning:

it represented a shifting focus from sources of misinterpretation in a literary work (a determinate model) to the variety of possible responses within any community of readers (an indeterminate model). (p. 241)

Relating early scientific ideas presented in Dewey and Bentley's (1949) Knowing and the Known to the reading of literature, Rosenblatt (1978) uses the term "transaction"<sup>7</sup> from Dewey and Bentley to characterize a new way of perceiving response to literature:

An element of the environment (the marks on a page) becomes a text by virtue of its particular relationship with the reader, who in turn is a reader by virtue of his relationship to the text. And at the same time the term **transaction**, as I use it, implies that the reader brings to the text a network of past experiences in literature and in life. (p. 35)

Even though the response-orientation appears to encompass both the text- and reader-orientations in a larger circle, Rosenblatt (1978) states that she calls this: "'transactional criticism', to differentiate it both from so-called 'objective criticism' and from self-exploiting narcissistic impressionism or subjectivity" (p. 174).

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<sup>7</sup>In Rosenblatt's (1938) earlier work, Literature as exploration, she had described the concept of "transaction" but used the word "interaction": "It is this interaction between the reader and the book - a process that may be compared to the interaction of two chemical compounds . . ." (pp. 33-34). In her later work this same concept is described as a "transaction".

The text-orientation of response to literature had posited the importance of the text. The reader-orientation emphasized the importance of the reader. It is the response-orientation, as illustrated by Rosenblatt, which proposes the importance of balance between the two<sup>8</sup>. Rosenblatt (1985a) states: "from the beginning, while affirming the importance of the neglected reader, I have insisted on the contribution of both reader and text" (p. 33). Purves and Beach (1972) suggest that she carries this balance into the classroom, in that her emphasis is: "first on the process of interaction between reader and text that results in interpretation, and second, on the teaching process" (Rosenblatt, 1985b, p. 34). Willinsky (1988) points out that Rosenblatt extends this balance to the "twin moral obligations of the democracy", beginning with the "affirmation of the sovereignty of the individual" and moving towards "an awareness of others" (p. 125). Rosenblatt (1990) agrees:

. . . teachers of language and literature have a crucial role to play as educators and citizens. We phrase our goals as fostering the growth of the capacity for personally meaningful, self-critical literary experience. The educational process that achieves this aim most effectively will serve a broader purpose, the nurturing of men and women capable of building a fully democratic society. (p. 107)

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<sup>8</sup>Indeed, Purves (1989) suggests that Rosenblatt herself, through her own writing in response to the needs of the time, has performed a balancing function: she states that her reason for emphasizing aesthetic over efferent reading was that it was being neglected in the schools.

The full articulation of the response-orientation is elaborated in Rosenblatt's (1978) The reader, the text, the poem, in which she proposes that the reading act can be thought of as an event. In this event, "as with the elements of an electric circuit, each component of the reading process functions by virtue of the presence of others" (p. 14). This view of reading as an event finds correspondences in the thinking of Fish (1971): "Meaning is an **event**, something that happens between the flow of print (or sound) and the actively mediating consciousness of a reader-hearer" (p. x.). Iser (1978) is another who speaks of the work "as being located somewhere between text and reader, actualized as a result of the interaction between the two" (p. 10). Like Rosenblatt, Iser also speaks of the relationship between reader and text as being a kind of self-regulating system (p. 67). However, Iser (1980) does not distinguish, as does Rosenblatt, between "evocation" and "response". He argues instead that readers, through a continuous process of "forming and overturning illusions, maintain a "wandering viewpoint" during the reading (Iser, 1980, p. 334). However for Rosenblatt (1980), the evocation is the point at which the "work" of response begins:

I have developed at length the thesis that **once there has indeed been a lived-through evocation from the text**, students can be led toward increasingly self-critical and sound interpretation and enhanced capacity to relate the experience to literary, historical or social contexts. (p. 395).

Purves (1989) observes that Rosenblatt conceives of literary reading not "so much as a form of therapy or escape as a set of mediating experiences which can be used to challenge the mind and its values" (p. 69).

Rosenblatt proposes the now-classic distinction between two different ways of responding to text: aesthetic and efferent readings. These have similarities with Kant's distinction between discourses with internal or external purposes. Valery (in Abrams, 1953) likens the distinction to either walking to a destination or dancing. During aesthetic reading, which is commonly associated with fictional pieces, the reader concentrates "on what he is living through during the reading event" (Rosenblatt, 1985, p. 38). What he is living through, becomes, in essence, the poem. During efferent reading, the reader is focusing "mainly on what the words refer to, on what is to be taken away from the transaction" (Rosenblatt, 1985, p. 38). Rosenblatt proposes that "any literary transaction will fall somewhere in the continuum between the aesthetic and the efferent poles" (Rosenblatt, 1985, p. 38). Purves (1989) agrees that these distinctions

appear to be poles between which a reader may oscillate during the course of reading a given text, and the sum total of reading may tend 'on average' to be seen as aesthetic or efferent. (p. 72)

Thus, as in the reader-orientation, it is not entirely the intrinsic qualities of the text, but in large part, often the



reader's stance which determines the nature of the response experience.

## 1. Concept of the author

Rosenblatt (1978) claims:

nothing that I have said or shall say denies that the text is the outward and visible result of an author's creative activity. Nor does it deny the importance of the author's text. (p. 15)

Response is thus conceived as a rhetorical act between author and reader: "the reader weaves his responses into an utterance sensed as a particular voice of a particular kind of persona" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 57).

## 2. Concept of literature

Rosenblatt proposes that the text, in the response orientation, is constructed during a stage called evocation, to distinguish it from the product, or the response. Rosenblatt (1985a) carefully distinguishes between "evocation" and "response", the first being "what we sense as the structured experience corresponding to the text" and the second, "the response to that evocation" (p. 39). In doing so, she thus combines the reader-oriented, Subjective emphasis on process with the text-oriented, New Critical emphasis on product. However, like the text-orientations of response, and rather unlike extremist views of reader-orientation which focus on process, the full response is not

achieved until the reading of the end of the text: "He had not fully read the first line until he had read the last, and interrelated them" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 10). Also, like the text-oriented New Critical approach, sometimes it seems that it is the text which ultimately limits and controls the response:

two prime criteria of validity as I understand it are that the reader's interpretation not be contradicted by any element of the text, and that nothing be projected for which there is no verbal basis. (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 115)

At other times, it seems that both text and reader are equally controlling:

the text presents limits or controls; the personality and culture brought by the reader constitute another type of limitation of the resultant synthesis, the lived-through work of art. (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 129)

In still other instances, the reader seems to triumph:

In the last analysis, it is always individual readers evaluating their own personal transactions with the text; we must recognize the uniqueness that derives from the individual's particular selecting-out of elements from the cultural milieu, and the special value-demands due to the unique moment in the reader's life in which the literary transaction takes place. (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 153)

Thus, the response-orientation, as illustrated by Rosenblatt, suggests the constantly changing emphasis of response.

### 3. Concept of response

Even though Rosenblatt claims that she had not written her 1978 work to "make the reader all-important" (p. xii),

she adds later: "meaning will emerge from a network of relationships among the things symbolized **as he senses them**" (emphasis mine, p. 11). But then again, "the text itself leads the reader toward this self-corrective process" (p. 11). Evocation is private: "the reading of any work of literature is, of necessity, an individual and unique occurrence involving the mind and emotions of a particular reader" (p. xii). But this reading also has communal dimensions: "perhaps we should consider the text as an even more general medium of communication **among readers**" (p. 146). As concerns the role of the critic among readers, she suggests that "no more than any other reader, however, can the critic read the text for us" (p. 147). In the next paragraph, however, she observes:

critics may reveal the text's potentialities for responses different - perhaps more sensitive and complex - from our own . . . the critic may have developed a fuller and more articulate awareness of the literary, ethical, social or philosophic concepts that he brings to the literary transaction, and may thus provide us with a basis for uncovering the assumptions underlying our own responses . . . in this way, critics may function . . . as teachers, stimulating us to grow in our own capacities to participate creatively and self-critically in literary transactions. (p. 148)

Thus, critics can lead the way, but again later, "even more perhaps than in the area of interpretation, evaluation offers no simple or static absolutes" (p. 153). Finally, "recognition of each reading as a personal event does not necessitate disregard for the more usual criteria of evaluation, predicated on some kind of consensus" (p. 160).

As is consistent with its moderating position, the context of response in the transactional or response-orientation is neither entirely safe nor completely threatening. The reader needs to be comfortable during the evocation of the work, but during the "response", he needs to be guided and challenged in his thinking: "[teachers] must help him [the student] to achieve for himself a rich and humane moral philosophy" (Rosenblatt, 1968, p. 23).

Response, in the transactional approach, thus seems to be characterized by balance. In order to retain this balance, however, the approach must acknowledge both the superiority of more experienced readers as well as, at the same time, affirming the equal value of every reader's response. An important aspect of this paradigm is its constant to and fro focus. Although never mentioned it seems to assume parallel processing in order for the reader to focus **mainly** or, in Rosenblatt's (1978) words: "centre directly on what he is living through" (p. 25), all the while being aware of the necessity of an ensuing response, of being accountable for one's fleeting impressions. It seems a challenge for the reader to "heighten(s) awareness of the words as signs with particular visual and auditory characteristics **and** as symbols" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 29). Slatoff (1970) offers a possible explanation in his description of the transaction:

The single most important thing to observe about our emotional transactions with a literary work is that they do not occur along single continua . . . Even the most limited reader is capable of maintaining several

simultaneous states of relation and feeling toward a work . . . We can share the experience of Gulliver, say, feel the experience, and at the same time view him with detachment and view with detachment the part of us that is identifying. (pp 38-9)

This response-orientation of the reading event is unique in its emphasis on both the reader and the text, united as in a chemical reaction but both retaining hegemony. Perhaps it can be best summed up in Rosenblatt's (1978) words:

Apprehension of what a poem is "about", what a novel "says" about the human meaning, the "sense" of the words, what they refer to "in the world" is an essential element, which cannot be dissociated from the affective impact on the reader, given an aesthetic orientation. (p. 46)

## VII. Summary

This chapter began with a look at the meanings of "response" in contemporary dictionaries. It was concluded that the concept of response was expansive, denoting any change in answer to a stimulus. Since the stimulus under discussion was literature in both its nonhonorific and aesthetic sense, it was pointed out that response in daily adult and college life generally consisted of: 1) inadvertent reading; 2) efferent reading; 3) pleasure reading; as well as 4) the highest type of aesthetic reading, all of which were generally inarticulate. Conventional conceptions of articulate response involved three underlying orientations: 1) text-oriented; 2) reader-oriented; and 3) response-

oriented. Although each of these is readily understood as a distinct way of reading or responding to literature, closer examination suggested interrelation and interdependence.

#### VIII. Conclusion

The three orientations of response to literature were presented in discussion as distinct from each other by emphasizing differences, rather than similarities in priorities. This type of presentation necessitates a data-reduction which reflects a mechanistic world view of a fixed reality with rigid boundaries.

However, each of these points of emphasis on the text-response-reader continuum could also be viewed as having many shared areas of agreement as well as differences. First, all three orientations accept the hypothesis that readers actively construct, rather than passively receive meaning. Second, all three orientations emphasize the ethical and moral importance of response to literature. Third, all three orientations propose the social nature of response and acknowledge, at some point, a hierarchy of responses. Fourth, all three orientations acknowledge the transactive nature of response. Finally, all three orientations conceive of reading as a type of work, a form of problem-solving. Thus, the three orientations from which to view research conceptions of response to literature are divided by

important differences as well as linked by fundamental similarities.

The selection of response orientation by the researcher, like the selection of literary genre, may arise more out of value, than of logic. Wellek and Warren (1956) propose: "we cannot comprehend and analyze any work of art without reference to value" (p. 156). Rosenblatt (1985a) suggests that: "the questions we raise, our research designs, and our interpretations of our findings will benefit from a cultural perspective." (p. 51). Thus, important influences on research conceptions of response to literature would seem to be provided by the pedagogical and conventional values of the time in which the research is situated.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## GROWTH AND DIVERSITY: 1910 - 49

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## I. Introduction

The central emphasis of the next three chapters is on conceptions of response to literature as they are realized in the research. These are presented in the context of both the foundation meanings delineated in Chapters Two and Three as well as prevailing pedagogical and societal conditions. It is acknowledged that to talk of stages in society and pedagogy is to oversimplify a complex pattern of changes occurring at different times in many places at varying speeds and with differing degrees of stability. To put dates to the stages or to the entry of particular components is to oversimplify even



further. However, the attempt to make sense of the past by viewing it through a framework with specific boundaries, is a first step toward an understanding of the present.

Research studies seem to fall naturally into three major periods. The first period (1912-1949), the inception of the research, is described in this chapter. The second period (1950-69), a transition stage, is described in Chapter Five. The third period (1970-89), in which the trend seems to be towards a pedagogical focus on literacy in a new key, is described in Chapter Six. The research studies will be discussed by decade, each to be introduced with a brief recapitulation of societal events and pedagogical conditions. The discussion of each research period begins with a consideration of conceptions of literature, as suggested by genres and specific literary works used. This is followed by a consideration of conceptions of response, as suggested by an examination of hypotheses, research questions, and conditions of the research.

## II. Overview

Button and Provenzo (1989) characterize general educational movements in the first half of the decade:

the 1910s had been the time of development and expansion of the one best system; the 1920s the time of its expansion; and the 1930s and 40s the time of its maintenance. (p. 229)

In research on response to literature, however, these decades witness an ascendance of diversity in research conceptions of both "literature" and "response to literature".

### III. Social and pedagogical conditions: 1910-19

The beginnings of research on response to literature occurred in the midst of rapid change. In the nineteenth century, both Canada and the United States were making the transition from agricultural to industrial nations (Bennett, 1989, 374). In British Columbia, the lumber industry was in the process of tremendous growth, so that by 1920, it contained more than half of the country's sawmills (Finlay and Sprague, 1989, p. 246).

This decade started with the population about equally divided between cities and rural areas. However, factories grew rapidly in both Canada and the United States and along with them the need for unskilled labour. Emigration from European centres soared (Finlay and Sprague, 1989, p. 247). Although both Canada and Britain joined the war when it began in 1914, it was not until 1917, the year in which Canada instituted Conscription and Federal income tax, that the United States entered.

Although the decade closed with the "year of the strikes in Canada", the biggest confrontation being the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 (Bennett, 1989, p. 543), this hardship was not characteristic of the decade as a whole.

During this decade, developments in transportation and communication along with mass population movements encouraged increasing awareness of an interdependent world. Trade had been advanced by improvements in ship design and speed. Radio transmission of human speech had been made in 1900. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the discoveries of physicists were challenging mechanistic world views. These theories suggested that the distinctions between time and space were mental rather than physical constructs. They also suggested that potentiality rather than actuality was the foundation of the universe and that the observer had a profound influence on events. However, such findings seemed to have little effect outside the area of physics.

In 1910, several universities were already established. The first university in Canada was Anglican King's College in 1790. By the early 1800s, Dalhousie and Acadia were established. Five other major universities were established during the 1800s: McGill University (1829); Victoria College and Queens University (1841); University of Manitoba (1877); University of Western Ontario (1878); and McMaster University (1887). During the early 1900s, other Canadian universities were established: Trinity College (1903); University of Saskatchewan (1907); University of Alberta (1908); University of British Columbia (helped by McGill), (1915); and the University of Montreal (1920) (Phillips, 1957, p. 211-12).

The most striking difference between colleges at the beginning of the century and those of today is the change in enrolment figures. Horowitz (1987) states of conditions in the United States:

in 1880 less than 2 percent of those between eighteen and twenty-one attended college; by 1890 3 per cent did so. In the first half of the twentieth century, the numbers roughly doubled every ten or twenty years. By 1900, 4 per cent of those between eighteen and twenty-one attended college; by 1920, 8 per cent; by 1940, 16 per cent . . . (p. 6)

At the University of British Columbia, there were 379 students in 1915 and 34 "members of the staff" (Logan, 1958, p. 55). With the outbreak of war in 1914, came "the opportunity of learning the fundamental lesson of service to humanity" (Logan, p. 69):

. . . women students, in their keenness, requested permission to knit for the soldiers in lecture periods. A small newspaper containing University tidbits of news was printed specially for the UBC men at the front. (p. 70)

With its roots in rhetoric and philology, the teaching of English literature as it is known at the present time is, like research on response to literature, a twentieth-century phenomenon (Parker, 1967, p. 339). Johnson (1988) points out that,

between 1900 and 1920, "Composition" and "Rhetoric" were required components along with the study of literary periods and figures in each year of the English course at such major Canadian universities as the University of Toronto, McGill, the University of New Brunswick, and Queens. (p. 868)

As concerns particular teaching emphases, the dominant trend was on detachment, analysis and "excessive concern for minutiae" (Parker, 1967, p. 353). Berlin (1987) describes the thinking behind the current-traditional rhetoric, which was most prevalent at the time:

truths are always external to the individual, located in an exterior object. The task of the writer in this scheme is to reproduce in the mind of the reader the particular experience as it took place in the mind of the writer . . . the work of the writing teacher is to teach the transcription process, providing instruction in arrangement and style--arrangement so that the order of experience is correctly recorded, and style so that clarity is achieved and class affiliation established. (p. 26-7)

He points out that "the approach to literary criticism in the new English department that appeared contemporaneously with this rhetoric was perfectly compatible with it, displaying a common epistemology . . . its approach emphasized philological and historical analysis, conceived in empirical terms" (p. 27).

Research on response to literature began early in the century, as a result of the emergence of psychology as a field distinct from philosophy. Underlining the close ties between psychology and research on response to literature was the fact that beginning the experiments of early psychologists explored responses to printed words (Venezky, 1984). It was thus natural that psychologists were the first researchers on response to literature.

## A. Research (1910-19): Psychology sets the stage

The earliest studies on response to literature with adult readers (See Appendix 3, Table 1) are those of the psychologists, Roblee and Washburn (1912) and Givler (1915).

### 1. Research conceptions of literature

The Roblee and Washburn (1912) study, "The affective value of articulate sounds", used syllables devoid of meaning as "literature":

the articulate sounds which we selected for study were combinations of an initial vowel and a final consonant. . . . had we used syllables with meaning, obviously the pleasantness or unpleasantness of the meanings would have wholly obscured that belonging to the sounds themselves. (p. 579)

Similarly, in Givler's (1915) eight-year long experiment, "The psycho-physiological effect in the elements of speech in relation to poetry", he used 540,000 sounds derived from 18,000 lines of poetry from poets such as Wordsworth, Shelley, Shakespeare and Arnold. He also uses ten-line passages of transmogrified poetry:

Original:  
 Spirit who sweepst the wild harp of the time!  
 It is most hard with an untroubled ear  
 Thy dark inwoven harmonies to hear!

The transmogrification:  
 Thũ spärd öf tēēp ĩt swēē nĩth ăn ěst wărp  
 Mō trime ĩt zărk whōō hĩld thũ wēēr ũld ov  
 Ōst ĩb nĩ dărd wũ năr tōō rees ĩn ēēm! (p. 83)

The behavioristic orientation is suggested in Givler's purpose: "to determine by means of the expressive method the

effects produced by the speech elements in poetry upon both the motor and introspective consciousness" (p. 1). The importance of the author's style was emphasized by Givler (although he also describes reader response styles in his appendix). Of the author, he explains:

. . . an elaborate statistical record was made . . . of the percentage of frequency of the various letter sounds in the leading English poets from Sydney to Rossetti. The basis for this work was the observation of very striking differences in the acoustic and kinaesthetic sensations aroused by the audible reading of different poets. (pp. 1-2)

These early experiments use a primordial concept of literature not even included in conventional twentieth-century dictionary definitions which start from print rather than speech. They explore the mere nonsense sounds of language.

## 2. Research conceptions of response

The response requested in the Roblee and Washburn (1912) study was subjective and immediate. Upon hearing a syllable, the subject was asked to judge its "pleasantness" or "unpleasantness" on a scale from one to seven.

The reasoning behind this earliest experiment is that:

apart from the associative power of words, the sounds which compose them may, by their own pleasantness or unpleasantness, exert a not inconsiderable influence on their literary value from an aesthetic viewpoint. (p. 579)

Givler's study explored the psycho-physiological effects "upon both the motor and introspective consciousness"

of various vowel sounds in combination with consonants, as well as single words and tonal patterns of famous poems. Givler worked with fifteen adults, giving them the following directions:

This is an experiment upon the psycho-motor effect of the sounds in poetry: while you recite the line, tap at each accented syllable; take your own time to do it, tap in a natural way, in as long or as short strokes as you please: say it in a clear voice and then introspect upon the three factors of feeling-tone, sensations and imagery if all three come . . . it is the sounds and their effects which you are to attend to. (p. 9-10)

Givler remarks that the tendency to make words out of "these meaningless experiments" was "super-strong with nearly all of the subjects . . . so that some severe critic might call this whole work, 'an experiment in the delayed associations of misspelled words'" (p. 37). Further,

it is not an impossible assumption that poetry as well as other forms of art may possess in each of their leading features, form and content, a sufficiency of emotional wealth to be considered each one as able to arouse the esthetic unconsciousness to the full. (p. 129)

In Givler's study, the influence of the author's style is stressed. For example, he refers to the distinctive "motor pattern and tonal display of such poets as Byron and Keats" (p. 2) and later observes: "it would seem that the temperamental character of the poet had gotten into these experiments" (p. 62).

As concerns the text-response-reader continuum outlined in Chapter Three, the focus of these behavioristic studies is on evocative response to textual qualities. The



centre of interest is on the literary quality of the sounds and rhythm. The personality of the responder is subordinated to a reporting of the images evoked by the sounds of language. Thus, even though no conventional forms of literature are used, the research begins with an orientation towards textual qualities. There seems to be only a tenuous relation to the prevailing college literature focus on philological and historical analysis.

#### IV. Societal and pedagogical conditions: 1920-29

The prosperous twenties had a slow start, but soon the rise of easy credit, technological ingenuity, and favourable economic conditions contributed to a long economic boom. New products, such as automobiles, telephones, and radios were suddenly available to all. Union memberships and strikes increased. In Canada in 1920, the three-party replaced the two-party political system. Although unemployment levels reached 16% each winter in Canada, the years between 1925 and 1928 were generally prosperous (Finlay and Sprague, 1989, p. 335).

In science, the advances in knowledge and the general level of technological aptitude increased exponentially. The proposals of physicists, such as Heisenberg's (1927) uncertainty principle, continued to challenge common-sense views of causality and observation. However, these proposals still seemed to have no effect on daily concerns. The closing

year of the decade was marked by the Winnipeg Grain Exchange collapse and the disaster of the stock market on "Black Thursday", October 24, 1929.

The Parson (1923) dissertation, "A study of adult reading", is an early survey study. Although classified by Purves and Beach (1972) as a study of "reading interests", it is relevant because it provides a vivid personal snapshot of the reading habits and priorities of the decade:

an assertion made nowadays is to the effect that the printing press has usurped the place formerly held by the public forum as the most powerful factor in the molding of public opinion. (Parsons, 1923, p. 1)

He observes that half of the population of the country was rural and about half was also illiterate. Only 2 out of 105 million people had some college or university training (p. 10). Most adults read newspapers and magazines "primarily for information, or to keep up with what is happening in the world. A very few individuals claimed that their primary reading purpose is recreational" (p. 100). Parsons observes that "there is reason to believe that the schools are all of them eventually going to learn the secret of interesting their pupils in reading" (p. 114). However, Parsons describes a librarian's disparagement of readers who "for years have spent practically all their time in the reading room of this library" (p. 116). Finally, oral reading seems to have been more important than it is today:

reading aloud has social values which many people do not even suspect . . . it seems perfectly evident that oral reading must always be taught in elementary school, first

because it is a natural way of introducing the child to reading and second, because many adults have occasion to read aloud. (p. 97)

This study vividly suggests that there were both similar and different priorities about reading at the beginning of the century as compared to today. It suggests that the priority was on speech rather than on the printed word, as seems to be more common today.

In education during the twenties, the Progressive movement was coming to the fore. Berlin (1987) points out that "progressivism contained within it two opposed conceptions of education--one psychological and individualistic and the other social and communal--which Dewey attempted to reconcile" (p. 60). In addition, he explains that progressivism changed with the times. Before World War I, "the emphasis of the progressives was on social reform, on bringing the school closer to serving the needs of society". After the war,

there was a shift to a child-centred pedagogy--more specifically, to an interest in depth psychology and the creative arts, both intended to foster the development of the individual without regard for social or practical ends. The focus of this effort was the cultivation of the aesthetic capabilities of the student in the interest of bringing about health and sanity. (Berlin, 1987, p. 60)

In Canadian universities during the twenties, undergraduate enrolment rose to a high of about 22,000 in 1919-20 (Phillips, 1957). At the University of British Columbia, the decade began with a sharp rise in registration as war veterans returned to the campus. Added to the growing

number of full-time students were an increasing number of part-time and vocational students (Logan, 1958, p. 98). Logan describes the period on the college campus:

the Twenties were a time of feverish activity and high achievement in every department of undergraduate life. The large number of returned-soldier students brought with them a quality of experience and character which impressed itself indelibly on the entire life of the University. (p. 99)

Harris (1976) observes that during this decade, English was the core subject in both the arts and science programs at Canadian universities (p. 247). The literature studied was "almost always English literature", with the chief exceptions being a course in "Canadian-American" literature at McGill in 1907 and one in Canadian literature at Queens in 1917 (p. 248).

Writing skills were stressed. Harris states that the University of Alberta Calendar of 1911-12 announced that after registration, all freshmen would be required to write a "theme, the subject to be chosen from a list provided by the Professor". If it was not of "average excellence", the student was required to take a non-credit course in composition (p. 247). Harris stresses that, unlike American universities, "there were no courses concentrating solely or primarily on problems of oral and written composition as did the rhetoric course usually prescribed for freshmen in American colleges at this time" (p. 247).

In the area of literary theory, Culler (1988) dates consciousness of criticism as "a significant realm of intellectual activity" from the years "following the First World War" (p. 4):

the 1920s generated a lively criticism and flourishing critical debate--carried on for the most part outside the universities. The major academic exception was Irving Babbitt, a Harvard professor and spokesman of the New Humanism, which demanded that literature contribute to moral enlightenment . . . and celebrated classical values as the necessary antidote to the moral laxity of the 1920s. (pp. 5-6)

#### A. Research (1920-9): Orientations take shape

During the early twenties, the Purves and Beach (1972) bibliography cites six studies exploring the responses of college and adult readers (See Appendix 3, Table 2).

##### 1. Research conceptions of "literature"

The earliest study to use published stanzas of literature in natural form is that of Abbott and Trabue (1921), "A measure of ability to judge poetry". Literature was represented by single stanzas from the poetry of Tennyson, Shakespeare, Keats and Milton, as well as excerpts from Mother Goose. The only criterion was that "each specimen have the recognized excellence of its type" (p. 102).

Wheeler's (1923) "An analysis of literary appreciation" and Valentine's (1923) "The function of images in the appreciation of poetry" continue this tendency to

present better in light of poorer poetry. Valentine presented the poetry of Shelley and Wordsworth next to some "poor" poetry such as "a stanza taken from one of some published poems by an acquaintance and a stanza of a poem printed and used for memory experiments" (p. 168-9). Wheeler's concept of the poem, foreshadowing the ideas later popularized by Rosenblatt, is that it is a living whole, a "true duration", rhythm being intrinsic to its value (p. 238). Works used in Wheeler's experiment include parts of poems by Shelley and Gray.

June Downey's 1928 study continued the trend started by psychologists in the previous decade and used as "literature" one hundred nouns and adjectives typed separately on small squares of paper. I.A. Richards' (1929) experiment uses a variety of poems, a "mixed lot" from D. H. Lawrence through Donne, Hardy and Longfellow. Thus the literature, in research of the twenties, is predominantly poetry.

## 2. Research conceptions of response

Conceptions of response in this decade include a focus on judgments of quality and images evoked by the poetry (See Table 2). The response is often in the form of written multiple choice or short answers. As well, the Richards study requests free written response. In the research of this decade, as compared to that of the previous, the subjects

were allowed more time for deliberation. For example, in Valentine's (1923) experiment, university students, hearing a poem read aloud twice by the experimenter, were to write "whether they found the poem pleasing, slightly pleasing, etc., [and] the reasons for their judgment" (p. 169). In Wheeler's (1923) experiment, note was to be taken of "the images that occurred naturally" while students silently read through a short poem (Wheeler, 1923, p. 233). Valentine (1923) pointed out the common emphasis of both the psychologist and the critic: "both the psychologist and the critic are really concerned with the relationship of the work of art to the appreciator" (166). However, he ends by stressing the difference of each perspective:

all this granted however, we must admit that the critic moves his attention from this aesthetic experience towards the objective study of the poem, while the psychologist proceeds with the analysis of the experience. The psychologist's aim is understanding of process. (p. 166)

Abbott and Trabue (1921), in their study, seek to "devise an objective test of independent critical judgment applied to specimens of the art previously unknown". That is, they assume that quality can be determined by the reader on textual grounds alone. This is done in order to shed light upon:

the degree of success attained in developing the power to appreciate; on the teacher's possession or lack of this power; possibly on the elements of the art itself that may profitably receive attention with pupils of a particular grade. (p. 101)

The test here was to read four stanzas of varying quality (consisting of sentimental, prosaic and metrical alterations as well as the 'original' version) and designate the best and the worst on the page, judged "by whatever makes it seem better poetry to you" (p. 105, emphasis in original). Even though the directions seem to personalize, the aim is to explore "the degree of success . . . in developing the power to appreciate". It was thus a test requiring recognition of the "best" or original. This concept is far from the idea of the reader as creator of beauty.

Psychologist June Downey (1928 and 1929) reports on experiments which explore subjective reflections, both immediate and extended. Her Creative Imagination (1929) includes descriptions of experiments on such topics as "audible thought", "the poetry of colour" and "literary self-projection" by which is meant "projection of the self into an imaginal scene which is illustrative of poetic or fictional content" (p. 186), as well as a writer's stream-of-consciousness report of his creating of a work. Squire (1969) points out that in this work, Downey presents:

a threefold classification of responses: the ecstatic, where the self-conscious reader is merged with the subject that he is enjoying; the participator, where the reader assumes one personality after another; and the spectator, who is detached from the action and evaluates as an observer. (p. 468)

Squire also stresses Downey's acknowledgment of the importance of the textual qualities. She "hypothesized that



the type and content of the literary selection affected the mode of response" (p. 468). In this work, however, the overall emphasis is on the creative and appreciative processes, with an attention to individual differences.

The approach of the literary theorist, I.A. Richards (1929), also takes into account the moment of response. The experiment, reported in his Practical Criticism (1929), explored the reactions of college honors English students, "the best and brightest readers" (p. 310). Being concerned about the quality of Cambridge undergraduate education which emphasized the value of critics' opinions rather than direct reading of poetry, he gave his students a variety of anonymous poems. The direction was to "comment freely upon them" in writing. The duration of the response was to consist of:

a number of perusals made at one session provided that they aroused and sustained one single growing response to the poem, or alternately led to no response at all and left the reader with nothing but the bare words before him on the paper. (p. 4)

This conception of response was a marked contrast to the immediate free associations in many of the psychological experiments. In addition, this is also the first study to mention a teaching experience resulting from the experiment: "I lectured the following week partly upon the poems, but rather more upon the comments, or protocols, as I call them" (p. 4). Thus, Richards' method of instruction seems decidedly to focus on the responses of the students. In his explanation

of the results, however, Richards reveals a text- rather than reader-orientation to response. He comments on the deplorable lack of even simple reading ability, or ability to understand the poem as a statement or expression, as well as other deficiencies:

- (1) deriving sensuous apprehension concerning the form of the poem;
- (2) understanding images;
- (3) being distracted by mnemonic irrelevances;
- (4) giving stock responses;
- (5) being sentimental;
- (6) being inhibited;
- (7) doctrinal adhesions;
- (8) technical presuppositions; and
- (9) general critical preconceptions. (pp. 13-17)

His dismay suggests that he was hoping for something better. He had hoped that the reader would be able to distinguish, on textual grounds alone, the "better" poems. A second reason for disappointment was that his direction to "comment freely in writing" was not interpreted by his readers as a request for a thoughtful, defensible analysis.

His frustration, however, is not only over the deficiencies in these few readers. It is a failing which he sees in all real readers. "Candidly", he points out, "how many of us are convinced, with reason, that we would have made a better showing ourselves under these conditions?" (p. 310). Perhaps all readers are doomed to such failure.

The influence of Richards' experiment was longstanding. A full forty-two years later, Cooper (1971) describes it "as the classic analysis of the difficulties and

stumblings and misreadings of practical critics to poetry" (p. 20). He adds, however, that "full of good sense as it is, his (Richards') report throughout has a tone of peevish and impatient disbelief" (p. 20).

As in the experiments of the previous decade, the poet is not forgotten in the experiments of the twenties. For example, Valentine is inspired to try an experiment on imagery, not because of an observation of some reader, but because his attention is caught by a characteristic of a poet: "Wordsworth's frequent references to his own intense enjoyment gained from visual imagery" (p. 167). June Downey (1928) speaks of the natural word-consciousness "of the literary artist who in this respect may be sophisticated from the cradle" (p. 323). The fact that these observations are made by psychologists suggests a perception of meaning and beauty as somehow residing in the external reality of the text itself.

Finally, it is important to note that even at this early date in research with literary response, there is mention of the facilitative effect of writing even though it is made referential to a greater appreciation of the artist's work, rather than the reader's understanding of it:

the appreciation of the work of a great artist may inspire the student to a fuller creative expression of himself: and conversely, his attempts at expression in the same medium, however imperfect these may be, may intensify his understanding and enjoyment of the master's art. (Wheeler, 1923, p. 230)

Thus research of the twenties brings to light the contrasting text- and reader-orientations of response to literature. The Downey (1929) and Richards (1929) works, Creative Imagination and Practical Criticism respectively, represent the different perspectives of the reader-oriented psychologist and the text-oriented critic-teacher concerning the emphasis toward the reader or the text in the literary transaction.

There is much common ground. Both text-oriented and reader-oriented researchers focus on the moment of the transaction between literary work and reader. Both at this early stage have an implicit respect for the writer. As well, there is a common interest in image formation and its relation to appreciation. Thus, although there is a general weighing towards text or reader in the work of the critic-teacher or the psychologist respectively, there are also important similarities.

Despite the influence of the Progressive movement in education, the many respectful mentions of authors and poets, as well as the omission of any more than a cursory description of the readers, suggest a general research tendency towards a text- rather than reader-oriented view of response.

## V. Social and pedagogical conditions: 1930-9

Worldwide economic depression, international bankruptcies and unemployment characterized the thirties. By 1930, unemployment, with farmers among the hardest hit, was greater than during the "hard times of 1921-22" (Finlay and Sprague, 1989, p. 336). "Harder times" continued throughout the decade in both Canada and the United States (Finlay and Sprague, 1989, p. 336). By 1932, there were twelve million unemployed in the United States and public work programs were vitiated by deflationary budget balancing. During the decade both the Canadian and United States governments embarked on programs of social reform and economic stimulation, including protection for labour unions, social security, public works, wages and hours laws, and assistance to farmers.

Although "representing a mere 3 per cent of college-aged youth." (Axelrod 1989, p. 216), full-time university enrolment in 1930-1 had increased to 34,119 as compared to 23,418 in 1920-1 (Harris 1976, p. 352). Axelrod (1989) describes the typical student as "the child of a merchant or a teacher for whom university was first and foremost a stepping-stone to a more secure professional career" (p. 223).

Harris (1976) explains the effects on higher education of the "Conference on Canadian-American affairs" at the end of the decade, in 1939, as being threefold:

- 1) the emergence of economics, history, and political science as academic disciplines of central importance;

- 2) the recognition by government of the professor as expert; and
- 3) the involvement of Canadian professors in large-scale research projects. (p. 339)

He also acknowledges the generous assistance given to Canadian higher education during the 1920s and 1930s by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and other American philanthropic institutions (Harris 1976, p. 352).

Logan (1958) describes the situation at the University of British Columbia during the thirties:

As the depression came, the interests of the students widened and deepened with their attention focused, first, on the serious social problems of the depression, then on the steady drift toward war. And through it all ran the constant theme of student effort--to improve the University. (p. 132)

Horowitz (1987) makes a similar observation of life on campuses in the United States:

The Depression brought a marked change in college atmosphere. Not only were fewer students able to afford Greek life; many more worried about life after college. Observers noted a new seriousness of purpose and maturity among college students. (p. 114)

During the thirties, the influence of the New Critics was only just beginning to be felt in universities. In the theory of New Criticism, as explained in Chapter Three, poems were treated as "aesthetic objects rather than historical documents . . . the New Criticism sought to show the contribution of each element of poetic form to a unified structure" (Culler, 1988, p. 10). During the thirties, however, Culler points out that the New Criticism "seemed

public rather than academic criticism" in its challenge of "the historical scholarship of the universities" (p. 10).

Towards the end of the decade, in the year 1938, Louise Rosenblatt's Literature as exploration was published. In this work, without explicitly using the word "transactional", she provided a model for a new kind of reading. Farrell (1990) explains that this work was "regarded as the first book in this country to advance a reader-response theory of literature" (p. ix). Farrell summarizes just a few of the points made by the work. The first was that although "students should be allowed to express freely their reactions to a selection in both writing and class discussions . . . the text must remain a constraint against total relativism or subjectivity" (p. x). The second was that "literature has social and aesthetic elements . . . that are inextricably interrelated, though theoretically distinguishable". The third point was that "the essence of literature is the rejection of stereotyped reactions" (p. x). The fourth concerned the relation of literature to the task of education. Literature helped "provide students with the knowledge, mental habits and motivation that will enable them to solve their own problems independently" by such means as freeing students from provincialism, redirecting "their potentially antisocial behavior" and fostering their imagination. Finally, the book proposed that students should

be provided with a broad range of literature, including works from different cultures. (Farrell, 1990, p. xi).

Correcting the common misconception that the work did not originally receive its due recognition, Rosenblatt (1990) describes the "surprisingly wide favourable response" of the book in 1938. This was largely because of the "strength of the progressive current in educational thinking" at the time (p. 101).

#### A. Research (1930-9): aesthetics and appreciation

Despite the Depression, the number of studies exploring the responses of college students and adults to literature increased from six during the twenties to twelve during the thirties (See Appendix 3, Table 3).

##### 1. Research conceptions of literature

The concept "literature" is represented by a wide range of materials. There are the sounds and rhythm of poetry devoid of meaning (Hevner, 1937), fragments of poetry (Howells and Johnson, 1932; Leopold, 1933; Carroll, 1933; Moran, 1935; Pickford, 1935a and b; Rigg, 1937; and Patrick, 1939) or prose (Broom, 1934; Pickford, 1935a and b), and novels (Foster, 1936).

Moran (1935) states explicitly that the meaning of "literature" to which she refers is not "all printed or written matter upon any theme". Instead the word connotes:



one of the fine arts whose field is primarily the attitudes, moods, emotions of the human being; whose immediate purpose is pleasure, enjoyment through beautiful embodiment . . . whose sole excuse for being is leading of the individual man into sympathetic participation in the eternal verities of life . . . (p. 139-40)

Carroll (1933) explains his criteria in his selection of literature:

. . . the first choice being an excerpt from a book by an author of established fame, the second choice an excerpt from a book by a writer generally considered as second-rate, the third choice an excerpt from a story found in one of the less literary magazines, and the fourth choice a mutilation. (p. 469)

The literature used in these experiments has fixed, intrinsic qualities. Genuine poems are presented with weakened versions (Carroll, 1933; Leopold, 1933; Rigg, 1937; Patrick, 1939). Patrick (1939) distinguishes between poems "of outstanding authors" and those written "by authors who entirely lacked poetic talent" (p. 255). However, in the preliminary trial of Riggs' (1937) experiment, several of the parodies are judged by the experts to be better than the originals, and thus must be eliminated from the final test (pp. 149-50).

Examples of specific works used in these experiments are as follows: 100-300 word fragments from such works as Shelley's "Defense of Poetry", Proust's Swann's Way, G. J. Romanes' Animal intelligence, A. N. Whitehead's The concept of nature and Tolstoy's War and Peace (all used in Pickford, 1935a and b); parts of Conrad's The Rescue, and D. H.

Lawrence's Sons and Lovers (Broom, 1933); and single stanzas of poetry from the work of Tennyson, Keats, Coleridge, Chaucer and Milton (Moran, 1935).

## 2. Research conceptions of response

### a. Text-orientations

Fully ten out of twelve (83%) of these studies focus on textual quality as a fixed aspect. Researchers explore issues such as "metresense in poetry" (Howells and Johnson, 1932), "the effect of creative work on aesthetic appreciation" (Leopold, 1933), and "the factors involved in learning to appreciate literature" (Smith, 1933). Moran (1935) attempts to construct tests to "measure certain poetry aptitudes of teachers". Patrick (1939) explores responses to good and poor poetry "with a view to ascertain if good poetry stimulates the imagination and produces more mental activity" (254). Carroll (1933) explores the question of whether girls have a superiority over, not mere difference from, males in the area of appreciation of literature, as they seem to have in the area of general linguistic ability.

In most of the studies, the importance of enhancing, evaluating and exploring appreciation is emphasized. This appreciation is perceived as being dependent on text-intrinsic rather than reader-created qualities:

appreciation rests upon discrimination--upon the ability to differentiate the good from the less good and the less good from the very bad. The man who does not recognize

good prose when he sees it can hardly be said to possess marked appreciative ability. (Carroll, 1933, p. 469)

Further, Leopold (1933) suggests that this is not a democratic ability, accessible to all:

nowhere are individuals more sharply differentiated than in their possibilities of response to aesthetic impressions. To some few poetry makes no sort of appeal and, in spite of the labours of the school throughout the most plastic years of their life, they will never seek pleasure in reading verse. (p. 59)

As concerns specific purposes of the experiments, Howells and Johnson (1932) want to "develop a measure of ability to discriminate between types of metre in poetry and . . . to discover the components and concomitants of this ability" (pp. 539-40). Leopold (1933) stresses that "the real, important result is the increase . . . in the appreciation of good literature" (p. 43). Thus the emphasis, in these research purposes, is on the text quality as the fixed standard by which to measure the response.

Responder tasks emphasize the formal elements and intrinsic quality of literature. Howells and Johnson (1932) ask their subjects to observe "a sample line of poetry and then identify, out of a list of four subsequent lines, the one that corresponded most closely with the rhythm or metre of the sample" (p. 540). Leopold (1933) and Riggs (1937) ask their subjects to identify the original or best stanza when it is presented with "weakened" versions. Carroll (1933) also asks his subjects to judge the literary merit of short

paragraphs which are presented along with version which include weakened images and epithets.

Leopold (1933), in the first classroom treatment study, explores "the effects of creative work on aesthetic appreciation". The implication is that creative work is useful only as it improves the ability to appreciate or identify the original or best version when presented among parodies. She proposes that instruction in the writing of poetry will improve appreciation. She gives the experimental group exercises in specific techniques. These include exercises with rhyme, "such as finding as many words as possible to rhyme with a given word or completing a couplet by adding the rhyming word" (p. 45). Another exercise is concerned with matching lines: "the first line of a couplet is given, the second supplied by the student" (p. 45). A third exercise is concerned with figures of speech: "finding similes and metaphors, writing paragraphs or stanzas personifying this and that, or giving a description of place or person or scene" (p. 46). Finally, in order to test the effectiveness of this creative work, the students are asked to identify the original or best stanza of poetry, when it is presented among its parodies.

#### b. Reader-orientations

Reader-oriented studies, which focus on the reader rather than elements of the text, are represented by only one

of the studies with adult or college readers in this decade, that of Foster (1936) who surveys general adult fiction interests. Her article, "An approach to fiction through the characteristics of its readers", is concerned with the social aspects of reading. Her report begins with the observation that the aesthetic assumption rests:

fundamentally on the conception of literature as an art, whereas the great mass of popular fiction is written--and read--for reasons other than its literary value and receives comparatively little serious critical attention. (p. 125)

Thus, her study rejects the importance of being able to correctly identify textual quality and proposes instead an exploration of what real readers choose to read for enjoyment. She uses library records as indicators of popularity of authors in her exploration of the reading habits of a sample of 15,285 readers in Chicago<sup>1</sup>.

#### c. Response-orientations

Response-centred orientations, focusing on the process of the developing response, begin with the psychological study of Pickford (1935a and b). This study explicitly acknowledges the influence of Bartlett (Pickford, 1935b, p. 57), who had made such important contributions to the area of

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<sup>1</sup>The favorite authors were also, interestingly, those most read by farm women in the Mississippi Valley; by college students reporting from all parts of the United States; and by Canadian farmers in the Fraser Valley, British Columbia (Foster, 1936, p. 126).

schema theory. Like the work of Bartlett in psychology, many of the questions and conceptions of this research study will remain neglected until the seventies.

Pickford's study aims to explore "the 'high level' character in the reading of continuous meaningful material" (p. 28). He acknowledges that "the results of an experiment depend only partly on the immediate conditions; in part also they depend on the mental factors which a subject brings with him to the task" (p. 419). He asks his subjects, all of whom were "well known to the experimenter" (p. 418) "to report, after reading (first silently and then aloud), upon his psychological reactions both during the reading and on its completion" (p. 418). He wanted to explore the general tendencies, attitudes and attention of the reader. In the unconditional acceptance of and interest in the varieties of response processes of his readers, Pickford's study also has strong psychoanalytic elements. However, the interest in the personality of the reader, which characterizes reader-orientations, is subordinated to that in the developing response itself:

a reader also tends to impose his own rhythm on reading matter, whether he reads aloud or silently, and the result of these two rhythmic influences is the rhythm of reading . . . such rhythm is . . . a swing or flow of apprehension and vocal or subvocal movement. (p. 421)

Pickford describes the responses under the general categories of affective and cognitive tendencies. Under "affective tendencies", he distinguishes between feelings

'of', "where the reference is definitely subjective", and feelings 'that', "where an objective reference is involved" (p. 425). Pickford's focus is on the process of coming to understand. As such, he observes the transformation of "painful feelings . . . into pleasure as the reading proceeds" (p. 427).

This experiment is unique in another respect. Amidst the seriousness of all this "work" of appreciating the aesthetics of these fragments of literary text, "feelings of amusement, and actual laughter, are very common in reading":

Frequently the amusement is a response to an intended joke in the literary matter, but more often amusement occurred in reading what was intended to be entirely serious. (p. 431)

Often, in the reading of obviously serious works, his "reader's interpretation automatically turns the passage (on Emperor Augustus) into a joke" (p. 432). This misreading is interpreted as a "defence mechanism acting against the difficulties encountered" (p. 432). However, on the same page, Pickford comments that, "amusement not only saves discomfort, but enables (in this case) the reader to make a sound interpretation of something which might have disturbed him" (p. 432). This experiment also proposes that another type of pleasure is important in response to literature: that of the evocation through reading of personal memories which are of private significance to the reader. Pickford elaborates on the sources of this personal, rather than

shared pleasure:

the first (pleasure) is the recall of memories themselves pleasant; the second is the pleasure of completion . . . which arises when the passage is fully and adequately interpreted by the integration of these very memories, by their satisfactory constructive use in the reading. (p. 429)

The overriding assumption suggested in this experiment is that response to literature includes all except physiological changes induced by the text. Pickford examines personal digressions, the positive effects of misunderstanding, and even laughter itself in a way which will never again be taken up in the research.

In studies of the thirties, as in those of the twenties, there is explicit respect for the poet himself. Hevner (1937) says that the poet is:

hypersensitive to language sounds . . . He can comprehend the progress and the digressions of the thoughts as they are carried by the sounds in much the same way that the layman is able to apprehend the two different but simultaneous processes in song--the words and the music. (p. 418-9)

Foster (1936) uses authors rather than titles or genres as the units to be used in her survey. She concludes with a proposed hierarchy of writers. At the top are those like Hardy, Conrad and Anatole France, who illustrate:

truth to human character and experience, gravity and breadth of theme, a freshness of insight which adds to the sum of human understanding, detachment without loss of emotional intensity, and beauty of expression. (p. 140)



A third example of the expressed importance of the author is provided by Moran (1935). For her test of poetry aptitudes, she proposes the responses of poets and literary critics as a virtually "absolute criterion"<sup>2</sup>. This consideration of the poet's response itself as ultimate criterion in a test of appreciation of literature reinforces the suggestion of the perceived superiority of the author's literary work over the reader's response to it.

The dominant orientation in research of the thirties is thus towards the text. Other strands include a single reader-oriented survey study, and a single response-oriented study. The text-oriented studies use poetry fragments written by well-established poets and authors. The reader- and response-oriented studies use recreational reading novels and short literary passages, respectively. There is some correspondence between the predominant research emphasis on textual qualities and the New Criticism, which is beginning

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<sup>2</sup>Several writers respond positively to her written request to take the test. However, others object. John Masefield writes that "in my opinion the questionnaires submitted are sufficient to destroy any pleasure which the poems quoted might give" (p. 189). John Erskine replies:

I do not believe in the value of this sort of test. There is no standard by which we can measure the answers . . . I believe the right method for teaching poetry . . . is to suggest to the student those experiences in life which he must have before he can understand the poem. The problem is to get behind the poem into the light which produced it rather than to try to measure its effects on the reader. Those facts, it seems to me, would be infinitely varied and need not be tabulated. (p. 160)

to be popular outside university circles.

#### VI. Social and pedagogical conditions: 1940-9

The decade opened with war in Europe and Asia-Pacific. Forty-five million people lost their lives in the war. This toll would later reveal the deaths of six million Jews in Nazi murder camps. The end of the war brought Western fears of Soviet advances. Along with a general move towards conservatism, the Cold War began. In addition, because wartime taxes had reduced the largest incomes, there was a major redistribution of wealth. Veterans wanted a life that was good in material things (Button and Provenzo, 1989, p. 185). In both Canada and the United States, birth rates climbed and veterans flocked to the campuses in droves (Button and Provenzo, 1989, p. 257).

Phillips (1957) points out that, due in large measure to the influx of returning war veterans, Canadian university enrolment reached a peak of 79,000 in 1947-8. At the University of British Columbia, Logan (1958) observes that the impact of this war on Canadian university students was very different from that of World War I. The suggestion was that college education was now considered important to the future welfare of the country. At the opening of the 1939 session, students were advised by both the University and the National Research Council to continue their studies and "remain at their university work until graduation" (Logan, p.

138). Nonetheless, a year later, President Klinck reported that:

Notwithstanding the strong recommendation of the Department of Labour that University students continue their studies until after graduation, six hundred members of the COTC (Canadian Officers Training Corps) volunteered and were accepted for Active Service. (Logan, p. 144)

During the war, the University underwent major expansion, as evidenced most explicitly by the growth of the extension department, which "extended the University until it reached almost every corner of British Columbia" (Logan, p. 176).

After the war, student population at the University of British Columbia rose dramatically, from approximately 3,000 in 1944-45 to over 9,000 in 1947-48" (Logan, p. 176). Logan provides a description of this overcrowding which characterized the majority of North American campuses during these years. In 1945-6, he explains that lack of classroom space necessitated the use of huts for lectures. These huts had been used only a few weeks earlier by Army and Air Force personnel. Logan cites Dean Curtis's description of a "typical scene" during the post-war days:

. . . on a late October afternoon, Dean Buchanan and I were sitting in his office working out some academic details, when the Dean, most beloved and helpful of men, let a smile flicker over his face and, looking out of his window, said: "Forgive me for interrupting but you may be interested; there is the Law School going by, along the Mall". It was. Two huts, being laboriously hauled along on tractor-trailers, were to be the first home of the men of Law on the campus. (p. 178)

For better or worse, this characteristic university expansion was to continue throughout the ensuing decades. Logan hypothesizes that "perhaps the greatest single impetus behind the enlarging of academic fields was the growing desire of all classes in the community to have their children attend the University" (p. 156).

As concerns the university English curriculum during the forties, Harris (1976) points out that on Canadian campuses:

by 1940, English was not only the central discipline in the humanities but as well in the university as a whole, the one subject which students in all first degree programs, including those in French-language institutions, were required to take. (p. 384)

Louise Rosenblatt continued to be an important influence, following the publication of her work, Literature as exploration in 1938. She was invited to speak at NCTE in New York and in 1946 was asked to edit an issue of the English Journal, "devoted to furthering the concept of cultural pluralism set forth in Literature and exploration" (p. 102). She points out that

my differences with the formalists, or my urging of a different idea of the reading process from the theory being taught by reading experts in my own School of Education, simply acted as stimulants to further thought and writing and served as the basis for a continuing and sometimes effective criticism of dominant practices. (p. 103)

Despite this recognition of her work, Rosenblatt points out that the post World War II period recorded "the

capture of English departments in the colleges by the formal and elitist New Criticism" (p. 102).

Culler (1988) also dates the influence of New Criticism in the classroom as beginning with the publication in 1938 of Brooks and Warren's Understanding Poetry, "which focused attention on the language of poems and showed how metaphor, tone and ambiguity should be analyzed in the classroom". Culler describes "the pedagogical success of this volume, which taught two generations of students how to read" (p. 11).

Gerber (1967) also attributes the rise of New Criticism in college classrooms largely to the influence of Brooks and Warren's Understanding Poetry in 1938, followed by Understanding drama in 1948 and Understanding fiction in 1959. He suggests that "no set of texts has ever been so influential in the college classroom . . . it forced the student to attend to the work itself instead of its historical matrix" as well as "such relatively unexpected elements as point of view" (p. 354). The emphasis on New Criticism also had curricular ramifications in that "survey courses tended to give way to master works courses. Period courses often became less popular than genre courses" (Gerber, 1967, p. 354). However, Culler (1988) modifies this perception:

Introductory courses employing Understanding Poetry might avoid historical considerations and train students to treat poems as eternal artifacts rather than datable documents, but advanced courses divided literature

according to periods . . . Graduate students, in particular, had to claim expertise in a historical period, since jobs were customarily defined in this way: an opening "in the Renaissance" or "in the eighteenth century". (p. 13)

Thus although New Criticism was popular, it was not without its critics and modifying influences. Rosenblatt (1990) stresses that during the forties, there was also an important progressive movement geared to help students "to develop their capacities to the full, a view of education assuming a democratically mobile society" (p. 102). Towards the end of the decade, in his 1948 Presidential Address to the Modern Language Association, Douglas Bush (1949) attacked the New Criticism for its "aloof intellectuality", its "avoidance of moral values" and its rejection of the common reader, who still thinks that "poetry deals with life" (p. 20).

#### A. Research (1940-9): Peak of diversity in conceptions

The Second World War, unlike the First, seems to have had an important impact on research conceptions of response to literature. The awareness of propaganda during the war was perhaps part of the reason for the unparalleled diversity of research conceptions of response to literature. During this decade, no fewer than twenty-three studies explored the responses of college and adult readers. This number compared with only twelve studies in the thirties, six in the twenties, and two published before 1920.

## 1. Research conceptions of literature

The research conception of literature in the forties was extraordinarily diverse. No fewer than thirteen different genres were used in the twenty-three studies. The range included: 1) single words (Bruner and Postman, 1947; Postman, Bruner and McGinnies, 1948); 2) newspaper articles (Waples, Berelson and Bradshaw, 1940; Strang, 1942; Berelson, 1945; and Gray, 1947); 3) magazines and books (Strang, 1942); 4) oral stories from other cultures (Hallowell, 1947); 5) comprehension test items (Davis, 1944); 6) full-length novels and fairy tales (Shrodes, 1949; Lazarfeld, 1949); 7) a researcher-devised story (Wolfenstein, 1946); and, finally, 8) fragments of larger works (Harris, 1946; Michael, Rosenthal and DeCamp, 1949).

Chester Harris (1946) offers one of the earliest explicit research definitions of literature as including "writings that are characterized at least in part by excellence as determined by inclusion in a critical anthology" (p. 14)<sup>3</sup>.

Specific examples of works used included poems such as Shelley's "Political greatness", Swinburne's "Love and sleep", and Thomas Hardy's "To Life" (Glicksberg, 1944).

These were more often than not compared with lesser works. In

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<sup>3</sup>This criteria for identifying "literature" remains important throughout the research, especially during the seventies and eighties when virtually all of the short stories used in experiments can be found in anthologies.

addition, there were fragments from Robert Browning's "Fame", Shakespeare's The Tempest and Frances Bourdillon's "The night has a thousand eyes" (Harris, 1946). Also representing "literature" were descriptive prose paragraphs (five written by one of the researchers in Michael, Rosenthal and DeCamp, 1949) as well as prose fragments used on reading tests (Davis, 1944; and White, 1947). Finally, Vegara (1946) includes the use of complete poems, regardless of length.

The research conception of literature in this decade, as in the first decade of research, expands beyond dictionary meanings of the word which specify the criterion of printed matter. Hallowell (1947) includes oral literature as well. In his work with the Ojibwa, he emphasizes that "with the rise and development of anthropology, it soon became a commonplace that all peoples had an oral literature" (p. 545).

Thus, research conceptions of literature during the forties extended from those of the thirties to include fragments used in tests of comprehension as well as newspapers, magazines, and oral stories of different cultures. This diversity was also paralleled in conceptions of response.

## 2. Research conceptions of response

This decade exemplifies an extreme diversity of conceptions of response as well as literature. Fifteen (65%) of the studies focus on the reader, the role of personality



and the use of literature in daily life and thus are considered reader-oriented. In this decade aspects of the reader explored in research expand to include studies of connections between the readers's values and perceptions, bibliotherapy studies and articles stressing the social relevance of literature. Six (26%) of the studies focus on textual quality and measurement of literary abilities and are thus considered text-oriented. In this group are included for the first time studies of comprehension, which explore ways of getting the meaning from the text. Response-orientations, which focus on the process of developing meaning, are characteristic of only one study. Finally, the single account of a poet's recollection completes the number of studies. The marked characteristic of the decade is the shift towards reader-orientations.

#### a. Reader-orientations

Reader-oriented conceptions of response to literature expand and diversify considerably in this decade. They can be divided roughly into those which stress public or private aspects of response. Reader-oriented studies which stress public aspects can be subdivided into those which focus on the relationship between political behavior and reading (Gray, 1947; Berelson, 1945) and those which focus on the more social and recreational aspects of reading (Waples, Berelson, and Bradshaw, 1940; Strang, 1942). Those which

stress personal relevance of response can be further subdivided into those which focus on changing the reader for the better (bibliotherapy and psychoanalysis) and those which used literature as an observation tool of personality characteristics (psychological). Those studies which centre on changing the reader are explored in the bibliotherapy studies of the latter half of the decade (Allen, 1946; Lazarfeld 1949; Schneck, 1946; Shrodes, 1949). Those response-oriented studies which centre on observation rather than change are represented by the Wolfenstein (1946) study with mothers and children. In this study, Wolfenstein merely makes observations about the mothers' responses to the children's story. Finally, there is a beginning strand of reader-oriented studies which focus on physiological aspects of the ways in which the reader's values affect word recognition ability (Bruner and Postman, 1947; Postman, Bruner and MacGinnes, 1948).

The war seems to have been an important impetus on those studies which focus on the social and political dimensions of response. During the forties, the conviction that response to literature strongly affects daily life seemed to be growing. The social historians Waples, Berelson, and Bradshaw (1940) propose in their book, What reading does to people, that

what is known about the influences of reading by advertisers, publishers, teachers, etc. has never been assembled in one volume for the guidance of those who seek to use print in the public interest. (p. 5)

They stress, in their introduction that "in short, reading is a social process" (p. 30). Significantly, they distinguish between aesthetic experience and leisure reading: "to call enriched aesthetic experience a social effect of reading is thus somewhat improper" (p. 122) and they emphasize that "'reading for fun' or 'just reading' is not spectacular; but it is the predominant type of reading" (p. 123).

Gray (1947) summarizes no fewer than thirteen studies on the effects of reading, the majority with adult readers. He states that "the recent rapid increase in the interest in bibliotherapy is a striking example of the growing confidence in the positive values of reading" (p. 269). He emphasizes political dimensions of response to literature: "the press has tremendous possibilities for promoting individual development and for determining the direction of social progress" (p. 275). He discusses these research studies on the effects of reading under five headings: 1) information and beliefs, for example, Seward and Silvers' (1943) "A study of belief in the accuracy of newspaper reports"; 2) attitudes and morale, for example, Allport and Lepkin's (1943) "Building war morale with news headlines"; 3) public opinion, for example, Berelson's (1942) "The effect of print upon public opinion"; 4) voting, for example, Hartmann's (1936) "A field experiment on the comparative effectiveness of

'emotional' and 'rational' political leaflets in determining election results"; and 5) crime and antisocial behaviour, for example, Frances Fenton's (1911) The influence of newspaper presentations upon the growth of crime and other antisocial activity. Although some of these studies were published before the forties, it is significant that there is continued interest in their results during the forties.

Berelson (1945) is another who explores the social aspects of response to literature. His study explores "differences in political behaviour between users of the library and nonusers, or between people who read more books and people who read fewer" (p. 281).

Strang (1942), similarly, explores the close connection between an individual's response to literature and the response to real life. Her study emphasizes both public and private dimensions of response. In her study, she does not extend her exploration of private dimensions as far as do the psychotherapists. However, her assumption, that "an individual's reading pattern has a central core or radix which, more or less, determines its nature" (p. 4), foreshadows the thinking of Norman Holland concerning reader response by nearly twenty years. The overall implication of these reader-based social studies is that not only does literature have an important effect on daily life, but also the personality and interests evident in the reader's daily

life have implications for the way she or he responds to literature.

The reader-oriented studies which explore private personal dimensions of response with a view to changing the individual by using literature as a means to personal growth and adjustment, include the studies of Allen (1946), Schneck (1946), Lazarfeld (1949), and Shrodes (1949).

The Shrodes (1949) dissertation uses the case study method with fifteen university students enrolled in the instructor's "Directed Reading" course. This course "was to be a course adapted to the needs and interests of each individual student". Instead of class meetings, "there would be occasional individual discussions of the readings, and . . . a plan of reading would be worked out in a preliminary conference with the instructor" (p. 190).

An example of the second group of reader-based studies, which explores responses only for purposes of observation, is the Wolfenstein (1946) study. This laboratory study explores "a subject hitherto scarcely treated in children's stories": the experience of the first child during the mother's pregnancy with the second. The story used, "Sally and the baby and the rampatan", was devised with the aid of a psychologist and a professional writer. The story was concerned with expression of the child's possible ambivalence about the new sibling which would not arouse undue guilt. The study explores the relationship between the

mother's reaction both during and after she reads the story as it modifies the reaction of her child. As well, the appendix of the study includes a description of the father's reaction the story.

Finally, of the studies which focus on the reader, there are the physiological studies of Bruner and Postman (1947 and 1948). Their reader-based conceptions of response are clear:

what the organism perceives, as well as how it manipulates its environment, is at least in part determined by such central factors as needs attitudes and individual habit systems. (p. 69)

In the second experiment with college students, on responses to single value-laden words, these researchers continue to test the related assumptions that "personal values are demonstrable determinants of what the individual selects perceptually from his environment" (p. 143). Perceptual selection, they propose, is "a servant of one's interests, needs and values" (p. 142).

#### b. Text-orientations

Accompanying these reader-based explorations of response to literature as it affects daily life in a democracy are the continuing text-oriented studies. One study is concerned with the effect of knowledge of the author on evaluation of textual quality (Michael, Rosenthal and DeCamp, 1949). This study investigates the relationship between an

author's prestige and the ranking of the quality of the text. These researchers explore two pedagogically-oriented hypotheses:

1. that shifts occur in the degree of preferences indicated for prose and poetry passages following the ascribing of each of the passages to a well known writer;
2. that the amount and direction of the shifts in preferences for passages depend upon the strength of the preferences of the writers associated with them. (p. 304)

Directions to the subjects are as follows:

to rank these authors (poets) according to those whom you consider to be the best authors. Place a number 1 beside the author (poet) whom you consider to be the best, and a number 2 beside the next best author (poet), and so on until you have completed the list of 12 authors (poets). (p. 396)

The researchers point out that, "similar instructions were placed at the beginning of the two collections of prose and poetry selections except the word "passage" was substituted for "author" or "poet" and the word "which" for "whom". (p. 396)

Four other studies suggest a text- rather than reader orientation in their focus on comprehension of the text: "Fundamental factors of comprehension in reading" (Davis, 1944); "Measurement of comprehension of literature and its relation to enjoyment" (Harris, 1946); "Measuring achievement in high school English" (White, 1947); and "Measurement of comprehension of literature" (Harris, 1948).

Davis (1944), working with 421 freshmen in teachers college, seeks to "determine the skills involved in reading

comprehension that are deemed most important by authorities" (p. 185). His assumption is that reading comprehension "is not a unitary ability" (p. 189). This comprehension study, which assumes that meaning is found rather than created by the reader, is the first of its type to be included as research on response to literature.

### c. Response-orientations

The first response-oriented study conducted as part of classroom teaching is that of Vergara (1946). In her study of "a group of college women's responses to poetry", the emphasis is decidedly on the context of response itself. The effectiveness of two different methods of presentation is explored. The first method, oral reading by an instructor, is compared with silent reading by students "with a view to evaluating the contributions made by each" (p. 1). In addition, Vergara:

aimed to determine what factors in cultural background influence readers in their reactions to poetry. Furthermore, inasmuch as readers may also be influenced in their understanding and appreciation of poetry by various elements, such as imagery, symbolism, tone, color, and rhythm, poems in which these elements are present were included in this study. (p. 1)

In this reporting of several experiments, supplemented by individual interviews and questionnaires concerning backgrounds, diverse methods of eliciting and channeling "response" are employed. These range from controlled conditions (during which the responses were timed and



restricted as to length) to more free responses in which the teacher read poems to students, following which they wrote "quite freely on their interpretation of the sense and mood of all the poems" (p. 37). These students also received a number of poems to "read silently and frequently at their leisure" (p. 37), after which they had a group discussion during which "stenographers took notes" (p. 37).

#### d. Author-orientation

Finally, a lone study of its type describes a poet's experience of writing a poem about his childhood (Flourney, 1949). The report of this study takes the form of a brief abstract.

To summarize, studies in the forties emphasize a reader-oriented social and personal relevance of response to literature. The first bibliotherapy studies and the first comprehension studies appear in this decade. The increasing trend toward reader-orientations is due, in part, to the interest in bibliotherapy studies, which suggest that "literature gives . . . (the reader) insight into his motivation and has the power to make him whole" (Shrodes, 1949, p. 329). In addition, the following statement suggests a second reason for the shift from text-based to reader-based emphases in research during the forties:

in these days of crisis, the social implications of various means of communication, including reading, are

uppermost in the minds of many people, for it is in part through reading that decisions of national and international importance are made, sustained and implemented. (Strang, 1942, p. 1)

## VII. Summary

This chapter has explored research conceptions in the three earliest decades of research. During the period from 1910-19, when comparatively few attended college, it was the behaviorist psychologists, rather than educators, who began the research on response to literature. The experiments of Roblee and Washburn (1912) and Givler (1915) focused on the formal properties of text, specifically the pure sound of language, on the assumption that, "apart from the associative power of words, the sounds which compose them . . . exert a not inconsiderable influence on their literary value" (Roblee and Washburn, 1912, p. 579).

During the period from 1920-9, research conceptions of both literature and response expanded. Literary pedagogical researchers added published poetry to the single sounds and words of literature and free written responses to the psychologists' requests for immediate oral impressions. The emphasis in this decade was on appreciation, aesthetics, and image formation, as determined by the text. Response tasks varied. They ranged from judgment of the best version of a stanza, through free association of single words, to written responses to poems. Although some researchers explored individual differences, the emphasis in many studies was on

the text as determining the response. This focus suggested a possibly coincidental correspondence with the incipient interest in New Criticism outside the university.

During the period from 1930-9, most of the studies with adult and college readers focused on poetry or short literary passages. Variable text quality was stressed. Often the original was included with the parodies, or else single stanzas of published poetry were presented with weakened versions. The emphasis was on the sound and the rhythm. Response was concerned with the identification of as well as reaction to the quality of the literary pieces. This predominant emphasis on quality as a fixed characteristic of the text seemed to support the beginning popularity of New Criticism in college classrooms.

During the forties, especially during the second half of the decade, when veterans flocked to the campuses in droves, research conceptions exhibited an expansive diversity in the areas of both response and literature. Not only researcher-devised stories, but also newspapers, plays, novels, pamphlets and oral literature fell under the rubric of "literature". Responses included expressions of reading interest and taste, as well as judgments of quality and psychoanalytic free responses. There were social studies of reading interests, a study exploring the effects of reading on political behavior, and a description of the literature and beliefs of oral cultures. In addition, bibliotherapy

studies in the later years of the decade proposed that literature could be used to change the reader's attitudes and behavior. If Douglas Bush (1949) had attacked New Criticism for its rejection of the common reader who still thought that "poetry deals with life" (p. 20), research on response to literature during the forties decidedly integrated literature with real life.

#### VIII. Conclusion

Research conceptions during this period expanded from physiological and verbal associations to the pure sounds of language. During the forties, research conceptions reached peak in diversity. Oral literature, newspapers, sounds of language, as well as novels and poetry constituted the variety of literature. Responses ranged from judgments of quality to free verbal responses and surveys of reading habits. The inclusion of bibliotherapy studies, studies exploring social and political aspects of response to literature, studies investigating recreational reading habits of citizens in a democracy, as well as the study exploring oral cultures suggested that during the forties, response to literature constituted an essential part of everyday life.

Comparison with foundation conceptions of literature as presented in Chapter Two reveals that although researchers during these decades have generally focused on print, they have not restricted themselves to this aspect. Comparison

with foundation conceptions of response, as presented in Chapter Three, suggests, understandably, only loose correspondence with the general focus on either the reader, or the text, or the response. Most of this thinking was not fully articulated when the research began. However, it could be argued that the seeds of future thinking, such as the response-orientation, are evident in this early research, which has been described as atheoretical (Singer, 1985, p. 630). It could also be argued that researchers have adopted these general emphases merely as arbitrary starting points from which to begin their explorations. In addition to the text-, reader-, and response-orientations which correspond to the foundation conceptions of response to literature presented in this dissertation, researchers also included physiological studies and explorations of reading interests.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## TRANSITION PERIOD: 1950-69

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## I. Introduction

The fifties and sixties mark a transition period in research conceptions of response to literature. While New Critical teaching approaches in college English classrooms reached their height of popularity, spurred by the publication of Brooks (1938) Understanding Poetry, a strong opposing undercurrent of research was coming to the fore with works such as Frye's (1957) Anatomy of criticism and Chomsky's (1957) Syntactic Structures. Important publications in the sixties included the 1968 reissuing of Rosenblatt's Literature as Exploration and Purves' (1968) Elements of literary response, a content analysis scheme of the reader's response which would complement the nearly forty-year old Richards' (1929) scheme of reader response to literature.

## II. Social and pedagogical conditions: 1950-9

During the fifties, world trade volume increased in an environment of economic stability. In both Canada and the United States, economic growth soared: "Canada's GNP doubled - from \$18.4 billion to \$36.8 billion; the American GNP rose 57 per cent, and reached \$600 billion in 1960" (Bennett, 1989, p. 647). It was increasingly evident that Canada's post-war prosperity depended heavily on that of the United States (Bennett, 1989, p. 650). There was talk of free trade between Canada and the United States. However, cautious of American domination, Mackenzie King abandoned the project during his last days in office. The normally friendly Canadian-American defence relationship entered a period of turbulence during the late 1950s. In the United States, Eisenhower's landslide election victories in 1952 and 1956 reflected consensus politics and the censure of McCarthy in December 1954 curbed the political abuse of anti-communism. Outside the country, a system of alliances and military bases bolstered American influence on all continents.

The economic boom of the decade produced an abundance of consumer goods in both countries, the most important of which seemed to be television, although high speed electronic computers also were invented during this decade. Dr. Spock's (1957) child-rearing manual, advocating permissiveness became a bestseller and in Canada the birth rate reached a peak in 1959 (Bennett, 1989, p. 652). An increasing number of women

chose to marry and raise a family, decreasing the percentage of women in the work force from the 1943 figure of 31.4 per cent to the 1953 figure of 23.4 per cent (Bennett, 1989, p. 652). In both Canada and the United States, suburban housing tracts, such as Vancouver's Fraserview and Winnipeg's Wildwood (which were modeled after the first suburban community, Levittown, Long Island), changed life patterns for middle and working classes (Bennett, p. 654). During the same decade, developments in medical research had resulted in the discovery of the polio vaccine (Jonas Salk) and cures for tuberculosis.

Towards the end of the fifties, the launching of Sputnik (1957) unleashed a flood of criticism against Western educational systems. Thus, although some suggest that the fifties were a time of prosperity and conservatism, undercurrents of unrest were mounting.

Phillips (1957) states that total undergraduate enrolment in Canada in 1950 was about 69,000 (p. 212). In the United States, thirty per cent of college-age youths were attending university (Horowitz, 1987, p. 6). The college scene seemed relatively uneventful after its intensive period of growth in the forties. Harris (1963) explains the lack of innovation during the years 1945-60 as being due to such factors as: 1) the curricular changes, recently implemented in the previous decade; 2) the severe financial constraints at Canadian universities throughout the forties and fifties;



and 3) the "increasing preoccupation of members of the teaching staff with graduate work and with scholarship and research" (p. 501).

However, changes were soon to be felt at all North American campuses. Logan explains the uneasy premonition at the University of British Columbia, with the realization that the crest of population growth would soon reach the university:

. . . by 1954 it was becoming apparent that expansion of unprecedented order, not merely in the capital plant, but also in the operating facilities and the teaching staff, would be necessary within a very short time. (p. 209)

Although registration at the University of British Columbia declined slightly in 1952-3, the respite was brief: "five years later, the registration for the session of 1957-58 has reached 8,986, less than 400 short of the highest post-war registration, in 1947-48" (Logan, 1958, p. 177). The increase in enrolment continued unabated to the end of the decade, attributed to such factors as the rising birth rate, increased prosperity and the "growing keenness on university education" (Logan, 1958, p. 177).

In addition, during this period, Logan observes the increasing influx of non-Canadians to the University campus:

In the session 1957-8 more than 1,200 undergraduates, in a total enrolment of 9,000, received their pre-university education in countries outside Canada. (p. 241)

Horowitz (1987) describes the characteristic oblivion of college students of the fifties to the 'real world':

"science and technology were splitting the atom, with its immense dangers and promises, but college men knew better than to take study too seriously" (p. 150). The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1977) concurs: "until the 1960's, it was widely assumed that . . . undergraduate education was 'for' rather than 'by' the students, and nearly all students accepted that proposition" (p. 86). "As freshmen, these college and university students accepted their parents' politics, and became more conservative as they went through college" (Goldsen, 1960, p. 72).

In addition, during this period it was becoming increasingly evident that grades correlated positively with eventual incomes (Havemann and West, 1952, p. 159). Horowitz (1987) concurs that now with nearly a third of American youths between 18 and 21 attending college, less status was attached to admissions and more to grades and graduation (p. 190). However, the seeds of collegiate unrest, like those of society, were being sown. College radicals brought politics surreptitiously back on campus in the late fifties.

In college English classrooms by 1950, the traditional elements of the late nineteenth-century belletristic curriculum had been re-distributed: "Composition" remained a major component of a first-year required course in "English Composition and Literature" while the traditional concerns of "critical" rhetoric were subsumed by senior courses in various topics under "criticism". (Johnson, 1988, p. 869)

Hunt (1990) describes the feeling in many college English classrooms of the fifties:

there was a common language, a very deep and widely shared set of common assumptions about how the world worked . . . When there were disagreements - and there were lots of them, heated ones - they took place within a set of boundaries that we can now see . . . were remarkably narrow and clearly defined. Everyone, at bottom, was a New Critic. (p. 98)

Hubert (1989) points out that at the mid-century, poetics and literature were more important than language and rhetorical arts (p. 157). In addition, he dates the interest in creative writing from the late forties with Earle Birney's inauguration of a course "devoted to practice in imaginative writing - at the University of British Columbia", suggesting that it "typified the strongly aesthetic nature of English studies at mid-century" (p. 330).

However, underlying challenges to the status quo were discernible. Straw (1990) observes that the 1957 publication of Frye's (1957) Anatomy of Criticism ushered in "a new era of literary scholarship ... with the application of a systems approach to the reading and interpretation of literature" (p. 58). During the same year, Chomsky's (1957) Syntactic structures was "storming the Bastille of behaviorism in language and psychology" (Hunt, 1990, p. 100) by stressing the importance of a mental or cognitive "competence" underlying the visible "performance" of language users. Hunt (1990) draws parallels between the respective influences of these two important works, with the emphasis of both on the

importance of underlying structure. He points out that Frye's work represents an important "reconnection of literary texts to each other, if not to the social and physical world" (p. 101).

As concerns the pedagogical situation, the beginnings of a response-oriented curriculum in the classroom can be traced to the English Institute Conference of 1957 (Gerber, 1957). The subject was "Literature and Belief". It attracted speakers as diverse as Cleanth Brooks, Douglas Bush, Nathan Scott and Louis Martz. The general conclusion of this conference was that the literary work must be regarded both as "something apart from experience", and yet at the same time, "grounded in experience requiring our total engagement for understanding and enjoyment" (p. 356).

Berlin (1988) observes that in colleges in the United States "the literary criticism approach to composition often came in tandem with the offering of creative writing courses" (p. 89). This corresponded to Canadian developments in the 1950's, with the beginnings of the creative writing course in 1949. These courses in creative writing were often accompanied by remedial writing courses "for those students who could not cope in the regular first-year course" (Berlin, 1988, p. 91). Hubert (1989) observes that the remedial model took the form of writing labs at McGill and Toronto in the late fifties and early sixties (p. 343).

With the example of scientific research improving the quality of life, it only made sense that educational research would have much to offer in the way of improving schooling. The fifties proved to be the turning point. In 1950, the Kellogg Foundation contributed \$6 million to eight universities for the improvement of training of school administrators. In addition,

from 1956 to 1960, appropriations for research increased tenfold, to \$10 million, and research grants relevant to education were also being made by the National Institute of Mental Health, the Office of Naval Research and the National Science Foundation. In 1966, appropriations for the U. S. Office of Education were more than \$100 million. (Button and Provenzo, 1989, p. 325)

#### A. Research (1950-9): stability and conservatism

The increase in funding during the fifties seems to have had little impact on the research which explored adult response to literature. The number of studies with adult and college readers actually decreased slightly from 23 in the forties to 21 in the fifties (See Appendix 3, Table 5).

##### 1. Research conceptions of literature

In this decade, research conceptions of literature no longer include pamphlets, magazine or newspaper articles. As compared with the forties, there is less variety of genres. Fragments of text, either poetry or prose segments predominate. Eppell (1950), Gunn (1951), and Philip (1951) use stanzas of poetry. Black (1954), Jenkinson (1957),

Schubert (1953), Swain (1953), Thayer and Pronko (1958 and 1959), Weisgerber (1957) and Witzig (1956) use prose fragments. Full-length books are used in both bibliotherapy (Amato, 1957) and survey (Lewis, 1959).

Three uses of genres are noteworthy. Wilson's (1951) study describes the use of not fictional, but nonfictional texts in the bibliotherapy treatment of an attitudinal pathosis. There is also the first research use of theatre performance, described in Matson's (1953) "A study of years of formal education as a factor in audience response to ideational content and treatment in plays". Finally, the first study to make exclusive and extensive use of short stories is that of Ellis (1951), in her exploration of these works as "projective documents" of the author's personality.

Specific examples of works used suggest the diversity. Wilson (1951) uses works such as Release from nervous tension, Victory over Fear, and Psychology applied to life and work in his bibliotherapy. Matson (1953) uses 162 episodes, selected from fifteen plays, such as The adding machine, Death of a salesman and Man and Superman. Britton (1954) uses poems such as Yeats' "I dreamed that I stood", Macleish's "I tell you the generations of man" and Edith Sitwell's "The youth with the red gold hair". Black (1954) uses excerpts from Churchill's "My early life", as well as miscellaneous articles from The Manchester Guardian.

Quality of text is a criterion cited by Eppel (1951) and Britton (1954), who both compare better with lesser poetry. Gunn (1951) seeks variety in his selection of poetry. Thayer and Pronko (1958), whose experiment explores the influence of ethical and moral values on perception, require ambiguity as a criterion.

Reports of research in this decade suggest increasing overt awareness concerning the hazy distinctions between types of text. For example, in his experiment, Witzig (1956) notes the similarities between researcher-devised archetypal and factual passages:

From a theoretical standpoint, the final drafts of the four selections all have many elements of both archetypal and factual nature. This could not, of course be helped because myths must be couched in the language of consciously known facts, and facts, to have meaning, may be contaminated with unknown archetypal influence. (p. 180)

## 2. Research conceptions of response

During this decade, text and reader-oriented conceptions of response seem about equal. There are nine (43%) each of reader-oriented and text-oriented studies, two (10%) response-oriented studies and one author-oriented study.

### a. Text-orientations

Text-oriented studies include tests involving the judgment of quality of literary works (Eppel, 1951; Britton,

1954; Gunn, 1951; Philip, 1951), as well as tests of comprehension of literature (Romney (1950; Schubert, 1953; Black, 1954; Witzig, 1956; and Weisgerber, 1957). Schubert's test compares comprehension and appreciation, as measured by the Iowa reading test and the ranking of four selections in order of literary quality. Weisgerber (1957) examines sensitivity in judging facial emotional expressions as an indicator of reading comprehension ability. Witzig's (1956) study of "the comparative effect on retention of mythological and factual prose" explores the hypothesis that the more archetypic, the more meaningful a selection of prose. The predominant text-orientations of response lead from conceptions of text as "container" of meaning: "a poem can have literary merit whether or not it is comprehensible or pleasing" (Gunn, 1951, p. 102).

#### b. Reader-orientations

Reader-oriented studies include five aspects. The first includes two bibliotherapy treatments: Amato's (1957), "Some effects of bibliotherapy on young adults" and Wilson's (1951), "Treatment of an attitudinal pathosis by bibliotherapy: a case study". The second aspect concerns reader attitudes. Sano's (1950) "College students' attitudes toward literature" asks students to rank fifty statements about the function of literature. The third aspect investigates reading preferences: Wilson's (1956), "Literary



experience and personality" and Lewis's (1959), "Books that Germans are reading about America". The fourth aspect concerns developmental influences: Matson's (1953) "A study of years of formal education as a factor in audience response to ideational content and treatment in plays". Finally, a fifth aspect of reader-orientations concerns studies which explore the relation between perceptions and values (Hallowell, 1951; Thayer and Pronko, 1958 and 1959).

#### c. Response-orientations

Response-oriented studies which focus on the process of arriving at a final response are two: the dissertations of Swain (1953), "Conscious thought processes used in the interpretation of reading material", and Jenkinson (1957), "Selected processes and difficulties of reading comprehension". Both ask their subjects to think aloud about the strategies they use to perform specific comprehension tasks.

Finally, there is a single author-oriented study. Ellis (1951) explores the hypothesis that "personality re-organizational processes are externalised in stories". Her judges independently rate the elements of the short stories and life segments of eight authors including Poe, Twain, Melville and Wilde.

Thus, research conceptions of response to literature are marked by balance between reader- and text-oriented

conceptions. However, text-orientations are distinguished by the increase in studies including comprehension as part of response to literature. Reader-oriented studies are distinguished by studies which explore the relationship between values and perceptions. This balance in research conceptions occurs at a time when New Critical approaches were strong in the college classroom, although the complementary trend toward student-centred instruction is becoming increasingly popular.

Unlike the research of the forties, which included the exploration of daily reading and considered even newspaper articles as "literature", research during the fifties seems, with the exception of the Lewis (1959) study, strikingly unconcerned with the political and social milieu. Similarly, college students work hard, accept societal values, and listen with passive respect to their professors. At the same time, text-oriented researchers such as Black (1954) investigate the "difficulty of training college students in understanding what they read".

### III. Social and pedagogical conditions: 1960-9

The largest sustained capitalist economic boom on record spanned most of this decade. It coincided with rebellion in many sectors of society. Relations between Canada and the United States became strained when Diefenbaker questioned Kennedy's Missile Crisis actions (1962). This

action brought the association between the two leaders "to the breaking point" (Bennett, 1989, p. 635).

During the sixties, the Quiet Revolution dawned in Quebec (1960). There were "Go home Liz" protests against the Queen when she visited Quebec (1964). In the same year, the Maple Leaf Flag was officially adopted. Centennial Year celebrations and Expo '67 coincided with Charles de Gaulle's State Visit to Quebec. In 1968, Trudeaumania was accompanied by the formation of the Parti Quebecois and new concerns about foreign ownership.

In the United States, opposition to involvement in Vietnam, especially among university students (Moratorium Protest, Nov. 1969) turned violent (Weatherman Chicago Riots, Oct 1969). New Left and Marxist theories became popular, and membership in radical groups swelled (Students for a Democratic Society, Black Panthers). Civil rights movements and indignation over the perceived unfairness and biases towards minorities in I.Q. tests characterized the early years of the decade. President Kennedy was assassinated in 1963; Malcolm X was shot in 1965; and Martin Luther King was killed in 1968.

In 1963 Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique described the isolation of the suburban housewife. In 1967 the National Organization for Women (NOW) was founded with chapters in both Canada and the United States. Bennett (1989) points out that: "in Canada, women's liberation movements of

the 1960s and 1970s grew out of New Left student movements" (p. 670).

In the realm of technology, the first human heart transplant was performed on Louis Washkansky by Dr. Christian Barnard in 1967; Apollo 11 landed the first men on the moon (July 20, 1969); and lasers and integrated circuits were new electronic inventions. All contributed to a faith in scientific solutions to problems (such as the "green revolution" in agriculture). The harmful effects of science, it was proposed, could be controlled (1963 nuclear weapon test ban treaty, 1968 non-proliferation treaty).

In the daily life of the sixties, the boundary between fine and popular art became blurred. Examples are the Pop Art of Andy Warhol and rock musicals, such as "Hair" in 1968. A non-political counter-culture developed, rejecting traditional bourgeois life goals and personal habits. The use of marijuana and hallucinogens spread (Woodstock, 1968). College students, having come into their own as a major power, seemed to be at the centre of the revolution.

With respect to the numbers of college students during the decade Zsigmond and Wennaas (1970) state that in 1967-8, there were 372,000 students in Canadian universities. This was a substantial increase from their figure of 91,000 for the year 1951-2 (p. 29). Part-time enrolment increased even more spectacularly, from about 4,100 in 1951-2 to almost 100,000 in 1967-8 (p. 30).

Students in both Canada and the United States entered university with the "vague sense of being special people embarking on a special mission . . . the irony was that there were tens of thousands of young people heading in the same direction . . . the expectations were high, and the universities were not prepared to deliver" (Jasen, 1989, p. 250). They had been too precipitously transformed, "from elite (in the sense of serving a small minority of the population, who would be distinguished by their degrees), to mass institutions" (Jasen, 1989, p. 250). Levitt describes the sense of disillusionment:

Students who had been expecting a first-class passage on a luxury liner soon discovered that they were second-class passengers on a tramp steamer. (p. 34)

Horowitz (1987) points out that some professors also added the fuel of encouragement to growing student unrest: "inspired by modernism, they saw the humane tradition as questioning the culture, not confirming it" (p. 224-5).

Jasen (1989) provides examples which convey the frustration felt by college students of the sixties:

"We . . . protest the impersonality of the university to a point where the statement seems trite", wrote a political science student at the University of British Columbia in 1968 . . . "We are confused by inconsistencies of principles in our universities which degrade them and their position in society", wrote a student at the University of Victoria . . . "We are told that the pursuit of knowledge and the betterment of men are our prime goals, yet our education is determined to a large extent by demands of the economy and job expectations". (Jasen 1989, p. 251)

The university seemed to become a scapegoat for all the ills of society:

Poverty, pollution, the Vietnam war, American domination of the Canadian economy--all these sources of discontent now seemed to implicate the university, which was described as a mere arm of a huge "military industrial complex". (Jasen, 1989, p. 252)

Student dissatisfaction often struck a responding chord in society. Jasen (1989) points out that:

A sympathetic Toronto Star Editorial observed that, "our children are growing up in a world where there are thousands of atom bombs, where our lakes and rivers are polluted, where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, where there is a massive population explosion, and we're not saying anything about it in our courses". (Toronto Star, 12 Nov. 1968 in Jasen, p. 254)

Finally, Horowitz (1987) points out, there were three triggering experiences to the United States campus revolts of 1969-70: 1) the sit-ins of the Civil Rights movements; 2) the expanding age cohort of the baby-boomers, which both separated and united them as a group against the older generation; and finally, 3) the Vietnam war, which threatened college men with the draft upon graduation<sup>1</sup>. Student protest reached its height during the 1969-70 academic year: "there was a total of 9,408 outbreaks; 731 of them led to the intervention of police and arrests; 410 involved damage to property; and 230, physical violence" (Horowitz, p. 234).

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<sup>1</sup> Horowitz (1987) points out that this threat was exacerbated in the mid-sixties when the government "with the intention of ending student deferments for those with low grades - asked colleges and universities to supply rank lists of students" (p. 233).

Jasen describes the rationale for Canadian protests in light of those in the United States:

In Canada, it (the New Left) originated with the peace movement but was deeply affected by the American civil-rights cause, so that by the 1960s the plight of minorities and the poor was a primary concern. The war in Vietnam, though not "our" war, fuelled the movement's growth in the second half of the decade and contributed to a complex vision of Canada as both a partner in and a victim of American imperialism. (p. 252)

As well, Jasen (1989) points out that Canadian student protests had three major domestic causes: 1) unrealistic faith in correlation between the economy and education ("both government and the private sector assumed that the gross national product would increase in proportion to the country's investment in higher learning"); 2) the faith that the study of the arts "was a powerful agent in the protection of our way of life against communism"; and 3) the confusion between military and cultural defenses ("our military defenses must be made secure, but our cultural defenses equally demand attention; the two cannot be separated"<sup>2</sup>). The inevitable result was that, "by the end of the 1950's, knowledge of all kinds was equated, quite simply, with power" (Jasen, 1989, p. 249).

In an interesting synthesis of collegial and national interests, student criticism of the Canadian university curriculum pivoted on the concern for both national as well

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<sup>2</sup>Canadian Royal Commission on the National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, 1949-51, Report, pt 2 (Ottawa, 1951), p. 274-5 in Jasen (1989).

as minority group identity. Woodcock (in Jansen) states that "on every Canadian campus the issue of the curriculum has been raised and the authoritarian activist (students) . . . have demanded that courses be relevant to contemporary issues" (Jansen, 1989, p. 254-5). However, others seemed less sympathetic to the students' causes. In the University of Toronto's Varsity, Bruce Campbell writes that: "the primary concern of students today is establishing self-identity". Lawrence Veysey was another who suggested that "the tendency during the sixties to see arts courses as 'therapy' could lead to the assumption that the aim of education is to study oneself more than anything else" (Jansen, p. 256).

Jansen describes the student's corresponding dissatisfaction with traditional emphasis in English classrooms:

each work was part of a unified literary canon, and the critic-professor was its legitimate interpreter . . . for the already disaffected, a course in English literature tended to reinforce the suspicion that most professors did not seek relevance in their teaching but actively avoided it. (p. 261)

Ravitch and Finn (1987) point out that since the mid-sixties, there was increasing pressure from minority groups as well as "from those who, on principle, opposed the very idea of a canon, and proposed a literature that was contemporary and relevant to their own lives" (p. 10).

The Anglo-American Seminar on the teaching and learning of English was held at Dartmouth College in 1966.



Squire (1971) points out that the result of this conference was the conviction that "active, emotional engagement in the literary experience was seen as a major goal and not one in conflict with the genuine critical response" (p. 223). Squire cites Arthur Eastman's comment on the seminar that this trend amounts to "a preference for power rather than knowledge, for experience rather than information, for engagement rather than criticism" (Eastman in Squire, 1971, p. 223). Marckwardt explains:

All of this does not imply that the sensitivity to literature and the adroitness in the use of language that we seek cannot be achieved by pouring them into empty vessels, that they will come about only through engagement and exercise, and that the idea of exercise without engagement is fruitless (Marckwardt in Squire, 1971, p. 223)

Rosenblatt's (1938) Literature as exploration is reissued towards the end of the decade (1968), most probably, as she hypothesizes, "as one of the signs of the growing reaction against the New Criticism" (Rosenblatt, 1990, p. 103).

Drewwel and DeLisle (1969), who studied the undergraduate curriculum requirements at 322 institutions over the ten-year period, suggest an increased interest in rhetoric. They observe that while "formal requirements in English composition, literature and speech have decreased" during the sixties, "the use of proficiency tests for meeting requirements in writing, speech, and foreign language has increased" (p. 30).

The 1960's saw the undergraduate English course offerings increase from thirty-eight to fifty-three at the University of British Columbia (Calendar: 1959-60 ,pp. 107-111; and Calendar: 1969-70, pp. 51-54). Hubert (1989) sees the sixties as a turning point in Anglo-Canadian English studies. This is suggested by the increasing diversity of courses offered by the end of the decade. These included, at McGill University: linguistics, literary theory, African and Yiddish as well as Canadian and American literatures, and film (Hubert, pp. 334-5). Hubert attributes the increase in interest in communication and rhetoric to the rising cultural belief that "the creation of knowledge itself is intimately related to the human use of language" (p. 351). It would be surprising if the endemic social commitment to re-examination and rebellion did not find correspondences in research.

#### A. Research: return to the reader

In the sixties there are thirty-five studies exploring college and adult reader responses to literature found in the Purves and Beach (1972) bibliography. There had been only twenty-one in the fifties.

##### 1. Research conceptions of literature

During the sixties, literature was represented in research by fragments of poetry and plays, researcher-devised stories and paragraphs, the text of a play, and the first

complete published short stories used with readers, rather than authors, as in the previous decade (See Appendix 3, Table 6).

There is a variety of genres used. Poetry is used in thirteen (37%) of the studies. As well, researchers use: 1) novels (Wilson, 1963; Holdsworth, 1964); 2) prose passages (Carol, 1960; Mahoney, 1960; Nikiforova, 1960; and Hinze, 1961); 3) a variety of genres (Ingram, 1967; Shirley, 1966); 4) dramatic text (Bleich (1969); and 5) short stories (Kingston and White, 1967; Smith, 1968; Chopin and Purves, 1969; and Ostoff, 1969). Finally, Saper (1967) uses with his patients actual case histories as "literature". Thus, poetry is the most predominant single genre in this decade, although the variety of other genres is plentiful.

The poetry includes such works as Donne's "The Good Morrow" and Frost's "Stopping by woods on a snowy evening" (Lawson, 1968; Kamman, 1966). Short stories include Josephine Johnson's "Alexander to the park" (Smith, 1968), Simpson's "I starved for science" (Kingston and White, 1967) and Gorki's "My childhood" (Choppin and Purves, 1969). Novels included Trumbo's Johnny got his gun (Holdsworth, 1968), Salinger's Catcher in the rye, Steinbeck's Grapes of wrath, and Hemingway's A farewell to arms (Wilson, 1963). Drama is represented by the text of Pinter's The Caretaker and Macbeth, Act I Scene VII (Lawson, 1968).

When cited, the criteria for choosing particular works seemed to reflect the orientation of the researcher towards either text, or reader, or else merely the availability of the work for use in the research. At one extreme, many researchers do not cite any criteria for the selection of literature (Nikiforova, 1960; Kingston and White, 1967; Rosenblatt, 1964; Rees and Pederson, 1965). At the other extreme is a researcher such as Lawson (1968). In his construction of a poetry test, his criteria are complex. His selection is restricted to 'familiar' and 'complete' fragments by both American and British authors, which represent both several historical periods as well as various degrees of quality and difficulty. Finally, these fragments must "lend themselves to framing questions". Other text-based researchers seem concerned only that the work was published. Roberts (1968) uses one of his own published poems.

Reader-oriented researchers have criteria which range from the strictly individual to the more general. For example, as is typical in psychotherapy studies, Edgar and Hazley chose poems "that expressed feelings thought to be troubling members of the group" (1969a), or those which "symbolically represented feelings that the patients were unable to deal with" (1969b, p. 29). Less extreme are researchers such as Holdsworth (1968), who specify content of the story as well as brevity and simplicity of vocabulary. On the other hand, Hansson (1964) specifies difficulty as a

criterion, in order that a reader may be challenged. A final example is Livingston's (1969) choice of Robert Frost's four-line, "It bids pretty fair", because of its brevity and also because it "exemplifies poetic diction".

## 2. Research conceptions of response

Of the thirty-five studies in this decade, six (17%) tend slightly more towards the text, especially standardized testing of literature. Nineteen (54%) tend toward the reader, focusing on attitudes, behavior or personality as a factor in response and nine (26%) are response-centred, focusing on the components or dimensions of response, process of developing response or effects of different teaching methods. Thus, although the bulk of the studies focus on the reader's personality, behavior or attitudes, the response-centred studies which focus on the process of developing response are growing in number.

### a. Text-orientations

Although not as strong as reader-or response-orientations, text-orientations of response to literature are still important as part of research on response to literature (See Appendix 5, Table 6). Betsky (1960) discusses the importance of literature to general culture. Other purposes of text orientations include: 1) a comparison of open-ended and multiple-choice items dealing with literary understanding

(Choppin and Purves, 1969); 2) an exploration of components of prose style, as rated by competent judges (Carroll, 1960); and 3) the devising of a test to measure understanding of poetry (Lawson, 1968). Finally, Roberts (1968) tests the hypothesis that the hearing or reading of a poem will have an immediate effect on the subject's creativity. His subjects are given forty-five minutes to draw pictures before and after being exposed to the poem. The results are then judged by a panel of experts. Thus, although text-orientations are few in research of the sixties, the focus among them is generally on evaluation of literary appreciation or comprehension.

#### b. Reader-orientations

During this decade, there is continued growth in the number of studies with a reader-based emphasis. These studies examine the power of the reader's personality both to shape and to be influenced by the work in a profound way. Studies which emphasize the growth of the reader's personal development and insight are the bibliotherapy studies or reports of studies. These include studies such as Edgar and Hazley's "Validation of poetry therapy as a group therapy technique" (1969a) and "Poetry therapy with hospitalized schizophrenics" (1969b), Saper's (1967) "Bibliotherapy as an adjunct to group discussion" and Riggs' (1968) extensive Bibliotherapy: an annotated bibliography.

Other studies are reader-oriented in their focus on the reader's preferences or personality in relation to response. For example, Kingston and White (1967) explore "The relationship of readers' self-concept and personality components to semantic meanings perceived in the protagonist of a reading selection". In Mahoney's (1960), "The literature empathy test: development of a procedure for differentiating between 'good empathizers' and 'poor empathizers'", he has his subjects read different selections to "get a feel" for the personality portrayed. Following this, they answer multiple-choice questions as they believe the fictional characters would answer them. Finally Shirley's (1966) dissertation, completed under the guidance of Ruth Strang, explores by means of a short answer questionnaire and case study interviews, "the influence of reading on concepts, attitudes and behavior of tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade students".

#### c. Response-orientations

Response-oriented studies within the college classroom setting provide increasing evidence of assimilation of reader- and text-orientations. Both the context and the process are becoming important as it influences response. For example, Kamman's (1966), "Verbal complexity and preferences in poetry" explore the effects of different contexts of discussion in preferences of poetic style. Wilson's (1963)

"Responses of college freshmen to three novels" is one of the first experiments to use novels for the purpose of comparing the effects of different modes of response. He investigates the relationship between the study of literature and the dimensions of the evoked response. This study compares free responses written by college students, before and after the study of three novels. Wilson centers aspects of the response in his categories of coding: literary judgment, narrational, interpretational, associational self-involvement, prescriptive and miscellaneous.

→ Bleich (1969), in his article, "Emotional origins of literary meaning" focuses on the process of developing response through the analysis of a written free association to a dramatic text. Hansson (1964) uses a semantic differential to explore the dimensions of response evoked in various readers. And Rosenblatt (1964) describes the free written response of students to Robert Frost's "It bids pretty fair".

One of the most significant contributions to subsequent research on response is Purves and Ripperre's (1968) Elements of writing about a literary work. This coding analysis was derived from analyses of written responses of critics, students and teachers. It was published the same year as the reissuing of Rosenblatt's Literature as exploration. Each of these works seems to have been used in subsequent research to explore the new research emphasis on



the response itself and the force of the reader's perceptions to shape the literary work.

Purves' methodology arose out of the need to describe the process or the constituents of writing about literature . . . Instead of considering a theory of literature or one of the literary work, we had to consider the person who read the work and wrote about his reading. (p. 2)

The elements he derives "should include all the possibilities that lie open to the essay writer each time he confronts a literary work" (p. 3). Importantly, Purves does not restrict these to critical, but also includes "subcritical" and "noncritical" elements (p. 3). The categories are as follows:

- 1) engagement-involvement, "often the object of pedagogical disdain, since it can be highly subjective and unassailable by logic or even persuasion";
- 2) perception, "analytic, synthetic or classificatory";
- 3) interpretation, "the attempt to find meaning in the work, to generalize about it, to draw inferences from it"; and
- 4) evaluation, "the writer's judgment of a work, either personal or objective" (pp. 6-7).

It is the acknowledgment of the first category, engagement-involvement which is so revolutionary. Purves goes on to explain of this category, emphasizing the affective roots of the cognitive: "certainly that form of involvement that is the writer's assent to the work's existence, to the work as both literary event and literary fact, underlies all criticism" (p. 6). This acceptance of the reader's first instincts about the work marks an important turning point in assumptions about response:

It is as if engagement has been viewed as peripheral when it may be at the very heart of our understanding of the meanings readers negotiate. (Tierney and Gee, 1990, p. 204)

This classification scheme, with its acknowledgment of the centrality of the role of engagement in response, answers such a profound research need, that Applebee's (1978) entire bibliography is restricted to studies which use this method of analysis.

The Nikiforova (1960) experiment, although it includes an exploration of the response process, is worthy of mention because it is the last study in the research which focuses exclusively on physiological processes. Nikofova had subjects either vocalize pairs of words or shift a rheostat on and off while they were silently reading a passage. The purpose of this confusing exercise was to discover the extent to which the motor and verbal tasks interfered with the subject's perception of the text. This behavioristic emphasis seems entirely out of step with the main currents of the decade. Its lone presence emphasizes the change in conceptions of response from the early days of exploration of pure sounds and rhythm of language and vast diversity in conceptions of both response and literature. The trend has been a gradual movement from an examination of the text, the effect of single words, and general diversity in the research to a focusing on the reader, an acknowledgment that his emotions influence what he derives from the text and the

embracing of a new orientation in which the context, the transaction, the rhetorical and social process themselves constitute "the poem".

#### IV. Summary

Research conceptions of literature in these decades, compared to those in the first decades of the century, have completely lost their meaning as referring to meaningless syllables. Generally, literature includes excerpts from short stories, exposition, and researcher-devised or researcher-revised stories. Innovations concerning conceptions of literature during these years include: Ellis's (1951) use of short stories as projective documents of authors; Saper's (1967) use of self-selected actual case histories; and Matson's (1953) use of theatre performance. Omitted during this transition period are newspaper and magazine articles used during the forties.

Innovations of response measures during this transition period include the first use by Hansson (1964) of Osgoode's (1957) semantic differential. Another innovation is Roberts' (1968) use of creative drawing as an indicator of response. There was as well the continued use in response modes of group discussion in the classroom, written short answers or multiple choice tests, as well as free responses, both oral and written.

During these two decades, text-based conceptions of response continue to be challenged by the number of reader-oriented studies both inside and outside the classroom. In addition, response-orientations are growing during this transition phase of research. In the sixties, the growing importance of the reader's context, goals, and process of developing response to literature is accompanied by the diminishing value of the text and little mention of the author.

## V. Conclusion

Research conceptions of response and literature during these two decades contrast markedly with those during the first four decades. The number of studies continues to increase. Pedagogical bibliographies still include non-pedagogical studies with schizophrenics and troubled adults. However, the emphasis on the reader has begun to permeate research in the college classrooms of the sixties.

During both of these decades, New Critical approaches are generally dominant in the classroom. Research conceptions of response do not strongly reflect this pedagogical interest. Conceptions of response seem conservative during the fifties, in that text and reader-orientations seem about balanced. During the sixties, on the other hand, there is a decided turn toward the reader, especially in the non-pedagogical studies with adult patients. It seems that

research conceptions thus reflected, in the fifties, the general societal mood of conservatism and in the sixties, the concern with relevance and self-interest.

## CHAPTER SIX: EMPOWERMENT OF THE READER (1970-89)

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## I. Introduction

After the tumult of the previous decade, it could be expected that the seventies would develop the answers demanded by the various radical uprisings. However, as with the previous outbursts of violence, the ensuing sobriety of the seventies came quickly in many areas: economics, natural resources, government, and education. Research of the seventies, similar to that of the forties, did not mirror societal hard times, but instead balanced it with steady optimism and a proliferation of studies. The eighties, and this is an admittedly myopic perception, seemed to end with increased societal optimism. There appeared to be a more noticeable concern for the future, suggested by the emphasis on saving the environment. In addition, there was a convergence of Eastern and Western political ideologies. In research, the move is towards the increasing empowerment of the reader.

## II. Social and pedagogical conditions: 1970-9

This was a decade that was marked with general disillusionment, rising interest rates and a sluggish economy. In Canada, the decade included events such as: the Canada-USSR Hockey series (1972); Trudeau's national oil-pricing policy (1973); the election of René Lévesque and the rule of the Parti Québécois (1976); and the Montreal Olympic Games (1976). By the late 1970s, minorities "were more visible in Canada than in the United States, particularly in the large metropolitan areas of Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver" (Bennett, 1989, p. 765). However, this immigration was not always peaceful and the image or hope of racial harmony was often shattered by sporadic violence (Bennett, 1989, p. 765).

In the United States, energy and resource shortages (national gas crunch, 1975; gasoline shortage, 1979), and environmental problems contributed to a "limits of growth" philosophy that affected politics. Despite isolated incidents such as the first supersonic flight of the British Concorde 002 in 1970, suspicion of technology and the scarcity of financial resources caused major projects, such as the general adoption of supersonic transportation, to be abandoned. Mistrust of big government weakened the support for government reform plans among liberals. School busing and racial quotas, previously the norm, were now opposed (for example, the Bakke decision, 1978). The defeat of the United

States in Indochina (1975); revelations of CIA misdeeds (Rockefeller Commission report June 1975) and the Watergate scandals (1974) resulted in the reduction of the United States' capacity to influence world affairs. Revelations of Soviet crimes and Russian intervention in Africa resulted in a revival of anti-communist sentiment. A severe recession occurred in the United States and Europe during 1974-5. This was precipitated by a huge increase in the price of oil in 1973. Business investment and spending for research declined. Severe inflation plagued many countries (25% in Britain and 19% in the United States).

However, university attendance continued to increase. Harris (1988) gives an example of the burgeoning college enrolment figures:

although as early as 1956, the University of Toronto had agreed to double its full-time enrolment by 1970, thus bringing it to 24,000 students, by 1970, the actual enrolment was 26,000 and by 1975 had increased to 30,000. (pp. 146-7)

As in Canada, Horowitz (1987) points out that "more Americans than ever before attended college":

In 1979 almost 11.7 million entered, 42 per cent more than the almost 8 million ten years before. More than half held jobs . . . a greater proportion were black, female and adults over twenty-five . . . by 1976 students thought it more important to acquire "training and skills for an occupation" and get a "detailed grasp of a special field" than to get along with people or formulate life goals, their strongest preferences in 1969. (p. 250)



The 1970 September class of college freshmen regarded protest as a normal part of college life. This assumption changed dramatically in the spring:

The killings at Kent State University and Jackson State College in May 1970 evoked an outpouring of protest unmatched in earlier periods . . . in the fall, however, an era had ended. The termination of the draft and the winding down of the war, repression, the death of innocents, self-destructive forces within youthful radicalism, a turn in the economy, and ennui worked their way. Protest stopped . . . students suddenly took to their books and began a period in their history that has persisted. (Horowitz, p. 19)

As they returned to their studies, college students of the seventies dropped their earlier concerns for relevance and societal well-being and concentrated on enhancing their competitive advantage for professional schools. Horowitz observes that "the demand that life and learning join was no longer heard; and students separated their private pleasures from academic work" (p. 20). For the students of the seventies, college had become "work". Yuppies characterized the seventies as Hippies had characterized the sixties. The sixties' protests and active concern for society were replaced by the pursuit of private rather than public goals. Jobs, rather than rights, were the focus. Schools continued to come under severe attack: "competency testing appeared in the 1970's, partly as a result of a new - or renewed - way of thinking about what was to be learned and how it was to be measured" (Button and Provenzo, 1989, p. 315).

Further, the universities were not left untouched by the economic crisis: "the fiscal squeeze experienced by universities in the 1970s and 1980s has been mirrored in the economic crisis that has affected the public sector as a whole" (Newson and Buchbinder, 1988, p. 9). In addition, the Carnegie Foundation (1977) pointed out the increasingly close relation between the job market and the humanities. This was suggested by the trend for occupations to require higher educational attainments "without specific regard for occupational performance" accompanied by a second trend for occupations to be upgraded "through educational programs that improve technical performance" (p. 36).

Culler (1988) describes what he considers to be "the other major event in our period, which may transform criticism as decisively as the New Criticism" (p. 14). It is the impact, beginning in the late sixties, of a plurality of critical perspectives, including "linguistics, feminism, psychoanalysis, Marxism, structuralism, deconstructionism" (p. 15). Although these developments began in 1966 "with a conference at Johns Hopkins, which brought together Levi-Strauss, Barthes, Lacan, Derrida, Poulet and others", the greatest impact of these events is not felt until the 1970s (p. 17).

The most prominent argument was that of deconstructionism, which developed out of a philosophical project of Jacques Derrida. Culler explains:

To deconstruct the hierarchical oppositions of Western metaphysics is to reveal them as constructions--ideological impositions--by showing through a close reading of philosophical texts how they are undermined by the discourses that affirm or rely on them. (p. 20)

Barbara Johnson (1980) explains that deconstructionism is a "careful teasing out of warring forces of signification within the text itself" (p. 5).

Bogdan (1990b) observes that:

deconstruction ensures the death - and burial - of the communication model; and it does so by exposing as language games all philosophical pretensions to uncovering truth . . . the text is important for what it does not say . . . the assumed correspondence between words and truth is a myth . . . (p. 159)

Culler (1988) suggests that "a corollary of this (critical plurality) has been the expansion of the domain of literary studies to include many concerns previously remote from it" (p. 15) such as psychology, anthropology and philosophy. He points out that this "loose, doubtless confusing interdisciplinarity . . . might be conceived as a new, expanded rhetoric: a study of textual structures and strategies, in their relations to systems of signification and to human subjects" (p. 17). Hunt (1990) suggests, "it was necessary to consider literary works of art not just in connection with each other, but with all discourse" (p. 101).

Hunt describes the virtual revolution in language comprehension research at the same time:

Within a few years, entirely new, alternative theories of language - examples include the text grammars of writers like van Dijk (1972), the sociolinguistic approach of a William Labov (1972), and the new interest in the pragmatic or "speech-act" theory of John Austin (1962) -

were being generated, theories that attempted to obviate what de Beaugrande calls "the context-free abstractness" of the older methods, and to take account of the importance of social interaction in language groups. (pp. 96-7)

He observes that text linguists such as van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) nominate 1970 as a watershed year because of the widespread realization that it was actual language use in social context, rather than the grammatical analysis of abstract or ideal systems which should be "the empirical object of linguistic theories" (Kintsch and van Dijk in Hunt, 1990, p. 97). Hunt points out that this trend was accompanied by a renewed interest in the importance of story grammars (Mandler and Johnson, 1977; and Stein and Glenn, 1979), as well as scripts, frames and schemata (Schank and Abelson, 1977) in exploration of the understanding of both expository and narrative texts. At the same time, there was a general tendency in cognitive psychology to move away from the word and sentence levels towards larger issues of understanding: "the basic unit of understanding came to be not merely the discourse or the text, but the dyad of text and reader" (Hunt, 1990, p. 97).

At the same time as these important convergences were taking place in the areas of literary theory, reading and linguistics, college English departments found it increasingly necessary to focus on writing skills as well as courses in literary theory. Hubert (1989) sees the year 1970 as offering a "substantial expansion . . . of language and

linguistics, composition and rhetorical theory, and new courses in communication theory as well as in literary theory". He concludes that the college English curriculum had "clearly shifted toward a balance between British and non-British literature, and between poetics and rhetoric" (p. 340- 1).

In 1974, at the University of British Columbia, the composition examination was introduced into English 100

in response to the concern expressed by members of the Department and by colleagues in other departments over the problem of student literacy. At that time, many students coming to UBC were poorly prepared in composition, and the situation was made more complicated by a large influx of students for whom English was a second language. ("History of the English Composition Examination", p. 1)

In American universities, similar changes were occurring:

Prestigious universities institute remedial and 'basic' courses in composition and sometimes impose a competency test to make sure that students have acquired the skills their grades imply. College English issues a call to the profession to submit manuscripts on the question of basics. (Memering, 1978, p. 553)

Rothman (1977) describes the situation at the University of California, Santa Cruz:

It became clear that either UCSC was going to have to admit only those students who were competent writers (thus shrinking the incoming class by maybe 60%) or hire more people to teach writing courses. (p. 484)

Changing needs of the students are also suggested by trends in the college textbook publishing industry:

Publishers are giving increasing attention to the "readability" of textbooks, with the result that in some cases texts are being prepared for college students whose reading skills are those of eighth- or ninth-graders. According to publishers interviewed by The Chronicle of

Higher Education, the market for "rigorous materials" - defined as those written at or above the twelfth grade level has been dwindling. (Carnegie Foundation, 1977, p. 44)

Kolb (in press) describes the reflection of this change in College English literature anthologies, which are often the basis of freshmen literature courses. As late as 1957, when the first edition of Norton's The American tradition in literature was published, Kolb (in press) states that:

the editors . . . spoke confidently in the preface about the task of selecting from a national inheritance the works that would best represent its nature and its values . . . Making 'literary merit our final criterion for selection', the editors assured their readers that 'masterpieces endure'. (no page number)

Kolb documents the gradual change over the ensuing twenty year period, noting that the "newness" of the 1976 anthology stemmed "not from reconsideration or selectivity or choice", but entirely from addition. He notes that the volume seems to be saying, "whatever the tradition may be, . . . we've got it here somewhere". Ravitch and Finn (1987) concur:

Today, there is assuredly no canon, and no one could venture a confident guess as to what is read by American students at any point in their schooling. Many college professors believe that their students have read very little; or that they have read nothing in common, which is more likely the case. (p. 10)

#### A. Research (1970-79): emphasis on response

Unlike the societal and student disillusionment of this decade, research in the seventies continues the shift towards a response-orientation. There are fifty studies in

this decade, as compared with thirty-five during the sixties (See Appendix 3, Table 7).

### 1. Research conceptions of literature

Short stories are used in 18 (36%) of the studies. Poetry is the second most popular genre, used in 17 (34%) of the studies. Three researchers use dramatic text (Bleich, 1971; Holland, 1977; and DeVries, 1973). Two studies use non-fictional works (Alsbrook, 1970; Kigar, 1978). Weber (1973) adds films used in a college film course. Finally, Cornaby (1974) and Peters and Blues (1975) use more than one genre. Cornaby uses two novels, one short story and one poem. Peters and Blues use fragments of novels and short stories.

Reasons given for the use of particular works seem to fall into three categories: 1) they satisfied the demand characteristics of the experiment; 2) the researcher had access to a class using this work; and finally, 3) the content was considered of interest to the reader. An example of the first category is explained in Shedd's (1976) dissertation, "The relationship between attitude of reader towards women's changing role and response to literature which illuminates women's role". She selects Lessing's "Notes for a case history" and Nathaniel Hawthorne's "My kinsman, Major Molineux" because they illuminate women's perspectives. An example of a selection chosen because the class was available to the researcher is Green's (1977) dissertation,

"An investigation of an objective approach and response-centred approach to teaching renaissance poetry in a survey course". Examples of a combined criteria are those cited by Peters and Blues (1978) and Green (1977). Peters and Blues chose Mark Twain's "A double-barrelled detective story" because it was "likely to evoke a number of connotations, alternative and plausible explanations" as well as being "of intellectual and emotional concern to the subjects". Green (1977) chose two renaissance poems not only because that was the content of the class but also because the particular poems "demand a sensory response from their readers" (p. 5).

Other examples of works used include stories such as Faulkner's "Rose for Emily" (Holland, 1975) and Shirley Ann Grau's, "The Beach Party" (Beach, 1976). The Cornaby (1974) dissertation uses two dissimilar novels (Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment and E.M. Forster's Passage to India), one short story (W.C. Williams' "Use of force") and one poem (Gustavsen's "Locked In").

The poems selected include works such as Byron's "She walks in beauty" (Hoffman, 1971) and Wallace's "Moving" (Beach 1972). The Green dissertation (1977) uses two renaissance narrative poems: Spenser's "Bower of Bliss" from The Faerie Queene and Fletcher's "The Bower of Vaine-delight".

Plays read in research include Shakespeare's Lear (Holland, 1977), The Tempest (DeVries, 1973) and Miller's



Death of a Salesman (Bleich, 1971). The Alsbrook study uses non-fiction works such as Allport's The nature of prejudice, Martin Luther King's Why we can't wait, Biesanz's Modern Society, and The autobiography of Malcolm X. The Kigar study uses several genres, both fragments as well as longer works. These include works such as: Updike's "A and P"; Ionesco's Rhinoceros; Jaspers' "Is Science Evil?" Maslow's "Psychological data and Human values" from Towards a Psychology of Being; and Blake's "Proverbs from Hell".

## 2. Research conceptions of response

Of the fifty studies of the decade, it is the response-oriented studies which are predominant. These studies focus on the process of the response, the nature of the components of response and the effects of teacher characteristics or different teaching techniques on student response. Response-oriented studies constitute 30 (60%) of the studies. Reader-oriented studies explore reading preferences and the effects of developmental differences, attitudes and gender on response. They constitute 14 (28%) of the studies. Text-orientations are represented by a research interest in text variables such as genre, rhythm, and narrative techniques on response. They constitute 5 (10%) of the studies. The final study is that of Cooper (1971) which explores general aspects including aspects of the text

itself, methods of teaching in the classroom, and characteristics of the reader.

Several of these studies are concerned with more than one aspect and would fit in more than one category. Generally, if several age groups were included, the study was classified as a reader-oriented study, even if it also explored process and stance.

There are two predominant characteristics of research conceptions of response during the seventies. The first is the focus on the pedagogical context of the response. For the first time in research on response to literature, virtually all studies use students, teachers, critics or professors. There is little mention of studies outside the pedagogical context after 1970.

The second characteristic of research in the seventies is the use of Purves' (1968) Elements of writing about literary response. In 1971, Cooper writes that the foremost content analysis scheme of response was that of I.A.

Richards:

I.A. Richards' Practical Criticism still stands as the classic analysis of the difficulties and stumblings and misreadings of practical critics of poetry, in this case college students . . . (it) is a detailed report on these responses, and it continues to have great influence on studies of interpretation and response and on the teaching of literature in schools and colleges. (pp. 19-20)

During the research of the seventies, however, Richards' physical text seems to have been replaced by the response of the reader as the object of interest. Richards'

exasperation has been replaced with not merely acceptance but interest and admiration in what real readers do (Purves, 1968, p. 6). No fewer than 33 studies during the seventies, of which eighteen include college or adult readers, use these elements in their analyses of response, despite Purves' contention that they were not taxonomical.

#### a. Response-orientations

Most of the studies of the seventies are response-oriented. They focus on the components of the response, the context, the stance, or the process of the developing response as well as for the first time in research, the teacher's response. An example of a study which focuses on the components of the response is Weber's (1973) "The responses of college students to film" in which he asks the subjects to give free written responses after viewing films. In addition, he also explores the process of response with six students giving oral thoughts while viewing the films.

Examples of studies which centre around contextual influences on response explore the differences of various modes of presentation and teaching techniques on response to literature. The study of Beach (1972) seeks:

- 1) to determine the differences between college students' literary responses while reading a poem as measured by a free-association technique (both taped and written) and their responses in a group discussion;
- 2) to determine the effects of completing the free association assignment with a poem on a subsequent discussion of that poem as compared to merely reading it; and

3) to determine the effects of each student's theory of literary response, attitude toward the poem or task and conception of the discussion situation on his response. (p. 656A)

Grimme (1970) also seeks to identify influences of three teaching approaches (New Critical, Experiential reflective and Existential) on the responses of freshman college students to lyric poetry. Vine (1970) explores the relationship between readers' pre-reading affective understandings and cognitive understandings.

An example of a study which focuses on stance is that of Mertz (1972), "Responses to literature among adolescents, English teachers and college students: a comparative study". In this study, the assignment was to write responses from either a pedagogical or informal perspective.

Dollerup's (1970) study, "On reading short stories" focuses on the response process. His purpose is "to establish a basic pattern for the experience of 'intensity' or 'tension' in reading short stories **since many critics speak of these qualities as if their existence is inherent in all works**" (p. 445). Dollerup (1971) asks his readers

to stop and tell anything they noticed while reading but in particular about what pertained to tension, intensity, suspense. They were to tell where and why they stopped. **We stressed the fact that we wanted no "school-like" literary analysis.** (p. 447)

Finally, and especially noteworthy in the response-oriented studies, is the exploration of the teacher's response in studies such as Mertz, (1972), Heil (1974), Major

(1975), Peters and Blues (1975), and McGreal (1976). Heil (1974) explores the relationship among the teacher's personal response to a literary selection, his behavior when teaching the story and his response to student essays on the story. Peters and Blues (1975) hypothesize, "if learning outcomes of students relate to teacher characteristics, then it seems probable that teacher intellectual disposition would relate to student openness in written response" (p. 128).

#### b. Reader-orientations

The second important focus in research of the seventies is the orientation towards the reader. Varieties of reader-orientations include: 1) those which focus on the attitude and behaviour of the reader as affected by literature, or conversely, response to literature as it is determined by the reader's attitudes; 2) those which focus on the reader's preferences and interests; 3) those which explore developmental aspects of response; and 4) a first study which explores the effect of gender on response.

An example of a study which focuses on the attitude and behaviour of the reader as affected by the reading of literature is that of Alsbrook (1970). In his "Changes in the ethnocentrism of a select group of college students as a function of bibliotherapy", he investigates the changes in the ethnocentrism of four groups of adult white students

after reading works such as Raisin in the sun and The Glass Menagerie.

An example of a study which explores how the reader's attitude affects his response is that of Menchise (1972). In her dissertation, "Racial bias as a determinant of literary preferences and patterns of preference and reflection of literary works whose author's race is known", she presents poems to be ranked. One group of poems is presented to the reader with the poet's photo and one group is presented without photo. This was done in order to discover the effect of knowledge of race on response to the works. A second example of a study which explores the effect of attitude on response is that of Auerbach (1974). His dissertation is "The interaction between social attitude and response to three short stories". He investigates adolescent response to three violent and three non-violent short stories in order to determine whether responses were related to initial attitudes toward physical aggressiveness and whether attitudes toward violence were influenced by exposure to such literature. The influence of the turbulent sixties is clearly evident. Studies exploring issues of race and violence are generally isolated to this decade.

An example of a study which explores the reader's preferences is that of Veley (1970). In his dissertation, "Literature and the emotions: a psychology of literary response", he interviews 180 professors. He asks them to cite

what they consider to be the most valuable critical work, in the sense of offering insight to a literary work. He then analyzes the characteristics of these articles.

An example of a study which explores developmental aspects of response is that of Beach and Brunetti (1976), who explore "differences between high school and university students in their conception of literary characters". The college students and tenth graders had to rate literary characters in stories, as well as themselves, by means of an adjective checklist.

Finally, in the various types of reader-oriented studies, is the single study which explores the effect of gender on response, that of Holland (1977) which explores the differences between men and women in their free written responses to King Lear. Thus reader-orientations are distinguished in this decade by the fact that in the research, readers cease to exist outside a pedagogical setting. They are teachers, professors or students. As well, this group of studies includes evidence of societal issues of race and violence, which seemed to attract the most attention during the violent sixties.

### c. Text-orientations

Text-oriented conceptions include those studies which focus on text variables such as genre, formal elements such as rhythm, and various qualities and values perceived as

being in the text, rather than created by the reader. An example of a study which focuses on the effect of genre on response is that of Cornaby's (1974) "A study of the influence of form on responses of twelfth-grade students in college-preparatory classes to dissimilar novels, a short story and a poem". Her purpose is "to determine the influence of the form of a literary work (not only its generic characteristics but also general structure, style tone or literary devices) on the student's response" (p. 15).

Another text-oriented study which focuses on formal elements of poetry is that of Tedford and Synnott (1972) who explore emotional reactions to the rhythms of poetry (iambic, trochaic, anapestic and dactylic) as they were beat out on a snare drum at both a fast and a slow speed. This study explored the hypothesis that "the structure of the poem may be as important as its content, for purposes of therapy as well as aesthetics" (p. 369).

An example of a study which focuses on textual qualities is that of Kigar (1978). He explores the different reactions to a variety of creative axiological and philosophical literary pieces in his study of "the use of value oriented literature at the community college level".

Thus research conceptions are marked during this decade by the increase in number and diversity of response-oriented studies. Accompanying this shift in conceptions of response from predominantly reader-orientations during the



sixties, is a shift towards an almost exclusive research use of poetry and short stories. Coincidentally perhaps, with this interest in the reader as writer, there is the omission of any studies exploring the author, such as those of Ellis (1951) or Rosengren (1968). There is also a general omission of any mention of the author's style in the research report of studies, as was common in the first half of the decade. There is occasionally comment on the literary works, but these are generally discussed as works which stand on their own. There is virtually no mention of the special gifts of the writer or poet.

### III. Societal and pedagogical conditions: 1980-9

Double-digit inflation and high unemployment plagued both Canada and the United States at the beginning of the decade. Furthermore, a severe drop in industrial output and the government's tight money policy strongly influenced the defeat of Jimmy Carter and helped the election of Ronald Reagan as President in 1980. In Canada, Trudeau was returned to power in 1980, the "Non" side triumphed in the Quebec Referendum, and Terry Fox's Marathon of Hope (1980) was launched. By 1983, interest rates and inflation had decreased and during the mid-eighties, North America experienced a stock market boom. However, October 19, 1987 was dubbed "Black Monday" because exchanges experienced the largest one-day stock market decline. Other Canadian

highlights during the decade were the implementation of the National Energy Program, the Patriation of the Canadian Constitution and the Anti-Cruise missile testing protests. The first woman Governor General, Jeanne Sauvé, was appointed in 1984, the same year in which Brian Mulroney's PC party was elected in a landslide victory. The year 1985 was marked by the beginning of Rick Hansen's "Man in Motion World Tour". This decade also saw the signing of the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the United States.

Although the beginning years of the decade were troublesome for USSR, with three heads of state dying in office (Brezhnev, 1982; Andropov, 1984; Chernenko, 1985), the eighties ended in astonishing harmony between the East and West with Gorbachev and Reagan in 1985 pledging a "fresh start". In addition, peace was now becoming a way of life in North America. Some of the more distressing highlights were the Iranian Hostage Crisis (1979-81), the Mexico City earthquake (1985), the Challenger explosion and the Chernobyl disaster (both in 1986), the Oliver North scandal (1987), the San Francisco earthquake (1989) and the revolt in Tianamen Square (1989). More optimistic news included: the Gorbachev and Reagan signing of the missile treaty (1987); Geldoff's Live Aid concert to aid Africa's famine victims, which was broadcast to over a billion viewers (1985); and in 1989, the end of the Berlin Wall.

In both education and society generally, literacy was stressed as an essential priority. Applebee, Langer and Mullis (1987) proposed that contemporary society is structured around the literacy of its citizens (p. 6). And Kearns (in Applebee et. al. 1987) suggested: "literacy - real literacy - is the essential raw material of the information age . . . by 1990, three out of four jobs will require some education or technical training after high school" (p. 3).

Hanssen, Harste and Short (1990) explained the new challenge for education at all levels to surpass its former standards:

although more middle, high school and college students can answer simple questions about what they have read . . . these conclusions represent old values in which the transmission of information was the goal. (p. 259)

In Canadian universities, total undergraduate full-time enrolment had increased to 354,503 in 1981-2. This was an increase of more than 100% over the 1962-3 enrolment of 132,700 (Hubert, 1989, p. 342).

At the university level, along with the increasing societal concern about literacy, there was concern about the "death of the humanities": "the humanities . . . have been engaged in a kind of preemptive surrender to a set of challenges that grow ever stronger and more apt to encroach precisely because of the weakness of the defenders" (Finn, Ravitch and Roberts, 1985, p. 6). The communicative function of language had been seriously questioned by both

deconstructionism and the abolishment of the canon by inclusion of "something for everyone".

Graff (1985) describes the challenge within English departments, dealing with increasing pluralism in literary theory:

If institutional history continues to run to form, we can expect literary theory to be defused not by being repressed but by being accepted and relegated to the margin where it will cease to be a bother. This indeed has already happened . . . To avoid . . . conflict, the university merely **adds** another unit to an aggregate which remains otherwise unchanged. (p. 67)

The similar movement in college anthologies and even college curriculum itself has been noted in the discussion of the seventies. However, these changes did not seem to lead toward empowerment of the student or the professor. Hanssen, Harste and Short (1990) observe that:

what we currently see being taught in classrooms - regardless of grade level - is a standard body of texts, primarily narrative, preselected for use by someone other than the teacher or students . . . at the secondary and college levels, publishing houses and editors of anthologies do the selecting. (pp. 259-60)

As concerns teaching techniques, Goodlad (1984) comments that, contrary to seemingly dramatic changes in pedagogical practice, the secondary and college teacher still merely explicates the meaning of the text and highlights major literary elements. Hanssen, Harste and Short (1990) agree about the need for improvement evidenced in the persistent belief at the college level that "techniques of

literary explication . . . are painful but necessary steps to gaining the correct meaning from a text" (p. 260).

Hubert (1989) points out that although there has been much change in English programs from those twenty years ago, "the thrust of Anglo-Canadian universities is still strongly literary, and many attitudes deriving from the pre-1960 curriculum still remain" (pp. 343-4). However, he also notes that Canadian College English programs, as evidenced by the increase in rhetoric courses, seem to be in the process of a shift in emphasis from poetics to rhetoric, predicting that "programs in speech will undoubtedly follow" (p. 352).

Hunt (1990) sees the current trends as having their foundations in the new priority placed on the social aspects of interpretation:

the current consensus is clearly that because readers act as participants in social circumstances influencing their goals, expectations, and strategies, any specific instance of reading - and thus, reading in general - cannot be understood except as part of an entire social situation . . . reading is as much a function of the social situation of classrooms as of either the structure of the text or the psychological makeup of individual students. (p. 98)

He concludes that "the socially communicative function of language becomes more and more a matter of primary concern and not something to be factored out or dealt with later, after the 'simpler' problems are solved" (p. 98).

## A. Research (1980-89): Context predominates

During this decade, the number of studies increased from 50 during the seventies to 64 during the eighties. As in the seventies, these studies were marked by the preponderance of short stories and poems to represent literature, as well as an orientation which emphasized aspects of the response over those of the text or the reader (See Appendix 3, Table 8).

### 1. Research conceptions of literature

As in the seventies, short stories and poems are the most popular research genres. Short stories are the most popular genre, being used in 28 (43%) of the research studies. Poems are used in 22 (34%) of the studies.

One of the most popular authors in research of the eighties is Hemingway. Hemingway stories used by researchers include: "Cat in the rain" (Miall, 1988); "Hills like white elephants" (Flynn, 1986); "The Killers" (Jacobsen, 1982); "Old man and the Bridge" (Hunt and Vipond, 1985); "Indian Camp" (Hunt and Vipond, 1985); and "Mr. and Mrs. Elliot" (Clayton, 1980). Dorothy Parker's story, "But the one on the right" is used in the studies of Zaharias (1986) and Zaharias and Mertz (1983). Two other Parker stories, "A summing up" and "The patron and the crocus" are used in Miall (1988). Finally, Virginia Woolf's "Kew Gardens" is chosen by Flynn (1986) and Jacobsen (1982).

Examples of poems used include Coleridge's "Frost at midnight" (Miall, 1985); e.e.cummings' "in Just" (Zaharias, 1986); and Dickinson's "I like to see it lap the miles" (De Beaugrande, 1987). Robert Frost's poems are used in several experiments: his "Out, out" in Zaharias (1986); and "Once by the Pacific" in Petrosky (1982). Other examples of poems used are: Shakespeare's "Sonnet 138", selected by Petrosky (1982); Swinburne's "A ballad of dreamland" used by Kintgen (1986); and Dylan Thomas' "Fern Hill", chosen by Miall (1986).

Reasons for selection of particular works are similar to those cited in the seventies. Sadoski, Goetz and Kangiser (1988) choose their stories because of their inclusion in literature anthologies, similar plot structure and the fact that they were those types of stories "often read for entertainment" as well as being "commonly used in education" (p. 325). Zaharias and Mertz (1983) choose their stories because of diversity in structure, form, content and length.

In his study, De Beaugrande (1987) cites three reasons for selecting poetry: 1) "it is essential that students can survey the entirety of the text"; 2) "the shortness of the poem is balanced against a greater density or concentration of possible meanings" and 3) "many theorists, at least since the Formalists, have judged poetry to be the central instance of literature" (p. 147). Miall (1985) selects Coleridge's "Frost at midnight" not only because it is accessible by readers with little or no previous experience of poetry of

the period, but mainly because it contains a fairly clear set of contrasting elements and thus will lend itself to the repertory grid technique, which he uses to measure his readers' responses. Zaharias (1986) selects e.e.cummings' "in Just" on the basis of its complexity, appeal and appropriateness to college readers; Svensson (1987) chooses poems which are short, of approximately the same length, written by well-established Swedish authors, in a style comprehensible to children and containing at least one motif which is symbolized.

In addition to the predominance of the short story and the poem, there seems to be a growing interest in novels (Salvatori, 1983; Radway, 1984; Crowhurst and Kooy, 1986; Nell, 1988b) Finally, a few studies use researcher-devised stories (Jose and Brewer, 1982, Meutsch, 1987), short expositions (Lytle, 1982) or expository prose (Maclean (1986) as "literature". Experiments with adult readers of the eighties include neither film nor dramatic text. Thus, in research of the eighties, as in the seventies, the literature used is generally easy to read, its content is of interest to the reader, and it lends itself to the experimental conditions.

## 2. Research conceptions of response

Research conceptions of response during this decade, even more than the seventies, seem dominated by Rosenblatt's



idea of "response" as an event. Response-oriented studies, which centre on explorations of stance and process, constitute 35 (55%) of the studies. Reader-oriented studies, which focus on cross-cultural effects, effects of attitudes, personality, gender and developmental aspects, constitute 21 (33%) of the studies. Text-oriented studies, which focused on text variables such as structure, interestingness, influence of the narrator's voice on response constitute 8 (13%) of the studies. Often, as in the seventies, response and reader-orientations as well as response as influenced by text variables seem equally important in several studies. However, in the categorizing of these studies, the attempt was made to determine the primary focus. If the text was manipulated, the study was classified as text-oriented. If the response style was determined by personality, it was categorized as a reader-oriented study unless the focus was on the process of the developing response. Generally, the title and purpose were given the most weight in categorizing the studies unless the general orientation of the report emphasized a different aspect.

In research of the eighties, the highly subjective and negotiated foundation of response to literature is acknowledged:

All meaning, even the 'most literal', presupposes specific and socially distributed, shared knowledge and strategies . . . (Svensson, 1987, p. 477)

Kintgen (1985) reflects:

It is never clear whether a particular statement reflects knowledge of the work or conception of the rhetorical situation . . . a poem may refer to anything past, present or future, real or imaginary, and most good poems exist in a mode that makes these terms seem inadequate. (p. 135)

This thinking is also suggested in explicit hypotheses to be tested. Hoffstadter (1987) proposes that "poeticity is a product of poetic text processing rather than a property of texts". Sadoski, Goetz, and Kangiser (1988) "investigate the convergence and divergence of several aspects of reader response to selected short stories read in a classroom situation" (p. 320). Meutsch (1987) asks, "do encoding procedures differ for literary vs. non-literary understanding?".

#### a. Response-orientations

Response orientations, as in the seventies, continue to centre on process, components and stance. Often within particular response-oriented studies, even though one of these aspects seemed predominant, each of these was included. In addition, studies of the teacher's response, which were explored by several researchers during the seventies, are represented by only one in the eighties, that of Hillocks (1989).

An example of a study which focuses on the process of the developing response is that of De Beaugrande (1985). In

his study, "Poetry and the ordinary reader: a study of immediate responses", he gives his students an "unannounced test" during final class interviews. He asks them to read a poem aloud, and then explain it, first from memory and then with the text in front of them. A second example of a study which focuses on the process of developing response is that of Lytle (1982). In her dissertation, "Exploring comprehension style: a study of twelfth-grade readers' transactions with text", she seeks to describe "individual differences of in-process reading comprehension style, particularly responses to comprehension difficulties encountered while reading".

In De Beaugrande's (1987) "The naive reader: anarchy or self-reliance?", he explores the process of response strategies of naive college readers. In this study, De Beaugrande also comments on the nature of their responses. He applauds the ingenuity of the readers' obvious (in the traditional sense) misreadings of Dickinson's poem, "I like to see it lap the miles". More than half of the respondents in this study, undergraduates who "report having little contact with literary works in their prior schooling and even less outside the school" (p. 147) saw the poem as being about a horse (p. 163) rather than a steam engine. In a dramatic contrast to Richards' (1929) impatience with misreadings, De Beaugrande defends them:

To say that these naive respondents "got it wrong" much of the time would be to miss the point. Instead of being

stumped because they were not familiar with the steam-engine train, they devised other solutions which accounted for an impressive amount of the metaphors, similes and images. (p. 168)

The Hillocks and Ludlow (1984) study is an example of a study which focuses on the components of response. In "A taxonomy of skills in reading and interpreting fiction" these researchers propose a hierarchy of "skills in the interpretation of fiction" which can be "discriminated from each other and organized taxonomically through logical analysis" (p. 7).

An example of a study which explores stance in a theoretical way is that of Vipond and Hunt (1984) who propose that readers can adopt one or a combination of several reading stances: point-driven, information-driven or story-driven. Their 1985 work, "Crash-testing a transactional model of literary learning" involves the use of several different interpretational contexts of response for their subjects. In three different experiments reported in the articles, they emphasize the reader, the text or the situation of the reading transaction. For example, in the reader-oriented experiment, which compares the responses of professors and college students, they ask for think-aloud responses after every page, as well as answers to open-ended questions and the completion of both probe and highlighting tasks. They propose that novices tend to read from a story-driven stance whereas expert readers (professors) tended to respond in a

point-driven way.

In another study exploring stance, Wade-Maltais (1981) explores the difference between the stance of public and private response. She asks "whether responses of four groups of community college students to a short story would converge towards the text, regardless of the instructional approach; whether the students' public responses would converge towards instruction while their private responses converged towards the text when no audience expectations were provided".

Thus, as in the seventies, it is increasingly difficult to categorize studies into one or the other category. The boundaries between response- and reader-orientations are becoming increasingly blurred and a study such as that of Svensson (1985), which explores developmental differences in readers' responses, also includes stance as important aspect of response. He asks his readers such questions as "What do you think the poem is about? Why? Could it also be about "a" (non-symbolic or symbolic interpretation, whichever alternative stance the subject did not initially take)?

#### b. Reader-orientations

Reader-orientations include a focus on developmental aspects of literary response, response preference styles, the influence of personality, culture, gender and attitudes and beliefs on response. The studies in which literature is

perceived as changing the personality, attitudes, or beliefs of the reader have dropped out in this decade.

Generally, those studies which explore the responses of different age groups or educational levels to response, were classified as developmental. An exception was the work of Crowhurst and Kooy (1986), "The use of response journals in teaching of the novel". This study, though describing the responses of two different age groups, seemed more centred on the process of developing response through journal writing.

An example of a reader-oriented study which focuses on developmental aspects of response is that of Uffman (1981), "Responses of young children and adults to books with a lesson". In this study, the responses of adults to children's "books with a lesson" such as Carie Carol's (1979) A rabbit for Easter and Mark Bown's (1979) Arthur's eyes were compared to the responses of first-graders, who listened to the story. A second example is the Svensson (1987) study, in which he predicts that "the number of interpretive responses, including symbolic interpretations, increases with age" (p. 471). A third example is Amigone's (1983) dissertation, "Apprehending a literary work of art: a comparative study of interventions into a poem by experienced and inexperienced readers". The question she asks is, "what do experienced and inexperienced readers do to a work of art in the process of reassembling or constituting it . . . are experienced readers

willing to alter their responses to a poetic work of art when presented with new and unfamiliar perceptions of that work?"

An example of a study which focuses on response preference style is that of Coss's (1983) dissertation, "The responses of selected groups to social, objective and affective theories of literature". In his study, he asked his subjects to respond to a poem itself, to statements about the poem and finally to statements about theories of literature.

An example of a study which focuses on the influence of personality on response is Kintgen and Holland's (1984) "Carlos reads a poem". In this study, after Carlos gave a think-aloud response to a poem, he was given an I-test, which explores questions such as , "If you could be any animal you wanted, what animal would you choose to be?" and "What activity do you like most?". The researchers point out that "any given reading of an I-test . . . like the reading of a poem . . . involves the personality of the interpreter" (p. 480). The conclusion of Holland, based on the I-test, which he interpreted "not knowing Carlos' treatment of the poem" (p. 482) is that "one would expect from Carlos a carefully observant and artfully phrased account of the poem, but above all a reading that is active, vigorous, controlling and dominating" (p. 482). Although the researchers go on to discuss also the relation between communal and private aspects of response, they point out that the individual

"identity themes", involving the reader's attitudes and beliefs, can be traced in his response.

A study which explores the effect of culture on response is that of Noda's (1981) dissertation, "Literature and culture: Japanese and American reader responses to modern Japanese short stories". This study attempts "to understand the nature and extent of the impact of culture upon the reading transaction" (Noda, 1980). This is a case study of two college readers of different cultures, the American reader reading a translation of the Japanese stories, and both readers responding to the stories in extensive interviews.

An example of a study which explores the effects of reader attitudes and beliefs is that of Banks (1987). He explores the changing attitude toward the novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin, as suggested by newspaper articles and reviews of the novel during the three years after its publication.

### c. Text-orientations

Text-orientations of response during the eighties no longer focus on quality, as they did during the first half of the century, but on the influence of text structure, genre, and attributes such as text "interestingness", the use of evaluative words, values in literary texts, and the effect of the narrator's voice on response.



An example of a study which focuses on text structure is that of Miall (1985). His study, "The structure of response: a repertory grid study of a poem", despite its title, proposes that "certain elements of the poem are related in a way which is internally coherent, and that this coherence would be reflected in readers' responses regardless of individual differences" (p. 257).

Hunt and Vipond (1985) focus on text elements in one of their experiments. Subjects read two versions of a short story, one in which evaluative words such as "crowded" and "tramped" were replaced by non-evaluative words such as "came" and "walked".

Fowler and McKormick's (1986) "The expectant reader in theory and practice" is an example of a study which explores genre expectations. These researchers propose that readers have different genre-dependent expectations about genres such as fairy tales, fables, parables and short stories.

Jose's (1984) "Story interestingness: goal importance or goal attainment difficulty" has students of varying grade levels rate four versions of four different stories for goal importance and difficulty as related to interestingness. It could also be argued that this investigation is reader-based. However, the emphasis stressed is on judgment of interestingness as it exists in the story.

Finally, during the eighties, there is a new emphasis on writing as a means to developing and enhancing response

and a new interest in studies which explore pleasure reading. Although 16 (25%) of the studies in this decade use free writing as modes of response, several centre their attention on the writing process itself. These studies (Crowhurst and Kooy, 1986; Vardell, 1983; Salvatori, 1983; Van DeWeghe, 1982), which regard writing as a way of enhancing response, take the constructionist viewpoint to its ultimate perspective. The Crowhurst and Kooy (1986) study proposes that it is the "spontaneous responses to the work" which form the basis of the "initial response that they (the students) must be helped to build into a sounder, fuller understanding" (p. 256).

#### d. Studies of ludic reading and explorations of psychic space

The last group of studies are unique in the research and may be suggesting a completely new research orientation which does not prioritize articulation and reading as work, but instead prioritizes the inarticulate response which characterizes leisure or "play" reading. Two of these explore pleasure reading outside of school (Radway, 1984; Nell, 1988). The third, although asking for a response, elaborates the connection between "literary space" and "play space" (Jacobsen, 1982).

The Nell (1988b) study reported in the Beach and Hynds bibliography is an article in Reading Research Quarterly, which summarizes very briefly the extensive six-year work

consisting of five separate studies, which are reported in his (1988a) Lost in a book. Nell coins the term "ludic reading" to describe spontaneous pleasure reading. His five studies consider: 1) the relation between reading ability and reading habits; 2) reader speed and variability during natural reading; 3) reader rankings of books for preference, merit and difficulty; 4) the physiology of ludic reading; and 5) the "sovereignty", or personal significance of the ludic reading experience. His major assumption throughout, is that there is more to reading than the "hard work" of articulated response required in classrooms. He proposes, through his studies, that ludic reading is extremely important and worthwhile and should not be dismissed with the pejorative "escapism".

The Radway (1984) study seems to go even further in exploring, not merely pleasure reading itself, but the reading of what is generally recognized as books of inferior literary quality. Her study, reported in Reading the Romance, explores the reading habits and satisfactions of historical romance readers. This is a serious, empathetic study written by a feminist who takes seriously the goals of these avid readers. She proposes that the intense reliance on these books suggests strongly that they "help to fulfill deeply felt psychological needs" (p. 59) . . . to "give the reader a strategy for making her present situation more comfortable without substantive reordering of its structure" (p. 215).

Jacobsen (1982)'s study explores the question of whether readers' actual accounts of reading literature would "describe a realm of experience that was neither inner psychic reality nor external reality but at the interplay between there being nothing but me and there being objects and phenomena outside omnipotent control" (p. 25). She asks her readers highly unusual questions:

Would you please describe your experience while reading passage 1 or 2. Refer to bodily, mental and emotional aspects of the experience. Where do you feel you are during the reading? In contrast to your usual sense of yourself? Draw a picture or diagram of yourself reading the passage. (p. 30)

These new reader-oriented studies present thoughtful challenges to the predominantly problem-solving academic and research reading situation. Other researchers, too, question fundamental research assumptions:

. . . virtually nowhere except in reading research laboratories (and sometimes, in classrooms) do people actually read with purposes as general, depersonalized and ineffective as "learn the information in this text" or "remember the structure of the poetry". (Vipond and Hunt, 1987, p. 132)

In addition, Miall (1986) underlines the unnaturalness of the traditional teaching of literature. He points out inequities in power: "where a student is reading, the teacher is rereading" (p. 188). He concludes, "neither texts nor the teachers are sacrosanct" (p. 194). These open challenges of the intrinsic ethical and moral importance of response to literature, continue the interest in reading preferences

(Foster, 1936) and acceptance of laughter, rather than distress when confronted with textual misreadings (Pickford, 1935a and b).

#### IV. Summary

Research conceptions of literature during the seventies and eighties are represented primarily by short stories and short poems. As concerns research conceptions of response, the non-pedagogical, bibliotherapy studies as well as the comprehension studies, both of which appeared in the forties and lasted until the sixties, are no longer included.

Innovations concerning literature during the seventies, compared with the sixties, include the use of film (Weber, 1973) as well as the concurrent use of several literary genres in a single experiment (Cornaby, 1974). During the eighties, innovations in the research concept of literature included published children's stories (Uffman, 1981) and different (though certainly not better or worse) versions of poetry (Hoffstaedter, 1987), neither of which were included during research of the seventies. Accessibility and reader consideration are mentioned more often than textual quality as criteria in the selection of literature. Accompanying this emphasis on reader consideration is a general omission of any acknowledgment of the talent of the author. There is little mention of the poet as an artist with

special insight. This reference was characteristic of many of the studies of the twenties, thirties, and forties, in the works of both psychologists as well as those from a literary background.

Conceptions of response during the seventies and eighties are decidedly response-oriented. Of the fifty studies of the seventies, the response-oriented studies constitute 30 (60%) of the total. They focus on the process of the response, the nature of the components of response and the effects of teacher characteristics or different teaching techniques on student response. Reader-oriented studies constitute 14 (28%) of the total. They explore reading preferences and the effects of developmental differences, attitudes and gender on response. Text-orientations during the seventies constitute 5 (10%) of the total. They focus on text variables such as genre, rhythm, and narrative techniques on response.

During the eighties, the change is slight. Response-oriented studies constitute 35 (55%) of the total. They centre on explorations of stance and process. Reader-oriented studies constitute 21 (33%) of the total. They focus on cross-cultural effects, effects of attitudes, personality, gender and developmental aspects. Text-oriented studies, which focused on text variables such as structure, interestingness, influence of the narrator's voice on response constituted 8 (13%) of the total.

The primary difference in research concerns between the seventies and the eighties is that in the research of the seventies, the influence of the turbulent sixties seems reflected in some of the research interests. There are several studies exploring the response of the teacher (Mertz, 1972; Hiel, 1974; Major, 1975; McCurdy, 1975; Peters and Blues, 1975; and McGreal, 1976). In addition, there is a unique research interest in issues concerning race (Menchise, 1972), violence (Auerbach, 1974) and death (Vine, 1970). These concerns are not evident in the research of the other decades.

A final characteristic of research shared by these decades is the emphasis on free written response. Response tasks which include free written responses number no fewer than 14 (28%) during the seventies and 16 (25%) during the eighties.

## V. Conclusion

During these decades, research conceptions of response to literature have moved away from the focus on the reader in the sixties. In the seventies and eighties, there is a decided emphasis on response. Most of these studies examine the process and the components of the response, often as affected by varying stances or contextual elements of the response. There is also consideration of the student reader as creator and writer. This increasing empowerment of the

reader in research recalls Bleich's conjecture nearly twenty years ago (1969):

Where we invest ego into our meanings and thus call them "true", the author invests ego into his meaning and calls it "art". It is not inconceivable that critical pleasure and creative pleasure are, after all, the same and that the truth and/or beauty associated with these two experiences are created by identical psychological mechanisms. (p. 40)

The general confidence in the inherent abilities of the college reader has been accompanied by the presence of two highly unusual studies, the Radway (1984) and the Nell (1988). Although only two in number, they are highly significant studies in that they valorize pleasure reading in a way which has not been done ever before in research. Thus the research period explored ends with the suggestion of a reversal of power positions between the reader and the author. The reader or the student during these decades is the writer. Finally, the research ends with a seriously considered research proposal to respect not only the work, but also the play or ludic aspects of reading.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

## SUMMARY

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## I. Overview

This chapter begins with a summary of the ideas presented in each of the chapters thus far. This general summary is followed by conclusions concerning the relationship between research conceptions of response to literature and the following: 1) foundation conceptions; 2) changing societal conditions; 3) changing college English classrooms; and 4) changing images of the college student. This chapter precedes the conclusion and a look toward the future.

## II. Summary of Chapters One through Six

This dissertation has explored conceptions of response to literature in research exploring the responses of adult and college readers. In order to better understand the research conceptions, they were compared with foundation

conceptions, as developed through theoretical discussions of dictionary meanings of the terms "literature" and "response". The research conceptions were presented in light of changing societal conditions and pedagogical values.

The first chapter provided an introduction and overview of the dissertation. It summarized the significance of the dissertation in terms of general significance of response to literature, significance of research on adult readers' response to literature, and significance of an examination of assumptions of this research. This was followed by the theoretical framework of the dissertation, including a discussion of the nature of perception, the conceptual method of clarifying the concept "response to literature", and the pedagogical value of examining conceptions. The problem formulation section indicated the large scope of dictionary meanings of both "literature" and "response", and the possibility of historical change in dominant conceptions in the areas of research. The statement of the problem was that the suggestion of a general shift in emphasis from the text towards the reader in research on response to literature has not been fully documented. Its underlying assumption, that there are historically predominant research conceptions, as well as possible reasons for these shifts, has also not been detailed. This statement of the problem was followed by specific questions to be

answered, procedure, methodology, and overview of the dissertation.

In Chapter Two, the discussion of the concept "literature" began with a summary of its etymology, followed by a description of dictionary meanings. Literature was considered as physical and then as aesthetic artifact. In both instances, the importance and general characteristics were reviewed. The discussion closed with the observation that literature could not be designated aesthetic by intrinsic criteria alone. In fact, literature, considered as aesthetic artifact, could be either a writer's special use of language or a particular stance adopted by a reader.

Chapter Three constituted the second perspective from which research conceptions of "response to literature" were examined. It centred on the perception of literature, less as an artifact and more as it is understood in the mind of the reader, as far as it is possible to separate these two dimensions. Like the exploration of foundation conceptions of literature, the discussion of conceptions of response to literature began with the foundation of dictionary meanings of "response", first historical and then contemporary. This was followed by a summary of the importance of response to literature in our society. The predominant forms of response, either articulate or inarticulate, were discussed as well as the differences and similarities between responses to nonhonorific and aesthetic literature. The discussion next

turned to the central issue in the exploration of articulated response. This epistemic issue involved three orientations or tendencies on the arbitrarily-chosen text-reader continuum. These were: text-oriented, reader-oriented and response-oriented. Examples from literary theory illustrated aspects of these different focuses as concerns the author, the text and the response. General differences as well as underlying similarities were delineated. Although there were many shared areas of agreement, the different orientations were derived by emphasizing the areas of disagreement.

The central emphasis of the next three chapters centred on conceptions of response to literature as they were realized in the research. These were presented in the context of both the foundation meanings delineated in Chapters Two and Three as well as in light of prevailing pedagogical and societal conditions.

Research conceptions appeared to separate into three major periods. The first period (1900-49), described in Chapter Four, was a time of growth, culminating in a peak in the diversity of conceptions of both literature and response to literature. The second period (1950-69) was detailed in Chapter Five, which describe the transition phase of research conceptions. In the research of the fifties, a strong focus seemed to be lacking and research conceptions emphasized both text-, as well as reader-oriented studies. The sixties were decidedly reader-oriented, reflecting the self-interest of

the decade. The third and final period (1970-89) was discussed in Chapter Six. During these latter decades, the predominant studies are those which focus on factors of the response itself: its components, its process, as well as the ways in which it is affected by the adoption of different stances and different teaching modes. Reader-oriented studies seemed to follow in popularity and those studies which focused on text variables seemed to rank third in importance.

### III. Conceptual summary: Chapters Two through Six

What follows is a synchronic rather than diachronic summary of the ideas presented in the foundation chapters of the dissertation.

#### A. Research conceptions compared with foundation conceptions

##### 1. Literature

Although the general research emphasis corresponds with the dictionary emphasis on "literature" as referring to printed matter, exceptions do occur in virtually all periods of the research examined.

General dictionary meanings of "literature" have in common the emphasis on printed matter. Although usually conforming to this meaning, research conceptions included oral stories, drama, film, researcher-devised stories, single words and meaningless sounds. In addition, researchers tended to focus on fiction, rather than non-fiction.

Research conceptions of "literature" began with the bare sound and pure rhythm of literature itself (1910-19). The research focus then turned to fragments of literary texts, single words and stanzas of poetry (1920-39). During the forties the focus diversified to include novels, oral language, newspaper and magazine articles and researcher-devised prose. During the transition period of the fifties and sixties, the trend was a slight narrowing of focus toward narrative rather than formal elements. Novels, theatrical performances and short stories began to be included. Occasionally, these were selected by the reader. During the seventies and eighties, short stories and poems predominate. However, researcher-devised texts, children's stories, films and plays are also included on the periphery.

Throughout the research, the particular conceptions of "literature" seemed to reflect the research discipline of the researcher himself. In the early days, the research was conducted by psychologists, who explored reaction to sounds and rhythm, as well as literary and pedagogical researchers, who focused on the identification of original stanzas. During the forties, it was the interest of social historians, anthropologists and psychiatrists interested in bibliotherapy, who introduced newspaper articles, oral language of different cultures, and novels and fairy tales respectively, as literature. During the fifties and sixties, psychologists and psychiatrists as well as literary and

pedagogical researchers explored response to literature. In the seventies and eighties, the research seems dominated by literary and pedagogical researchers, who sometimes reflected concerns of cognitive psychology as concerns text structure. The work of social historians, anthropologists and psychiatrists is virtually excluded in these latter decades.

It is possible that dictionary meanings of literature provided a starting point for some researchers. However, since very few researchers offer explicit definitions of terms, it seems more likely that researchers created, rather than found their conceptions of "literature" and "response to literature". Thus, theoretical and dictionary discussion provided foundation for purpose of this discussion only, rather than a framework within which research conceptions could be contained.

## 2. Response

Foundation meanings of "response to literature" were derived first from the dictionary meaning of response, which specified physiological, emotional, intellectual, recreational and ecclesiastical connotations of the word. This was too vague a foundation from which to approach research conceptions. Thus, since research is concerned with a response which is articulated in some way, foundation conceptions were derived from theoretical discussions of how real readers respond to literature. The continuum arbitrarily

selected was the text-reader continuum, with response in the middle. Examples were derived from the writings, as well as the interpretations of the writings of the text-oriented New Critics, the reader-oriented critics such as the psychoanalysts and subjective critics, and the transactional or response-based critics. Differences as well as similarities among these three tendencies were explored.

In turning to the research, however, although these tendencies could be perceived in the general focus of each study, there were often underlying perspectives which explicitly acknowledged the importance of opposing or complementary orientations. In addition, some researchers explored physiological and inarticulate response to literature through the use of semantic differential and interviews exploring reading preferences, as well as changes in reader behavior and attitude. Thus, as with the foundation conceptions of literature, it seemed that researchers also created, rather than found their conceptions of response.

The general trend in the research conception of response has been a movement from a text-orientation through the reader-based conceptions to the present focus on the response-orientations. The earliest research conception of response to literature was rooted in images evoked by single words and meaningless sounds. It then became focused on judging the textual quality of poems. This stage seems to have reached its height in the late thirties and early



forties. Another group of studies, the reader-oriented survey and bibliotherapy studies, became popular from the forties through the sixties. During the seventies and eighties, most research conceptions of response explore implications of the transactional or response-orientations. These include aspects such as the mode of response, the influence of the teacher, various genres, and student's personality on the response. Significantly, the importance of issues such as the stance and context of response seems to underline a new awareness that the way the reader responds depends more on what he is asked to do, than what he can do.

Throughout all the periods of the research, there have been strong subordinate conceptions of response to literature. These serve to define more sharply the dominant conceptions by their presence. Since the sixties, there has been a subordinate conception of response as text-oriented, thus reversing the trend in the first thirty years of research, during which the subordinate trend was a reader-orientation.

Thus, the general impression of research conceptions, as revealed by a comparison with dictionary and theoretical conceptions underlines two ideas. The first may be obvious but is worthy of mention. It suggests that, because researchers exceed the bounds of general dictionary conceptions, the researcher has generally made his own meanings of response and literature, rather than relied on

dictionary or theoretical meanings. The second is that, because there are dominant conceptions in most decades of research, the researchers may be relying on communal meaning, or else independently developing remarkably similar conceptions.

#### B. Research conceptions of response to literature compared with changing societal conditions

Comparison between these areas seems highly subjective. Nonetheless, it is worthy of mention. Research began early in the century with the Roblee and Washburn study in 1912. World War I broke out in 1914. Both Canada and the United States were making the transition from agricultural to industrial nations. There was rapid growth and much hardship. As though isolated from the world, researchers focused on images evoked in response to meaningless syllables. During the twenties and thirties, societal events included an economic boom as well as severe Depression. Predominantly text-oriented research conceptions focused on issues such as literary appreciation, aesthetics and judging the quality of poems. The research itself seemed like a hermetically-sealed haven from the surrounding hardships. Many considered university campuses to be Ivory Tower institutions, isolated from society.

The forties, beginning in wartime, witnessed the return of the soldiers and increasing economic prosperity. For the

first time, there seems to be a correspondence between research conceptions and general societal conditions of prosperity. Research conceptions revealed a surge of questions based on the growing conviction that response to literature now included almost all possible forms of both text and response. Investigations ranged from physiological reactions recorded in muscle action, to surveys about political views, to verbal impressions of single words, to judgment studies, as well as the first extended teaching study. The literature which evoked this miscellany was equally variegated. It included almost all types of printed matter: newspapers, magazines, oral literature of different cultures, poetry, novels, researcher-devised stories, as well as single words. The implication was that literature, as printed matter, had become central to the life of the democracy.

During the fifties, there was great economic prosperity. This was accompanied by peak birth rates and an abundance of consumer goods, notably the television. Research conceptions, continuing the interest in the connection between literature and real life, suggested increasing pedagogical interest in clinical reader-oriented bibliotherapy studies.

The subsequent decade recorded the longest economic boom on record. After the economic and social hardship in the first half of the century, it does not seem surprising that

the demands of college students and other minority groups were described as narcissistic. It was the first opportunity they had ever had to be so. The bulk of studies in the sixties seemed to correspond to this self-interest, with their decidedly reader-oriented focus. The end of the sixties coincided with the end of the longest economic boom on record.

The seventies and eighties began with a sluggish economy, environmental problems, and general suspicion of science and technology. During the eighties, after a rough start, there was a general move towards stability, if not prosperity, as well as new harmony between the Soviet Union and the United States. As though completely isolated from economic hardship, research flourished during the seventies and eighties. Research conceptions centred upon response-orientations as a sort of fusion of the text- and reader-orientations. These two decades also give evidence of a new focus on the value of reading, writing and talking about literature in different modes and stances.

Thus research conceptions seemed to be hermetically-sealed from societal conditions until the forties, when research with propaganda stressed the general relevance of print. The conservatism of the fifties, the narcissism and excitement of the sixties also seemed generally reflected in research concerns. However, during the seventies and eighties, the research seems decidedly restricted to pedagogy

and focused on its own mission for preparing students to be self-actualized citizens of the democracy.

It is interesting to note that both television and the Bible, both of which have had profound effects on Western culture, are entirely omitted from the almost eighty years of research on response to literature. These striking omissions suggest two possible areas of future expansion within the research. The general conclusion arising from a comparison of the areas of research and prevailing societal conditions, however, is that although there is no consistent linkage, there are periods of important correspondences.

#### C. Research conceptions compared with the changing image of the college student

Research on response to literature began in 1912, coincidentally during the same decade as the founding of the University of British Columbia. Colleges were few, but they rapidly expanded to accommodate the burgeoning numbers of students in attendance. Research conceptions of response to literature began at a time when only four per cent of people between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four attended college. Research was also just beginning. During the forties, Canadian enrolment rose dramatically due to the influx of returning soldiers in 1947-8. There was a similar peak in diversity of research conceptions. During the fifties, the conservative mode of the students was reflected

in the research by the virtual equilibrium between text-oriented pedagogical studies and the reader-oriented studies which included those of bibliotherapy and psychotherapy. The sixties, with the predominant research focus on the reader seemed to correspond to the prevailing mood of campus and societal turbulence and protest. Societal events and campus protests coincided with the research interest in the reader: his personality, preferences, attitudes and behavior, as revealed through or as changed by literature. Research of the seventies is decidedly pedagogical and there is a predominance of response-oriented studies. As though reflecting the revolts of the sixties, in the seventies there is some research which examines more closely the teacher's response. As well, there is one study which examines the effects of the reading of violent literature, and a study exploring poems about death. During the eighties, there appears to be increasing diversity, although almost all response to literature studies are pedagogical, except for the two which focus on ludic reading. Thus, especially since the forties, when the veterans flocked to the campuses, there seems to be a pattern of correspondences between the changing image of the college student, who is himself the subject of most of this research, and research conceptions of response to literature.

#### D. Research conceptions compared with the changes in the college teaching of English

During the beginning years of the century, the predominant literary approaches in college classrooms focused on detachment and analysis, with a philological and historical emphasis. Early research conceptions of "response to literature" had little relation with the college classroom. During the thirties, research conceptions suggested a predominantly text-oriented approach to literature, anticipating the rise of New Criticism in college classrooms of the forties and fifties. By the forties, when New Criticism was just gaining in ascendancy in the college classroom, research conceptions had begun to favour reader-orientations, as evidenced through surveys of reading interests, reports of studies exploring effects of reading in daily and political life, on the reader's behaviour, attitude, interests, and even mental health. During the fifties and sixties, there seemed to be diminishing relationship between research conceptions and college teaching. First, during the fifties there was a balance between text-and reader-orientations. In the sixties, the research became decidedly reader-oriented. The college English classroom, on the other hand, generally emphasized New Criticism. Finally during the seventies and eighties, there seems to be convergence between the college English

classroom and research in the exploration of the underlying relation between writing and response to literature.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

## CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS: THE LARGER CIRCLE

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## I. Introduction

Morgan (1989) proposes that "metaphor is central to the way we organize and understand our world" (p. 339). Further, he continues, "metaphors are not only interpretive constructs or ways of seeing; they also provide frameworks for action." (p. 343). In attempting to make sense of the changing research conceptions of response to literature as they have been presented in this dissertation, this chapter will explore this change through various metaphors and offer predictions concerning future directions.

## II. Overview

The four metaphors or interpretations to be explored in this chapter are as follows: 1) mechanistic; 2) cultural-political; 3) organic; and finally, from the area of theoretical physics, 4) holonomic. A brief description of the metaphor will be followed by its application to the research conceptions. Its pedagogical implications will be proposed, and then strengths and limitations evaluated.

## III. Mechanistic metaphor: Conceptual change as succession

### A. Description: research conceptions

The mechanistic metaphor is derived from Cartesian philosophy. In simple terms, it suggests logical cause and effect. In the mechanistic metaphor, rationality predominates over intuition, analysis over synthesis: "the belief in the certainty of scientific knowledge lies at the very basis of Cartesian philosophy" (Capra, 1988, p. 57). The mechanistic metaphor, Morgan (1989) points out, works best "under conditions where machines work well": where there is a straightforward task and a stable environment. The mechanistic metaphor uses conceptual data-reduction to present issues in absolute terms so that progress toward the predetermined goals can proceed expeditiously. Issues are perceived as either good or bad, right or wrong, with intermediate gradations eliminated. The mechanistic

perspective suggests a context-free evaluation which is both quick and absolute.

The application of the mechanistic metaphor to changing research conceptions of response to literature reveals a succession of unrelated stages. These are determined by distinguishing the differences rather than similarities in the predominant conceptions of each period. Kuhn (1970) implies a mechanistic metaphor in his description of scientific paradigm shifts:

just because it is a transition between incommensurables, the transition between competing paradigms cannot be made a step at a time, forced by logic and neutral experience. Like the gestalt switch, it must occur all at once (though not necessarily in an instant) or not at all. (p. 150)

Using the mechanistic metaphor to interpret conceptual shifts in research presents the view which has been suggested throughout the dissertation: research began with the predominance of text-orientations of response to literature (1912-39), followed by reader-orientations (1940-69), and finally response-based orientations (1970-89).

Straw and Bogdan's (1990) proposal of paradigm shifts within the areas of reading and literary theory are a recent related example of a mechanistic viewpoint. In seeking to identify the "conventional wisdom . . . and . . . primary assumptions in any particular era" (p. 15), they describe the conceptual changes in reading and literary theory as progressing from: 1) a predominantly transmission model,

(predominant until the 1880s) in which text was perceived as synonymous with the author's meaning; to 2) a translation model (until the 1960s), in which readers had to translate "the meaning of the text through their own skill . . . as readers or interpreters" (p. 16); to 3) interactive theories or models (until the present time) in which: "reading became . . . a problem-solving (rather than puzzle-solving) activity in which author and reader shared both world knowledge and linguistic knowledge via the text" (p. 16); to 4) constructionist models, "only just now being created" in which "the reader becomes the author in the sense that the meaning of any text is seen as a total creation of the reader within the particular social milieu of the text, the reader and the act of reading" (p. 17). These descriptions of predominant orientations as separate, monolithic and unvariegated stages convey the clarity offered through mechanistic simplification.

#### B. Pedagogical implications

Applying the mechanistic metaphor to the college English classroom places a priority on: 1) ritual and adherence to pre-set goals and objectives; 2) rational, efficient organization; 3) preservation of a standard ideal "response"; and 4) detailed specification of each assignment. As concerns the type of literature taught, the mechanistic view, in its strict separation of categories, is careful to

separate literature as aesthetic artifact from literature as referring to all printed matter. A mechanistic, black and white approach perceives of literature as either good or bad. In the classroom, there is an emphasis on good literature. Similarly, teaching focus is on planning, organizing and above all, controlling. This metaphor suggests an autocracy in which not only the idiosyncratic nature of the personalities involved, but also the existence of contextual constraints, are factored out.

Graff (1989) argues that contemporary pedagogical practices in the college English classroom suggest a mechanistic model: "one still encounters the widespread belief that teaching students to read literature is primarily a matter of inculcating a technical skill" (p. 251). Further, this model is also suggested in contemporary evaluation instruments of "response to literature", especially standardized tests (Brody, DeMilo and Purves, 1989). Answers are either right or wrong.

### C. Strengths and limitations of the mechanistic metaphor

The primary strengths of the mechanistic metaphor are its delineation of straightforward paths toward goals and its facilitation of evaluation. Limitations arise from its conversion of ritual to ideology. Conceptual change takes the form of unpredictable revolution. In the areas of pedagogy and research, the mechanistic metaphor seems to have been

discarded. Others would argue that it is inescapable. It is the conceptual prison within which twentieth-century thinking is encased.

#### IV. Cultural-political metaphor: conceptual change as ideology

##### A. Description: research conceptions

The cultural-political metaphor suggests that conceptions can be viewed as a culture of ideologies. Therefore, within the context of this dissertation, the research conceptions of response to literature can be examined as a smaller culture of ideologies within the larger context of social and pedagogical conditions. Purves (1988) points out that "any culture serves to isolate its members from other cultures and any culture is elitist in some senses" (p. 2). Since cultures seem intrinsically self-interested, the cultural and political metaphors will be considered as virtually synonymous. A major strength of the cultural-political metaphor is its disclosure of research conceptions as shared systems of meaning.

The application of the cultural-political metaphor to changing research conceptions suggests that during the twenties and thirties, the text-orientation gained power. This was perhaps because of its correspondence with an elite view of response to literature suitable for the special few of the growing industrial nation who were privileged enough

to attend college. Furthermore, the text-orientation also supported the predominant mechanistic view of an objective reality, virtually indispensable in the transition from agricultural to industrial nation: "a book is a machine to think with" (Richards, 1924, p. 1) is what is remembered of Richards' longer quote<sup>1</sup>. During the forties as well, research conceptions appeared to correspond to general societal conditions of a long-awaited economic prosperity, and growing self-confidence with a peak in diversity of conceptions of response to literature. During the fifties and sixties, the longest economic boom on record resulted in the promotion of "self-indulgent narcissism" (Rosenblatt, 1978) in the predominance of reader-oriented conceptions during the research of the sixties. The conservatism in both society and some college classrooms of the seventies is contradicted by the enthusiasm in research for response-orientations as well as, perhaps, the renewed interest in rhetoric. The reader, in research, is often perceived as creator and writer of his own responses. As well, discussion groups and the influence of the teacher's response are now considered important factors in the shaping of the individual's response to literature. The only ideological correspondence in the seventies and eighties between research conceptions and the areas of

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<sup>1</sup>He continues: "this book might better be compared to a loom on which it is proposed to re-weave some unravelled parts of our civilization" (Richards, 1924, p. 1).

college English teaching is perhaps the renewed interest in rhetoric and society's increased emphasis on literacy skills.

Thus research conceptions viewed through a cultural-political metaphor can suggest a succession of ideologies which sometimes but not always have overt correspondences with societal conditions in which they are nested.

#### B. Pedagogical implications

The cultural-political metaphor underlines the power of the college English classroom as a preparation for both future career and better citizenship. The student is indoctrinated into thinking which stresses deference to the authority of the text and obedience to the power of the teacher. However, the defensive stance of a dominating ideology suggests the threat of attack from other value-laden ideologies or conceptions. The pervasive cultural and pedagogical obsessions with literacy, articulated response and literature as print are examples of cultural values turned into ideology.

#### C. Strengths and limitations of the cultural-political metaphor

The major strength of the cultural-political metaphor is its challenge of cultural rationality as myth. Straw explains that:

at any time that a particular level of literacy has been defined as being functional and, as a society these



levels have been approached, literacy has then been redefined so that approximately 20% of the population falls into the category of "functionally illiterate" (Straw, in press a, p. 3)

Thus, the concept of functional illiteracy "has both challenged our schooling practices and succeeded in keeping them under constant attack" (Straw, in press a, p. 5). A realization of the Sysiphean punishment which is both assigned to and often accepted by the educational system suggests that regardless of what educators do, the constant of criticism prevails.

#### IV. Organic metaphor: Conceptual change as living organism

##### A. Description: research conceptions

The organic metaphor suggests that research conceptions can be viewed as an organic entity. This metaphor implicitly prioritizes growth and visible expansion. It implies that a number of inter-related ideas should be examined together. In other words, it proposes a holistic view within the boundaries of the organism. Research conceptions of response to literature, as they change through the twentieth century, can be viewed as an evolution, from an emphasis on the external reality of the text through that of the subjective reality of the reader towards an assimilation or balance between both these aspects.

Kuhn (1970) suggests an organic metaphor in another interpretation of paradigm shifts, which acknowledges the

evolutionary, rather than revolutionary aspects. He suggests that "all crises begin with the blurring of a paradigm and thus the consequent loosening of the rules for normal research" (p. 84):

by proliferating versions of the paradigm, crisis loosens the rules of normal puzzle-solving in ways that ultimately permit a new paradigm to emerge (p. 80) . . . during the transition period, there will be a large but never complete overlap between the problems that can be solved by the old and by the new paradigm (p. 85)

Thus, in research, before each orientation was succeeded by the ensuing orientation, it seemed to proliferate and thus "loosen the rules of normal puzzle-solving" which allowed the new orientation to emerge. Both text and reader-orientations seemed to peak during the stage before they were replaced by the next dominant orientation.

As well, the organic metaphor also suggests a second view of the movement of conflicting orientations or ideologies which fluctuate in and out of existence,

(in) a continual dance of recreation and annihilation of (what appears to be) mass changing to energy and energy changing to mass. Transient forms sparkle in and out of existence creating a never-ending, forever-newly-created reality. (Zukav, 1979, p. 179)

For example, certain elements seem to appear only for an instant: the humorous aspect of "misreadings" in the Pickford (1935) study. Other elements, such as the response-oriented elements of the Pickford (1935) study are given life in the Vergara (1946) study and are picked up and expanded full-blown in the research of the seventies. During the

eighties, these ideas seem to be on the wane and a new strand seems to be growing at a faster rate. Those are the studies which focus on free writing, which began as early as the Shrodes (1949) dissertation. Similarly other elements or transient forms, such as the text-oriented judgment of quality studies, starting with the Abbott and Trabue (1921), seem virtually extinguished in the research of the seventies.

#### B. Pedagogical implications

The pedagogical implications of the organic metaphor strongly suggest that students are neophytes who need to be guided and nurtured in their development. Straw (in press a), more recently refers to this as a model of an interactive and cooperative situation. He explains that, although respect is granted the student, the goals, methods, procedures and content of what is learned come from the teacher, who acts as the guide. The implicit assumption is that the teacher, solely in the role of teacher, has reached an ultimate stage of independence and virtual self-actualization. All three orientations of response to literature appear to stress the importance of a hierarchy of response and the central value of a guide or model of response.

#### C. Strengths and limitations of the organic metaphor

The strength of the organic metaphor is its emphasis on visible growth and the rational evolution of the

surrounding culture. Implicit in this metaphor of living growth however, is the fear of death or impending decay. So frantic, in fact, is the recent emphasis on literacy virtually as a means to life itself, that the recent report (Globe and Mail, July 4, 1990) of a formerly illiterate prisoner, who was taught in prison to read and write and is now harassing a judge with threatening letters, seems entirely humorous. Finally, emphasis on the organic metaphor encourages ideology: measurable visible growth is good.

The suggestion that the response-centered orientation of response to literature, or more properly our conventional understanding of it, needs re-examination and revision is suggested in Straw and Bogdan's (1990) proposal that the previous "communication model", which has not been seriously questioned "prior to the past twenty years" has recently been replaced by an **actualization** model, in which:

. . . what drives each of these (possible) readings is a need in the reader to fulfil or actualize his or her own purposes. (p. 4)

Straw (1990) predicts a movement towards holism and collaboration between formerly disparate areas:

. . . the integration of notions of reading and writing that will lead, I think, to a single conceptualization of a **literacy process**, a single overarching explanation of both reading and writing. (p. 79)

In a similar proposal for the need of collaboration between formerly distinct areas, Hunt (1990) predicts: "reading comprehension research will need to tap the

expertise of literary theorists" (p. 104).

Johnson (1984) perceives the long-standing polarity in university English departments between cultures which emphasize "literature" or "rhetoric" can and should be resolved by focusing on important theoretical similarities rather than differences:

while those of us teaching literature have failed to recognize . . . the work as a composition, those of us teaching language and writing have similarly failed to recognize that teachers of literature . . . are focusing on exactly the issues that are basic in composition teaching . . . (p. 24)

In 1988, she suggests the "congruence of interests" between reader-response criticism and rhetoric:

the fundamental synonymy between reader-response and rhetorical views of the pathos principle represents a significant bridge between a body of theory largely confined to the analysis of literary texts and a body of theory generally restricted to the dynamics of formal and social discourse. (p. 163)

The viability of her suggestion is supported in the strand of recent research which employs free written responses to enhance and shape the understanding of text.

These proposals toward general holism between the areas of reading research, literary theory and rhetoric are suggested in the research of the eighties by the appearance of new research conceptions which emphasize the importance of writing (Crowhurst and Kooy, 1986; Vardell, 1983; Fowler and McCormick, 1986; Salvatori, 1983; and Van DeWeghe, 1982) as well as those which valorize ludic reading (Nell, 1988b; and

Radway, 1984), and the single unique study which explores psychic literary space (Jacobsen, 1982).

It is proposed that these suggestions of a new model or a new interpretation of the transactional or response-orientation might expand its tenets to emphasize as well: 1) inarticulate, as well as ludic and task-oriented reading; 2) a focus on "literature" as encompassing oral events as well as written; and 3) a view of the teacher's role to include also one of "a voice among voices" (Straw, in press a) rather than only the one of an obvious guide.

Since Lakoff and Johnson (1980) propose that cultural change may be brought about by replacement of familiar metaphorical concepts with new ones, it appears that a new metaphor of response to literature would be useful. Following the example of Dewey and Bentley (1949), Bleich (1978) and Rosenblatt (1978), the following metaphor, derived from the area of theoretical physics, is offered for speculation. It extends the holistic view one step further by positing a different point of emphasis beyond the visible world.

#### VI. Holonomic metaphor: speculation on the future

In the area of theoretical physics, the two most current theories are the S-matrix and the holonomic or holographic paradigm (Capra, 1988). It is the holonomic theory, which has been proposed in fields as diverse as neurological research (Pribram, 1982), quantum mechanics

(Rutherford, 1989) and theology (Schindler, 1984) which seems to offer both explanation and suggestions for directions of expansion in research conceptions of response to literature. Although this theory has only recently come to the fore, it has a long conceptual history, beginning in 1714, when von Leibniz, the discoverer of integral and differential calculus, proposed that: "a metaphysical reality underlies and generates the material universe. Space, time, mass and motion of physics and transfer of energies are intellectual constructs" (Wilber, 1982, p. 13). In 1929, Alfred North Whitehead described nature as a great expanding nexus of occurrences not terminating in sense perception. He took the organic view one step further in the proposal that the visible world was not the fundamental reality. He proposed that dualisms such as mind and matter were false; that reality was inclusive and interlocking. During the same year, Lashley published substantial research demonstrating that specific memory was not to be found in any particular site in the brain but was distributed throughout. In 1947, Dennis Gabor, later winning a Nobel prize for his discovery, employed Leibniz's calculus to describe a potential three-dimensional photography: holography. In 1965, Emmett Leith and Juris Upatnicks announced their successful construction of holograms with the newly invented laser beam. The significance of the development of the hologram, which is a unique optical construction, was that it effectively served

as a conceptual model to illustrate the application of this idea in other fields.

In 1969, the work of Karl Pribram, who had worked with Lashley as a neurosurgeon, provided evidence for Lashley's suggestion that:

memories are generally recorded all over the brain in such a way that information concerning a given object or quality is not stored in a particular cell or localized part of the brain but rather that all the information is enfolded over the whole. (Bohm, 1987, p. 198)

This phenomenon is analogous to the functioning of an optical hologram. Any piece of the hologram has the ability to reconstruct an entire view of the original image. In 1971, physicist David Bohm, who had worked with Einstein, proposed that the organization of the universe may be holographic.

Dychtwald (1982), in his summary of the most important implications of the holographic paradigm, suggests both its similarities as well as fundamental differences from Dewey and Bentley's (1949) idea of "transaction". The holonomic paradigm or metaphor accepts the transactional tenet that "there is actually no such thing as pure energy or pure matter". However, it takes the next logical step to emphasize, not the transaction and the fluid nature of "reality", but the importance of underlying unity:

every aspect of the universe contains knowledge about the whole(s) within which it exists. In addition, since the vibrational expression of each holographic unit is also a statement of pure information, we can expect that each particular aspect has the ability to be knowledgeable about every other particular aspect within the master hologram(s). (Dychtwald, 1982, pp. 109-111)



Thus, the holonomic theory prioritizes the empowerment of the observer. Deriving the idea from physics rather than from religion, it also proposes that belief determines reality. Significantly, unlike the preceding metaphors, the holonomic theory prioritizes deep rather than surface structure.

#### A. Description: research conceptions

Bohm (1986) proposes that "the basic origin of rigidity and fragmentation is in the way we form and use concepts in general:

what generally happens is that each concept implicitly divides itself from its object - i. e. what the concept is about. Such a division works fairly well when we are thinking of an external object . . . but when we come to the concept of the self, how do we distinguish this from the actual self (whatever that may be)? (p. 11)

Bohm suggests that this fragmentation has its roots in the conventional concept of the 'self':

the general rigidity and fragmentation behind most of the problems of humanity arise in such defense of the concept of the self (and of what is identified with the self). The whole framework will change radically when this concept (i. e. holonomy) is proprioceptive (i. e. completely internalized) (p. 13)

He further observes that:

people are always forming groups in society. . . a very strong identification takes place which leads people to try to hold boundaries fixed . . . what is behind a great deal of confusion is the attempt to fix boundaries too rigidly. (p. 8)

To turn from theoretical physics back to the matter at hand, an examination of foundation conceptions of both "literature" and "response to literature" reveals implicit

areas of potential growth by searching for underlying similarities in overt fragmentation. First, predominant in the research is the almost complete emphasis on "literature" as "print". As though to underline even further the importance of this conception, this is the one similarity which unites the various dictionary meanings of literature as well as appearing in the current preoccupation with literacy. This preoccupation reveals an underlying cultural focus on differences rather than similarities between print and non-print cultures. Finnegan (1988) convincingly argues that there are as many similarities as differences between the "literatures" of oral and print cultures: 1) the occurrence of different genres such as lyrics, panegyrics, love songs, stories or drama; 2) the importance of style in both oral and print cultures; 3) the highly similar acts of composition; and 4) the similar process of dissemination as well as 'distancing' of literature as aesthetic artifact which is achieved in oral cultures by the emphasis on literature as **performance** and in print cultures by virtue of the print itself. Further, Finnegan emphasizes that the stress on achievement, individualism, industrialism and secularization occurs in non-industrial as well as industrial cultures. She refers to the oft-cited individualistic and competitive ethos of the Kapauku Papuans of New Guinea (Pospisil, 1963) and the Ibo of West Africa (Ottenberg, 1959) and the large-scale urbanism of the Yoruba of Nigeria (Bascom, 1955; Mabogunje,

1968). The viability of underlying unity between opposites brings to mind the fact that the co-existence of oral and written modes - the cellular phone, the computer, and the book - are perceived in our culture not as anomalous disjunctives - but as a normal and pervasive aspects of our existence.

When one searches for similarities, rather than distinctions between the various foundation emphases of response, the text-, reader-, and response-orientations, the common priorities become evident. These include the focus on: 1) mandatory articulation; 2) the ethical and moral importance of response to literature due to the emphasis on the 'work' of response; 3) the virtually exclusive emphasis on printed text; and 4) the absolute necessity of a teacher or guide. Thus, the holonomic metaphor suggests that the three response orientations, nested within a cultural context, can be expanded to include also: 1) inarticulate private reading; 2) pleasure as well as work; 3) emphasis on dramatic as well as printed text; and finally, 4) the empowerment of the student as concerns his own learning, in addition to his dependence on the guidance of the teacher.

When the holonomic metaphor is applied to research conceptions of response to literature, it suggests that developing research conceptions have been providing a changing image of our own microcosmic development of literary language acquisition. It suggests that we have been viewing

not "objective reality" but an increasing awareness of the power of the reader. Research conceptions of "response to literature" begin with the reader's instinctive, unreflected responses to the meaningless sounds and rhythms of literature, devoid of any meaning (1910-19). This conception of the reader is followed by one in which his response is measured against that of authors and critics (1920-39). These authorities designated the fixed quality inherent in the text and the reader was tested to see whether his thinking was in alignment with these experts. This predominantly text-oriented stage of research conceptions was succeeded by a stage in which research became preoccupied with the reader's personality, attitudes and behavior and the power of literature to change or modify these aspects, or even facilitate a cure for a troubled personality (1939-69). Finally, response-orientations proposed an emphasis on components of response, process of response, as well as considerations of context and stance (1970-89). The demands of the task run the full gamut of reading, writing and talking about literature. Most recently, the emphasis on reader as writer and creator himself are suggested in research of the seventies and eighties. Studies on stance emphasize the versatility of the reader to read in many ways, garbing many different perspectives. A further extension of this view is the new focus on writing in response to

literature suggesting, as Straw and Bogdan (1990) propose, a forthcoming stage of self-actualization.

#### B. Pedagogical implications of the holonomic metaphor

First, an essential point must be made. The holonomic metaphor, which places a priority on underlying wholeness rather than fragmentation, suggests that each of the three orientations, text-, reader- and response must be included within the classroom. It suggests, not replacement, but only enlargement of perspectives beyond present boundaries. In order for this to happen, there must be an expansion of the rigid boundaries within which these three orientations are nested.

The first of the commonalities shared among these orientations is the social aspect of response which could be expanded to include as equally important the private aspect of response. The second commonality concerns the work aspect of response which redeems the debauchery of pleasure reading. This could be expanded to include a valorization, or incorporation of reading for pleasure in measures of accountability, such as reading tests. The third commonality among text-, reader- and response-centred orientations concerns the emphasis on literature as "print". This could be expanded to include performance and plays as representative of oral literature. Finally, since each of the three orientations suggests the importance of an external guide,

either teacher or community, this could be expanded to include the student as her or his own guide. Self-selection of books and materials could be stressed, as well as collaborative learning, not only within the classroom but also on measures of evaluation. This idea is based on that part of the holonomic theory which suggests that, given the proper guidance, the student can be empowered to seek out the knowledge he requires. Finally, along with this confidence in the student could be a lessening of emphasis on mandatory response, valorizing both greater trust in the learner as well as pleasure in classroom activities. A final implication of the holonomic metaphor to the teaching of response to literature is the increasing emphasis on rhetorical skills, in particular oral skills, which increase our connections with oral cultures.

In offering these proposals, the possible application of holonomy in the area of response to literature aligns college English pedagogy more directly with the movements of Emergent literacy and Whole Language in elementary schools: "the field of Emergent literacy presents a new research perspective, one that focuses on the **natural** growth of the processes of reading and writing development". (Shapiro, 1990, p. 273):

Whole-language was developed to emulate the home environments of children who learned to read and write spontaneously, without being taught. (Gunderson and Shapiro, 1988 in Gunderson, 1990, p. 124)

Similarly, holonomy in the college English classroom would encircle both rhetoric and literature, pleasure and work, both trends of which are explicitly suggested in recent strands of research on adult and college readers' response to literature in the eighties. An example of the growing empowerment of the teacher and student, implicit in holonomy, is suggested in the University of British Columbia's "The Handbook for new instructors of English 100 (1988-9)":

you will find no dictates or prescriptive demands for particular teaching method here, because we believe that there is no best way to teach English 100. Teaching styles are at least as diverse as student learning styles--perhaps more so--and any number of teaching styles and techniques can be effective in the classroom. (p. 1.1)

The inclusion of suggested workshop techniques specifically empower the students as they learn, as does the suggestion of assigning a "genuine response" to particular works of literature which can be submitted anonymously, "so that students feel free to say what they think" (p. 2.40). However, these types of activities are yet to be part of evaluation procedures.

The move towards holonomy, collaborative learning, and wholeness in general, is not, of course new, although as Froese (1990a) points out, it does seem to be attracting more attention than previously and it is suggested in areas other than pedagogy and response to literature.

In economics, it appears that attitudes are shifting towards new models of collaboration. According to a study

published in the Harvard Business Review (December, 1975), 70 per cent of corporate executives interviewed stated a preference for traditional ideologies of individualism, private property and free enterprise. However, 73 per cent were convinced that these values would be replaced by collective models of problem-solving in the next ten years, and 60 per cent thought that a collective orientation was more effective in finding solutions.

The study of medicine until only recently focused on the curing of disease. Capra (1988) argues that:

this attitude derives directly from the Cartesian view of the body as a machine that requires somebody to repair it when it breaks down. Accordingly, medical intervention is carried out with the aim of correcting a specific biological mechanism in a particular part of the body, with different parts treated by different specialists. (pp. 156-7)

However, there is an alternate view which proposes an emphasis on holism and health of the individual through such approaches as homeopathy, and the recent school of "energy medicine", or Reichian therapy which proposes the concept of bio-energy, "a fundamental form of energy that permeates and governs the entire organism and manifests itself in the emotions as well as in the flow of bodily fluids and other biophysical movements" (Capra, p. 343). This theory of medicine is based on the holonomic view that the individual has within himself the ability to alter his well-being. This has been more commonly referred to as "New Age" thinking.



For most of the century, research on response to literature similarly, tended to focus on inherent deficiencies rather than strengths of the college student. Recently, however, there is an emerging focus on underlying wholeness suggested in the emerging emphases on: 1) literacy as "thinking", rather than decoding; 2) ludic reading; and 3) the value of writing as offering insight in "response to literature".

#### C. Limitations of the holonomic metaphor

The primary limitation of the holonomic metaphor is the argument that this thinking is idealistic and cannot succeed. It is Kuhn (1970) who addresses this problem:

. . . the decision (to adopt a new paradigm) must be based less on past achievement than on future promise. The man who embraces a new paradigm at an early stages must often do so in defiance of the evidence provided by problem-solving. He must, that is, have faith that the new paradigm will succeed with the many large problems that confront it . . . A decision of that kind can only be made on faith. (p. 157-8)

A second important pedagogical limitation is the fact that models of learning should be clear, readily understandable and easily operationalized. There is still much debate over which aspects of holonomy are most important. Finally, holonomy suggests that mechanism is mere teleology. And mechanism is still the reality of much daily life.

### VIII. Summary

The perspective of this chapter has been both retrospective, summarizing the dissertation through various metaphors of interpretation as well as forwards, on a possible future direction of research conceptions of response and literature. The adoption of each metaphor constituted a different stance of the viewer. Seen through a mechanistic metaphor, the changes in predominant conceptions were perceived as discrete stages of predominant conceptions from text-orientations to reader- and response-orientations. Viewed through a cultural-political metaphor, shifts were perceived as reflections of changes in societal and pedagogical thinking. Adoption of an organic perspective perceived changes as part of a visible life and death cycle, with each orientation having a life cycle of its own. The use of the holonomic metaphor was proposed for speculation. This metaphor views conceptual shifts as suggesting an evolution of the reader towards increasing empowerment. This metaphor traces similarities rather than differences in concepts. It emphasizes synthesis, rather than fragmentation.

### IX. Reflections

Pedagogical implications arising from the dissertation concern several levels of interpretation. First, the dissertation emphasizes to the educator that both "literature" and "response to literature" are concepts of

vast dimensions, each of which has been interpreted in a multitude of ways. "Literature" ranges the mere sounds of language, devoid of meaning, through researcher-devised stories, nonfiction material, newspaper and magazine articles and oral narratives to short stories and poems. "Response" has included oral, written or lived reaction to the stimulus of literature.

Second, the dissertation illustrates that the research paradigms used are determined to a large extent by the particular beliefs of the researcher conducting the experiment. The researcher may believe either that "literature" is all printed text, or that it is restricted to beautiful poetry or even that the concept includes film and conversation. Similarly, the researcher may believe that "response" is indicated by mere identification of the original version of a poem, or the more detailed written creation of a literary analysis, or the researcher may even include changes in the reader's attitude and behavior as a result of reading. These choices serve as the funnel of the research results just as the questions asked by teachers in their classrooms channel the results they get from their students.

Third, the dissertation provides evidence of a conceptual evolution concerning the term "response to literature". Depending on the stance adopted, the reader can become responder to the mere sounds of language, identifier

of intrinsic quality of the work, or even creator rather than identifier of meaning.

Finally, the research has been characterized by increasing complexity of questions accompanied by a growing conviction that what the researcher believes about "literature" and "response to literature" channels what she or he will get from the subjects. This conceptual evolution begins with a mechanistic and ends with a holonomic approach to response to literature. The mechanistic view suggests that reality lies out there, in the text itself, waiting to be discovered by the reader. The cultural-political view suggests that the response is both culturally important and culturally determined. The organic view focuses on the perception that response is a constantly changing fluid transaction between two elements which are themselves in a state of flux. Finally, the holonomic view suggests that the meaning of the transaction is not discovered, but is instead created by the researcher and reader.

Holonomy suggests that what the researcher and her or his subjects believe, is what is. It proposes to the teacher that the student's response in the classroom, like the subject's response in the research on response to literature, is limited only by the stance which she or he is asked to adopt. It suggests that our potential as educators, as students, as part of the human race, is, like conceptions of

response to literature, limited largely, or even only, by imagination.

In conclusion, the dissertation has presented an historical analysis of empirical research about which it has been said that "so many studies tell us so little with absolute certainty" (Cooper, 1976, p. 88). The analysis has refuted the idea of a confused plurality and suggested evidence of an evolution of the concept "response to literature". This evolution of perspectives, from mechanism through to holonomy, is one which appears to be unfolding in concert with a general conceptual trend in many diverse areas.

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## APPENDIX ONE

## CRITICAL BIBLIOGRAPHIES OF THE RESEARCH

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## I. Introduction

Research on response to literature is delineated, for both practitioners and researchers, by the major bibliographers of this research body. An aspect not to be overlooked is an examination of the bibliographers' conceptions of "response to literature". These bibliographers are as follows: Purves and Beach (1972); Cooper (1976); Applebee (1978); Klemenz-Belgardt (1981); Galda (1982); Beach (1988) and, most recently, Beach and Hynds (1989). Each of these bibliographies has in common its focus on the results rather than the researchers' initial conceptions of response. In addition, none of these bibliographies proposes a historical development of the research conception.

The studies included in these bibliographies are restricted, with minor exceptions, to those which have been published in English, thereby excluding a large body of



European research, particularly that of East Germany, West Germany and Hungary. This chapter will summarize these critical bibliographies, in terms of their scope, organization, and, where given, explicit definitions of the term, "literature" and the phrase "response to literature".

#### A. Purves and Beach (1972)

The earliest bibliography is that of Purves and Beach (1972). "Literature" is defined as "the written word . . . (considered) only in its aesthetic and humanistic aspects" (p.vii). Explicitly excluded is "film or the process of reading or learning to read" (pp. vii-viii).

Studies included in this bibliography encompass those which are "not empirical or experimental . . . although we agreed that a critic's writing would not be considered a case study" (p. viii). As does Applebee later, the methodological weakness of response studies in general is pointed out (p. viii). Worth noting, also, especially as concerns this dissertation, is Purves' and Beach's statement that:

in considering the value of each study, we have tended to look at the importance of the question with which it deals and at the conceptualization of the design more than at the statistical treatment used. (p. ix)

The cutoff date of the studies summarized was 1969, however, these bibliographers do include several studies published as recently as 1971.

In its scope, this bibliography covers the largest time span, 69 years. It also contains the largest number of studies, 816 (244 on "response to literature"; 405 on "reading interests"; 167 on the "teaching of literature"). Thus, the "response" studies, constitute only one-third of their bibliography. They delineate the following subcategories of response:

- 1) studies of factors in understanding;
- 2) in rating or judging, of stated responses;
- 3) of preconceptions and their effect on response;
- 4) of the process of response;
- 5) in general effects of literature;
- 6) in bibliotherapy;
- 7) of the factors in literary learning; and finally,
- 8) the development of literature tests.

From their overview of the area, Purves and Beach conclude:

We know that it (response) is a complex process and that it consists of a number of interrelated parts: understanding; the possession of information and the ability to grasp verbal and human complexities; psychological readiness to become as objective as one can; the concomitant psychological ability to enter into the world of the work; the use of various evaluative criteria, both personal and impersonal; and the ability to articulate critical statements. We know that understanding and liking are associated. We know that readers are interested more in the content of literature than in its form. We know that some readers can be influenced by what they read - emotionally, attitudinally, and intellectually. (p. 35)

This extensive bibliography, unlike that of Beach and Hynds, does not include separate annotations for each of the studies. Instead, it offers descriptions of the few significant studies in the area. Finally, this monumental work officially marks the beginning of "research in response to literature" as a separate area worthy of study.

C. Cooper (1976)

Charles Cooper, in his "Empirical studies of response to literature: review and suggestions" (1976) distinguishes studies exploring response to literature from experimental studies of teaching literature and studies of reading interests. He begins with a definition of this pedagogical research area: "researchers in response to literature look at what readers of all ages and backgrounds do when they read a literary text" (p. 77). The emphasis, however, seems to be on diversity of response: "these researchers expect great variation in response". Cooper sees the goal as being "to describe and explain the full range of possible responses of all kinds of readers as well as to arrive at some general principles of response" (p. 78). He hopes that the research "might in addition begin to shape literary instruction in schools and colleges" (p. 78). Of the thirty studies he mentions as response to literature studies, ten of these (Beach, Mertz, Barnes, Fehl, Hansson, Silkey, Holland (2), Bleich (3), and Holland and Schwartz) explore the responses of college subjects. The rest are concerned with high school students. Cooper's bibliography spans seven years of research: 1969-76.

Cooper divides the studies in two categories: those, such as the Shirley (1969) and Purves and Ripperre (1968) studies which explore expressed response, after the reading of a literary work; and those such as the studies of Dollerup

(1971) and Silkey and Purves (1973), which explore the process of response, during the reading of a literary work.

As concerns recommendations, Cooper cautions, rather alarmingly, that "there is no need to despair because so many studies tell us so little with absolute certainty" (p. 88).

He proposes that,

Researchers need to push ahead on a broad front, asking many different questions, trying a variety of approaches to answer them, replicating significant studies, and in particular devising further tests of theory-based descriptions of response like the one from psychoanalytic psychology. (p. 88)

Cooper's is a more informal and less comprehensive review than that of Purves and Beach. It is, however, extremely important in its distinguishing between response as a product and response as a process. As well, this review conveys the major problems, characteristics and the current of excitement which pervades the research area.

#### D. Applebee (1978)

Arthur Applebee, in his "ERIC\RCS report: the elements of response to a literary work: what we have learned" (1978), examines only those thirty studies (seven of which explore the responses of college students, one of which includes the responses of adults, (NAEP), six of which explore the responses of Grade 12 students, and five of which include the responses of teachers) which use the Purves and Rippere (1968) Elements of writing about a literary work. This

content analysis scheme marked a turning point in research on response to literature, as Applebee points out, because it "shifted the focus of analysis from the correctness or accuracy of a stated response to its content or subject" (p. 255).

Applebee includes both a general discussion of these studies, as well as a useful appendix which summarizes the characteristics of the studies. He divides the studies into two categories: 1) those which focus on different teaching styles or approaches as they affect student response (Applebee subdivides these into experimental and observational studies); and 2) those which explore the psychology of response and the influence of age, sex, ability, personality, stimulus characteristics, modes of response and the development of response over time. Applebee briefly describes the methodology and results of each of these studies.

As concerns those experimental studies which explore the effects of schooling, Applebee concludes that "the single most important finding" is that "the approach to literature adopted by the individual teacher does affect the content of the response from that teacher's pupils" (p. 256). The IEA study offers the most convincing evidence concerning the effects of teaching. "There were significant between-country differences in the tendency to select each of the twenty

items, differences which were sharper in the pre-university than in the fourteen-year-old population" (p. 258).

As concerns those studies which explore psychology of response, Applebee proposes that results suggest the following: 1) generally, the range of response increases with age, with a general movement from a concentration on literal aspects of a story to interpretive responses; 2) girls, more than boys, tend to verbalize engagement-involvement responses; 3) the differences between stronger and weaker students in response preferences are relatively minor except as by products of difficulty in comprehending a work; 3) perhaps engagement-involvement responses are higher in people who could be characterized as self-actualizing; "response preference" is influenced by the form and pattern of the literary work, however, many factors such as those described above also interact to form the final response pattern.

As concerns those studies which explore process of response, results seem to suggest that readers go through various stages such as perception and digression before they move to interpretation.

Applebee's conclusion is that:

in considering the results of these studies, we have been playing a believing game, ignoring methodological, statistical and conceptual problems which have marred most of them. (p. 264)

D. Klemenz-Belgardt (1981)

Edith Klemenz-Belgardt, in her "American research on response to literature: the empirical studies" (1981), explores philosophical underpinnings of the research, especially of those studies carried out during the last fifteen years (p. 357). No annotated bibliography is included. Instead, she lists 128 sources, the earliest of which is Heleler's (1940) "Free reading in the junior high school". Of the 128 sources, only twenty-six were published before 1968. Of all the sources listed, fourteen involve college students; nine involve grade 12 students; three concern adults, not college; three concern teachers; and one concerns critics' responses.

Klemenz-Belgardt links the research to the areas of literature, education and mass communication. She sees its most important line of development as emanating from literature, in particular the ideas of Louise Rosenblatt. She points out the discrepancy between the tacit acknowledgment of this transaction and the failure of researchers to integrate it. She cites as evidence of the influence of mass communications, the researchers' increasing emphasis on the recipient's role as well as the development of methods and instruments such as attitude scales and semantic differential.

Although Klemenz-Belgardt's definition of response "includes perceptual, cognitive, affective and psychomotor

behaviours and the reading and hearing of a work, as well as watching one", she points out that investigators usually content themselves with expressed response, thus avoiding the question of possible discrepancy between expressed and inarticulate response.

She divides the studies into the following three categories: 1) articulations of response; 2) expressions of interest; and 3) effects of reading. Klemenz-Belgardt points out the widespread taxonomical use of the Purves/Rippere categories of response (engagement, perception, interpretation, and evaluation) especially in those studies which centre on articulations of response.

In her synthesis of the research results, Klemenz-Belgardt offers some suggestions: 1) there seems to be a relationship between verbal intelligence or reading ability and possible difficulties in understanding a literary text; and 2) a reader's identity theme is the most significant determinant of diverging responses.

As concerns the properties of texts, she points out the arbitrary and theoretically unfounded reasons for selection: "they are either listed according to their titles or only classified according to their genre (novel, short story, poem, play)" (p. 370). She concludes that it is the pragmatic way of selecting texts, or the demand characteristics of the experimental situation, which have



"determined American research on response to literature" (p. 372).

Klemenz-Belgardt concludes her review with three major suggestions: 1) that the negative effects of the close attachment to educational science could be neutralized by a "more intensive integration of the ideas and the knowledge of literary scholarship" (p. 373); 2) though constantly stressing the complexity of response to literature, researchers have so far not succeeded in determining the interdependence of the two essential factors of literary interaction" (p. 373); and finally, 3) "the weakest point of most empirical studies lies in the failure to consider variables derived from elaborated theories of literary texts . . . the text, has for the most part not been taken adequately into account" (p. 375).

This review offers a clear definition of response and emphasis on the shaky philosophical underpinnings of the research. Importantly, although Klemenz-Belgardt offers a clear definition of response, there is none of "literature".

E. Galda (1983)

Lee Galda (1983), in her "Research in response to literature" reviews "seminal theoretical and empirical investigations of response to literature" as well as addressing "methodological problems specific to the analysis of oral responses to literature" (p. 1). Of the twenty

studies she cites, only three use college students; and seven, high school. These studies focus primarily on the period between 1966 and 1982. The early Harding study (1937) and I. A. Richards study (which is included in the introductory rather than research section) are isolated exceptions from the thirties.

Galda's review of this research area is distinguished by the fact that she devotes space to theoretical as well as research perspectives. She concludes her discussion of theoretical perspectives, which includes mention of the contributions of Rosenblatt, Lesser, Holland, Richards, Harding and Bleich with the statement that: "there is clearly a consensus across theoretical perspectives that a dialectic between reader and text constitutes reading and responding to a literary work" (p. 2). As concerns her discussion of the research body itself, Galda explores the characteristics of the reader, the text and the context in which that response occurs. It is interesting that her citations of "research" on the text include theoretical works of Rosenblatt (1978), Fish (1970), Iser (1972, 1978), and Booth (1961) as well as Holland (1975a), Squire (1964) Schlager (1978) and Favat (1977). As concerns the reader, Galda finds that personal style and experience, cognitive development and concept of story are the main influences on response. As concerns the text, such aspects as style, characterization, point of view, level of abstraction and complexity of syntax all seem to

affect the nature of the response. As concerns context, there is a wide variety of influences: responses obtained during the reading, after the reading, over time, written, responses obtained in questionnaire format, oral, individual, group, individual and group responses are only a few of the different contexts which Galda includes.

The third section, after theoretical and research perspectives focuses on methods of analysis of these responses, the most significant being the Purves (1968) content analysis scheme. Galda points out the various problems in adapting this scheme for oral responses and group discussions. She goes on to present a model for content analysis of responses which includes as its elements comprehension, involvement, inference, and evaluation (either undifferentiated or generalized).

Galda's conclusion is that more research is needed in the area of text-reader interaction including a description of "exactly how readers' constructs of reality affect their response to realistic literature" (p. 6). She concludes:

the power of these studies lies in the similarity of their findings . . . We do know that the theory of response to literature is valid. We are now beginning to learn the details of what happens when a reader responds to a literary text. (p. 6)

Unfortunately, there is little exploration of the philosophical underpinnings of the research and some may take exception to her statement that the power of research response studies lies in the similarity of their findings.

Perhaps instead, as Cooper argues, equal power lies in the differences of their findings.

F. Beach (1988)

Richard Beach, in his paper, "New Directions in research on response to literature" (1988), delivered at the NCTE convention in St. Louis, summarizes "Some of the current innovative research in response to literature". Beach describes "trends that reflect certain assumptions about the nature of response", assumptions which he sees as being first described in 1938, in Louise Rosenblatt's Literature as Exploration. The trends are as follows:

- 1) response as a process of discovering meaning through talking and writing (e.g. Marshall, 1987; Lytle, 1982; Rogers, 1987; Bruner, 1986);
- 2) emotional response as related to interpretation (e.g. Nell, 1988; Opdahl, 1988);
- 3) meaning as "text-bound" versus "intertextual" (e.g. Lehr, 1988; Rogers, 1987; Wolf, 1988);
- 4) the relation between attitudes and response (e.g. Dorfman, 1985; Radway, 1984);
- 5) responses as constituted by varying stances and orientations (e.g. Hunt and Vipond, 1987, in press); and finally,
- 6) response as a learned social activity (e.g. Marshall, 1987).

Beach includes twenty-seven studies, of which fourteen concern college students, and three concern adult readers, not college. Thus the bulk of these studies, or 52%, concern college readers. The earliest study cited is Lytle's 1982 study with college readers and thus the span here is five years of research.

The most important conclusion to be made from this brief presentation on recent as well as "in progress" research, is that the emphasis today is on the context of the response rather than on the literary text which supposedly initiates the literary response.

G. Beach and Hynds (1989)

Beach and Hynds (1989) in their Research on the learning and teaching of literature: selected bibliography, include studies published after 1970 which employ "some systematic analysis of readers' responses to literary texts, even though, in some cases, that analysis was not empirical" (p. 1). They explicitly exclude "reading comprehension research with literary texts in which the primary interest was determining comprehension" (p. 1). Two fundamental assumptions underlie this criteria: 1) some other reaction to text, explicitly response, is distinctly different from "comprehension"; and 2) literariness is a quality of the text rather than a characteristic of reader stance.

Beach and Hynds organize the bibliography in the following categories according to the primary focus of the studies: 1) reader variables (orientation, development, gender); 2) text variables; 3) response processes (general, engagement, interpretation); 4) influence of instruction; and 5) research methodology. In some cases they categorize the studies according to one additional secondary focus, cross-

referencing these studies by authors' names. Implications arising from this organization are: 1) these bibliographers perceive of reader response as multidimensional; 2) reader variables are more numerous and therefore perhaps more important than text variables; and 3) these different variables are not discrete categories but ones which overlap.

The Beach/Hynds bibliography includes reports on a total of 236 studies, some of which are duplicates of the same research published in different forms. Of these studies, 9 or 4% concern adults; 6 or 2.9% concern the responses of teachers (usually compared to students); 74 or 31% concern college readers, 82 or 35% concern high school students (grade eleven or lower); 60 or 25% concern elementary students; and 5 or 2% concern preschoolers. Of this vast list, 85 or 36% are dissertations.

The primary contribution of this extensive work is its representativeness: it provides a superb overview of the type of research on response to literature during the last two decades. In addition, the annotations are exemplary: each one includes the purpose of the study, age group of subjects, conditions, types of literature used and results. This extensive work marks an invaluable record of the ways in which pedagogical assumptions concerning "response to literature" have changed since the landmark Purves and Beach (1972) bibliography. Gone are the studies on response to single words, either in isolation or in passages; gone are

the physiological studies; gone are studies of the uses of literature in psychoanalysis; and gone are the "comprehension" studies. In their place are studies which validate the reader of every age as capable interpreter of text.

### III. Summary

The Purves and Beach (1972) bibliography is the monumental work which marks the beginning of "research in response to literature" as a separate area worthy of study. It is both comprehensive and clear, including not only the largest list of studies from the beginning of the century until the seventies, but also general discussions about themes, issues explored and general strengths and weaknesses of the research in the studies.

The Cooper (1976) bibliography, in contrast, offers a quick, concise overview which conveys both the excitement of the research, current problems, and importantly, makes the revolutionary distinction between response as a product and response as a process.

Applebee's (1976) invaluable bibliography examines the research through the lens of the thirty studies which use the Purves and Rippere (1968) Elements of writing about a literary work. He demonstrates the radical significance of this content analysis scheme in shifting the focus of analysis from the correctness or accuracy of a stated

response to its content or subject" (p. 255). The bibliography is, like Cooper's, not intended to be comprehensive. Nonetheless it is useful because of the concise description of the studies as well as the examination of their significance.

The Klemenz-Belgardt (1981) bibliography explores philosophical underpinnings of the research. Although no annotated bibliography is included, Klemenz-Belgardt lists 128 studies, the bulk of which were published during the seventies. This bibliography contributes a clear definition of response as well as a need for a clear definition of literature; it emphasizes the shaky philosophical underpinnings of the research; and it offers an updated and most extensive list of studies.

Galda's (1983) review of this research area is distinguished by the fact that she devotes space to theoretical as well as research perspectives. Her focus is on methodological issues of the research, especially oral and written analyses of responses. Complementing the other shorter bibliographies (Cooper, Applebee), Galda's emphasizes even stronger than Klemenz-Belgardt's the theoretical roots of the research in the area of literary criticism.

Beach's (1988) talk focuses on recent trends in research on response to literature. The most important conclusion to be made from this compelling presentation on recent as well as research in progress is that the emphasis



today is on the context of the response rather than on the literary text which supposedly initiates the literary response.

Finally, the Beach and Hynds (1989) bibliography takes up the enormous task started by the Purves and Beach bibliography. It is as sweeping as the former in its representativeness and aims. It includes exemplary annotations for each of the cross-referenced studies presented in intertwined and overlapping categories which emphasize the complexities and challenges of the area of research on response to literature.

#### IV. Conclusion

Critical bibliographies of research on response to literature have chosen to focus on one aspect of the research (Applebee, Galda); or attempted to delineate several key paths (Cooper, Beach); or else, have presented a variety of strands (Klemenz-Belgardt, Beach, Beach and Hynds, Purves and Beach). Thus, assumptions concerning the phrase 'response to literature' have been that it has both central as well as dispersive tendencies.

As concerns assumptions about the term 'literature', most bibliographers<sup>1</sup> define it in the pedagogical sense, as predominantly fictional, printed text. As concerns

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<sup>1</sup>With the exception of Klemenz-Belgardt, who also includes film.

assumptions about the term "response", again bibliographers situate themselves clearly within the area of pedagogy in the restriction to articulated response. However, one can hypothesize that this assumption has been changed when one compares the first and latest of these bibliographies. The Beach and Hynds bibliography, as does that of Klemenz-Belgardt, includes as "response to literature research" both the teaching studies and the studies of reading interests which were designated as separate categories in the Purves and Beach bibliography. Thus research on response to literature appears to be a larger concept than it was originally, after twenty years of pedagogical popularity.

The Beach and Hynds bibliography also reveals fundamental changes in the concept since the early seventies. Although the term "response", in this bibliography no longer includes comprehension, physiological changes, judgments of the quality of text, or studies outside the classroom, it has developed to focus and valorize the response of the student reader whatever his ability or credentials. His contexts, goals and purposes for reading as well as the influence of modes on his response, emphasizes both the socially-mediated nature of even private response as well as suggesting a new respect for the validity of the response process itself.

## APPENDIX TWO

## STUDIES NOT AVAILABLE FOR THE ANALYSIS

- Beach, Richard; Appleman, D.; and Dorsey, S. (in press). Adolescents use of intertextual links to understand a story. In Richard Beach and Susan Hynds. Becoming readers and writers during adolescence and adulthood. New Jersey: Ablex.
- Beach, Richard and Saxton, Charles. (1982). Secondary and college students' problem-solving strategies applied to literary texts. Paper presented at a meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English, Minneapolis.
- Buehler, John A. (1952). Change in appropriateness of affective responses as a function of prior affective responses. University of California Berkeley.
- Dorfman, M. (1985). A model for understanding the points of stories: evidence from adult and child readers. Paper presented at the Seventh Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, Irvine, California.
- Hipple, Theodore. W. and Bartholomew, Bruce. (1982). The novels college freshmen have read. Alan Review, 8-10.
- Hynds, Susan and Chase, Nancy D. (1986). The responses of college freshmen to expository and narrative text. Paper presented at the National Reading Conference. Austin Texas.
- Jay, Eva S. (1951). A factor study of reading tasks. Dissertation. University of Chicago
- Livingston, Howard. (1968). Responding to poetry. Missouri English Bulletin. October, 11-13.
- Meckel, H.C. (1946). An exploratory study of the responses of adolescent pupils to situations in a novel. Dissertation. University of Chicago.
- Rosenblatt, Louise. (1969). Towards a transactional theory of reading. Journal of Reading Behavior 1, 31-47.
- Serling, Albert M. (1967). Three methods of testing literary comprehension at the advanced placement level. College Entrance Examination Board Research and Development Report, No. 4. Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service.

APPENDIX THREE:

TABLES OF STUDY CHARACTERISTICS

TABLE 1

## CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDIES: 1910-19

<u>Study</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>"Literature"</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response task</u>	<u>Primary mode</u>
1. Roblee, Louise and M. F. Washburn. (1912). The affective value of articulate sounds.	text: association of sounds	meaningless sounds: initial vowels and final consonants	adult women	13	judgement: pleasant or unpleasant	oral
2. Givler, Robert. (1915). The psycho-physiological effect of the elements of speech in relation to poetry.	text: association of sounds of poetry; physiological	meaningless syllables, transmogrified poetry	adults	15	recitation, rhythm taps, introspection	oral

TABLE 2

## CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDIES: 1920-9

<u>Study</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>"Literature"</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response task</u>	<u>Primary Mode</u>
1. Abbott, Allan. and M. R. Trabue. (1921). A measure of ability to judge poetry.	text:quality	poetic stanzas,variable quality	college students	273 (249)	1. Read stanzas 2. Imagined how would sound if read aloud 3. judged quality	written, multiple choice
2. Valentine, C.W. (1923). The function of images in the appreciation of poetry.	text:quality	poems, variable quality	college students	49	1. listened to poem being read 2. judged pleasing/displeasing and reasons 3. gave details as to experience	written, short answer
3. Wheeler, Olive A. (1923). An analysis of literary appreciation.	text: images and associations	poems (3)	college students	50	1. read poem, noted images that occurred naturally 2. explained how noting of images affected appreciation	written, short answer
4. Downey, June. (1928). Individual differences in reaction to the word-in-itself.	reader: images and associations	single words	adults	9	as each word was presented, asked to "become absorbed in it" and dictate experiences aroused by the word	oral
5. Downey, June. (1929). <u>Creative imagination: studies in the psychology of literature.</u>	reader: images and associations	variety	adults	N. A.	N. A. reporting of numerous studies concerned with creative process itself as well as appreciation by readers (self-projections, inner speech, images)	
6. Richards, I. A. (1929). <u>Practical criticism.</u> New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.	text: features and quality and form	poems, variable quality	college students	unspec.	written free response	written free

TABLE 3

## CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDIES: 1930-9

<u>Study</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>Literature</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response task</u>	<u>Primary mode</u>
1. Hartley, Helene. (1930). Tests for interpretive reading of poetry for teachers of English.	text: test for teachers	poems	teachers	unspec.	N. A. (concerned with aspects of meaning conveyed through figures and symbols, sense impressions, values and rhythms, and literal written expression).	unspec.
2. Howells, Thomas H. and Johnson, Allan A. (1932). A study of metresense in poetry.	text: rhythm	single lines of poetry	college students	89	given sample line of poetry, checked the line (out of three) with the closest rhythm to the original line	written checklist
3. Carroll, Herbert A. (1933). Influence of the sex factor upon appreciation of literature.	text: quality	short paragraphs of variable literary quality	college students, grades 9 - 12	1,400	judged merit of excerpts of variable quality	written, multiple choice
4. Leopold, Kathleen B. (1933). The effects of creative work on aesthetic appreciation.	text: quality	poems: original stanzas and parodies	college students	56	1. practised techniques of writing poetry 2. identified original when it was presented with parodies	written, multiple choice
5. Smith, Johnnie R. (1933). An analytical study of the factors involved in learning to appreciate literature.	text: factors of appreciation	"literature" as a general concept	teachers	unspec.	completed questionnaire concerning aspects of literary appreciation	written, questionnaire
6. Broom, M. E. (1934). A study of literary appreciation.	text: appreciation	short literary passages	college students, high school	100+	listened to passages (physiological response measured by psychogalvanometer)	physiological
7. Moran, Mary C. (1935). Construction of three tests designed to measure certain poetry aptitudes of teachers of English at the high school level holding an AB or BS degree or better.	text: test for teachers	poems, excerpts	teachers	unspec.	completed written multiple choice test exploring emotional reaction to music of verse, imagery, literary vocabulary, Abbott and Trabue (1921) test	written, multiple choice
8. Pickford, R. W. (1935). Some mental functions illustrated by an experiment on reading - Part I and Part II.	response: process	short literary passages	adult friends and acquaintances	18	1. read silently 2. read orally 3. gave detailed verbal report of thinking processes	oral, free

9. Foster, Jeanette M. (1936). An approach to fiction through the characteristics of its readers.	reader: interests	library fiction: novels	adults, college students	15,285	N. A. (book borrowing records to indicate popularity of authors)	library book borrowing
10. Hevner, Kate. (1937). An experimental study of the affective value of sounds in poetry.	text: associations of sounds	poems, transmogrified	college students	unspec.	1. read orally 2. completed written checklist of adjectives describing sounds	written checklist
11. Rigg, Melvin. (1937). The relationship between discrimination in music and discrimination in poetry.	text: quality	poems, single lines of original with weakened versions	college students	71	1. completed interviews, I.Q tests 2. asked to identify original or best lines	written, multiple choice
12. Patrick, Catherine. (1939). How responses to good and poor poetry differ.	text: quality	poems, variable quality	adults	20	1. gave free oral responses 2. ranked poems in order of merit	oral free written, rankings



TABLE 4

## CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDIES: 1940-9

<u>Study</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>"Literature"</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response task</u>	<u>Primary Mode</u>
1. Chandler, Henry B. and John T. Croteau. (1940). <u>A regional library and its readers: a study of five years of reading.</u>	reader: interests	library books, newspapers	adults	25,000	N. A. (book borrowing)	library book borrowing, newspaper circulations
2. Eysenck, H. J. (1940). Some factors in the appreciation of poetry, and their relation to temperamental qualities.	reader: preference	poems (32)	adults English graduates	3 12	1. ranked in order of preference not literary standards 2. took Hiedgreder Extroversion Questionnaire	written checklists, questionnaire
3. Waples, Douglas; Bernard Berelson; and Franklin Bradshaw. (1940). <u>What reading does to people.</u>	reader: social aspects, attitudes	N. A.	adults	N. A.	N. A. theoretical proposal of research concerning adult reading in general	N. A.
4. Strang, R. (1942). <u>Explorations in reading patterns.</u>	reader: social aspects, attitudes	magazine articles, books	adults and adolescents (13+)	112 23)	1. gave interviews about reading habits and preferences 2. took vocabulary and comprehension tests 3. gave written free responses to passages	oral, written, multiple choice, written, free
5. Davis, Frederick B. (1944). Fundamental factors of comprehension in reading.	text: comprehension	comprehension test items	college students	421	completed multiple choice test	written, multiple choice
6. Glicksberg, C. I. (1944). Psychology and the teaching of English.	reader: psychological aspects	poems (10)	adults	15	(reporting of two experiments) 1. judgment 2. oral free creative task	written, ranking oral, free
7. Berelson, Bernard. (1945). The public library, book reading, and political behavior.	reader: behavior	library books	adults	600	1. gave interviews once a month 2. book-borrowing habits observed	oral, library book borrowing
8. Allen Edward. (1946). Books help neuropsychiatric patients.	reader: behavior, attitudes	novels	adults (patients)	unspec.	therapy session	oral, behavior
9. Harris, Chester. (1946). Measurement of comprehension of literature and its relation to enjoyment.	text: comprehension	comprehension test items	Grade 12 Grade 11 Grade 10	114 67 101	1. answered multiple choice questions of comprehension and preference	written, multiple choice

10. Schneck, Jerome M. (1946). Bibliotherapy for neuropsychiatric patients: report of two cases.	reader: behavior, attitudes	non-fiction books	adults (patients)	2	therapy sessions	oral, behavior
11. Vergara, Allys D. (1946). A critical study of a group of college women's responses to poetry.	response: components and process	poems	college students	68 (15) (5)	during the duration of a course, gave written judgments of sense and mood, interviews, free written responses, took part in discussion groups	oral written, free written, judgments discussion groups
12. Wolfenstein, Martha. (1946). The impact of a children's story on mothers and children.	reader: attitudes and beliefs	children's story, researcher- devised	mothers, four year old children (fathers)	10 sets	interviews	oral
13. Bruner, J. and L. Postman. (1947). Emotional selectivity in perception and reaction.	reader: emotions determine perceptions	single words (five letters)	college students	unspec.	word recognition	oral
14. Gray, William. S. (1947). The social effects of reading.	reader: social effects, behavior	newspapers, exposition, pamphlets	adults	N. A.	N. A. reporting of many research studies concerned with reading and adult opinion	
15. Hallowell A. Irving. (1947). Myth, culture and personality.	reader (cross- cultural): social effects, behavior	oral narratives	adults (Ojibwa)	unspec.	gave interviews, took Rorschach, Thematic behavior apperception test	oral, behavior
16. White, Verna. (1947). Measuring achievement in high school English.	text: comprehension	comprehension test items	Grade 12	344 (64)	took multiple choice test	written, multiple choice
17. Harris, Chester. (1948). Measurement of comprehension of literature I-II.	text: comprehension	variety of short passages (prose, poetry, drama, essay)	adults (veterans)	106	took multiple choice test	written, multiple choice
18. Postman, L.; Bruner, J.; and McGinnies, E. (1948). Personal values as selective factors in perception.	reader: values determines perception	single words (36, representing six values)	college students	25	word recognition	oral
19. Flourney, Henri. (1949). Poetry and childhood memory.	poet	N.A.	adult: poet	1	free oral	
20. Lazarfeld, Sofie. (1949). The use of fiction in psychotherapy.	reader: behavior, attitudes	novels, fairy tales	adults (in therapy)	unspec.	free oral	oral, free

- |  |                             |  |                  |             |  |                                       |
|--|-----------------------------|--|------------------|-------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| 21. Michael, William B.; Bernard Rosenthal; and Michael DeCamp. (1949). An experimental investigation of prestige-suggestion for two types of literary material. | text: quality               | prose passages, poetry, variable quality | college students | 120         | had to rank passages and authors in order of merit                     | written, rankings                     |
| 22. Shrodes, Caroline. (1949). Bibliotherapy: a theoretical and clinical experimental study.   | reader: behavior, attitudes | novels (guided self-selection)           | college students | 60, 50 (15) | took teacher-student interviews, tests, written free reactions, essays | oral, written, free written, directed |
| 23. Strother, George B. (1949). The role of muscle action in interpretive reading.   | text: moods of text         | poems of differing moods                 | college students | 24          | read poems orally, physiological response recorded while reading.      | physiological                         |

TABLE 5

## CHARACTERISTICS OF RESEARCH: 1950-9

<u>Study</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>"Literature"</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response task</u>	<u>Primary Mode</u>
1. Eppel, E.M. (1950). A new test of poetry discrimination.	text: quality	stanzas from poems, one line missing	college students, high school	600	1. read poetic stanzas 2. imagined how it would sound if read aloud 3. selected best choice out of three to complete	written, multiple choice
2. Sano, Katsuo. (1950). College students attitudes toward literature.	reader: attitudes	literature as a general concept	college students	794	ranked 50 statements about the function of literature	written, multiple choice
3. Romney, A. Kimball. (1950). The Kuder literary scale as related to achievement in college English.	text: tests	"literature" as a general concept	college students	1,085	N. A. (multiple choice comprehension test compared with English grades)	written, multiple choice, English grade achievement
4. Ellis, Katherine. (1951). A new approach to the interpretation of stories as projective documents.	author	short stories, 30	authors	8	written, published stories compared stories with autobiographical material, classified stories and life segments independently	written, published stories
5. Gunn, Douglas G. (1951). Factors in the appreciation of poetry.	text: quality	poems of variable literary quality	college students, high school	52 61	rated poems for qualities such as effectiveness of rhythm, thought, etc.	written, rankings
6. Mallowell, A. I. (1951). Cultural factors in the structuralization of perception.	reader (cross-cultural): perception, values	language and oral narrative	adult (Ojibwa)	unspec.	interviews, behavior	oral, behavior
7. Philip, B.R. (1951). The effect of general and specific labelling on judgmental scales.	text: quality	poetry, single lines (25 at a time)	college students	66 x 3	given 25 lines at a time, asked to judge melodious aspects. Three conditions: line alone, line and author, line, author and historical period	written, ratings
8. Wilson, J. W. (1951). Treatment of an attitudinal pathosis by bibliotherapy: a case study.	reader: behavior, attitudes	nonfiction books	adult (patient)	1	asked to read 12 books, discuss	oral, behavior

9. Matson, Elson L. (1953). A study of years of formal education as a factor in audience response to ideational content and treatment in plays.	reader: developmental	play segments	college, high school	232	provided graphic response records of interest ratings with Meier Audience Response Recorder	ratings
10. Schubert, Delwyn G. (1953). The relationship between reading ability and literary appreciation.	text: comprehension and quality	prose selections of variable quality, 4	college students (50 retarded readers)	100	1. given IOWA silent reading test 2. ranked four selections in order of literary quality	written, multiple choice and rankings
11. Swain, Emeliza. (1953). Conscious thought processes used in the interpretation of reading materials.	response: process	passages, several subject areas	college students, three ability levels	29	gave oral reporting of strategies as answered questions of interpretation	oral
12. Black, E. L. (1954). The difficulty of training college students in understanding what they read.	text: comprehension	excerpts, nonfiction	college students	240	took multiple choice comprehension test	written, multiple choice
13. Britton, J. M. (1954). Evidence of improvement in poetic judgment.	text: quality	poems, 31 (7 counterfeit or terrible poems)	adults (service personnel), college students, sixth form pupils	221	1. ranked poems from best to worst 2. took multiple choice comprehension test 3. took a second similar test, four to six months later	written, rankings and multiple choice
14. Wilson, Robert M. (1956). Literary experience and personality.	reader: interests	"literary experience" as a general concept	college students	12	1. in an interview, listed favorite books, gave written account of reading history, took I. Q. tests	oral, written listings
15. Witzig, James S. (1956). A study of the comparative effect on retention of mythological and factual prose.	text: comprehension	passages of mythic and factual prose, normalized by the researcher	college students, different levels	76 15 30	wrote summary of each selection after a single reading	written, directed
16. Jenkinson, Marion. D. (1957). Selected processes and difficulties of reading comprehension. (Dissertation).	response: process	prose passages	Grade 12	unspec.	took cloze tests, gave introspective and retrospective verbalizations	oral
17. Weisgerber, Charles A. (1957). Accuracy in judging emotional expressions as related to understanding of literature.	text: comprehension	comprehension test items	college students	112	1. judged facial emotions in photographs 2. took comprehension test	written, multiple choice

18. Amato, Anthony J. (1957). Some effects of bibliotherapy on young adults. (Dissertation).	reader: behavior, attitudes	books	college students	unspec.	participated in discussion groups to solve everyday problems and resolve stress	oral, group discussion
19. Thayer, Lee O. and N. H. Pronko. (1958). Some psychological factors in the reading of fiction.	reader: perception and values	fiction excerpts dealing with a love theme and representative of different narrative techniques	college students	112	1. asked to read five fiction excerpts, answered questions e.g. "describe"; "did you like" 2. asked to check a personality profile chart for the central character in each excerpt	short answer
20. Lewis, Ralph. (1959). Books that Germans are reading about America.	reader: interests	books	adult Germans	N.A.	book purchase	book purchase
21. Thayer, Lee O. and N. H. Pronko. (1959). Factors affecting conceptual perception in reading.	reader: perception and values	ambiguous passages	college students	112	1. pretest to determine attitude and values 2. post-reading multiple choice test of inferences concerning fictional characters (3 different conditions)	written, multiple choice

TABLE SIX

## CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDIES: 1960 - 9

<u>Study</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>"Literature"</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response task</u>	<u>Primary Mode</u>
1. Betsky, S. (1960). Literature and general culture.	text: importance of literature to culture	"literature" as a general concept	adults	N. A.	N. A. theoretical article concerned with the cultural importance of literature	N. A.
2. Carroll, John B. (1960). Vectors of prose style.	text: components of style	passages from various sources and styles of prose, 150	"competent" judges	8	rated each of passages on each of 29 scales covering major qualities of style	written, rankings
3. Mahoney, Stanley C. (1960). The literature empathy test: development of a procedure for differentiating between 'good empathizers' and 'poor empathizers'.	reader: attitudes and personality	fictional selections, 4 (representing different personalities	college students	1.139	1. completed multiple choice items 2. read selection to "get a feel" for the personality portrayed 3. completed the above multiple choice questions as characters would have	written, multiple choice
4. Nikiforova, O.I. (1960). Role of inner speech in the reconstruction of literary images.	response: process (physiological	literary descriptions of landscapes	college students	9	1. read silently while vocalizing word pairs or while shifting a rheostat on and off 2. oral reporting of impressions	oral, physiological
5. Russell, David M. (1960). Contributions of reading to personal development.	reader: developmental response: process	N. A. reporting of many studies				
6. Scribner, M.I. (1960). The responses of students, teachers and critics to selected poetry.(Dissertation).	reader: developmental	poems (4)	critics, teachers, junior college students	unspec.	1. students heard poems read aloud 2. read silently and answered eight questions	written, short answer
7. Valentine, C.W. (1960). <u>Psychology and its bearing on education.</u>	reader: preference	poems	college students	72	1. researcher read poems 2. students rated them pleasing, very pleasing, displeasing, etc. 3. could add reasons and comments	written, rankings and short answer
8. Hinze, Helen K. (1961). The individual's word associations and his interpretation of prose paragraphs.	reader: associations to key words	prose passages: one factual, one emotional	college students	25	gave free verbal associations to key words from selections	oral

9. Valentine, C. W. (1962). <u>The experimental psychology of beauty.</u>	reader: appreciation	poetry	adults, students	N. A.	N. A. report of research with colour, art, and poetry. Emphasis is on preference, judging of quality and relation with imagery	N. A.
10. Wilson, James Robert. (1963). Responses of college freshmen to three novels.	response: process	novels, 3	college students	54	1. gave free written response while reading novel 2. participated in group discussion. 3. after discussion, wrote another free written response	written, free group discussion
11. Hanson, Gunnar. (1964). Dikt 1 profil. (from description in Beach and Hynds, 1989)	response: components	poems	professors, college students, skilled workers	unspec.	completed a semantic differential (25 bipolar, seven-point scales, e. g. sad-happy	semantic differential
12. Rosenblatt, Louise. (1964). The poem as event.	response: process	poem	unspec.	unspec.	asked to write whatever came to them as they read	written, free
13. Stout, Douglas A. (1964). The responses of college freshmen to characters in four short stories.	reader: perception and personality	short stories, 4 (written by researcher)	college students	104	after reading, checked multiple choice items indicating similarities and differences between self and characters	written, multiple choice
14. Whitman, Robert S. (1964). Significant reading experiences of superior English students.	reader: preferences and interests	books (self-selected)	recently graduated and very superior high school students	975	answered questionnaires containing questions such as "while you were in high school, did you read one book which was more significant to you than any other? Which one? Why?"	written, short answer
15. Bormuth, J.R. and O.L. Macdonald. (1965). Cloze tests as a measure of ability to detect literary style.	text: comparison of tests	fictional excerpts, 2	college students	150	took cloze test and test constructed to measure ability to detect literary style	written, short answer
16. Rees, Richard D. and Pederson, Darhl M. (1965). A factorial determination of points of view in poetic evaluation and their relation to various determinants.	reader: personality and appreciation	poems, 11	college students	74	1. listened to tape-recorded reading of poems 2. completed 15-scale semantic differential for each poem 3. miscellaneous personality tests (8)	semantic differential
17. Kammann, Richard. (1966). Verbal complexity and preferences in poetry.	response: stance	poems, 15	college students	24	1. completed cloze procedure with poem 2. rated poem on a 7 step good-bad scale 3. evaluated preference in different contexts, e. g. in discussion with a friend, with a professor 4. Alpert-Haber test of academic achievement anxiety	written, ratings



18. Shirley, Fehl L. (1966). The influence of reading on concepts, attitudes and behaviour of tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade students. (Also reported in Shirley, 1969)	reader: reading interests and preferences	self-selected variety: novels, short stories articles and poems	Grade 12 Grade 11 Grade 10	420 (10)	1. answered 8 short answer questions concerning reading interests 2. case study interviews, vocabulary and I. Q. tests	written, short answer
19. Ingram, Charles O. (1967). How university freshmen read: a study of the dynamics of the reading process. (Dissertation).	response: process	variety: short stories, magazine articles, history selection, psychology study	college students	500 (50)	1. answered the questions, "What did the author say, or what did you get out of reading the selection?" 2. described processes used	written, short answer oral, think-aloud
20. Kingston, A. J. and W. F. White. (1967). The relationship of readers' self concepts and personality components to semantic meanings perceived in the protagonist of a reading selection.	reader: personality	short story, 1	college students	89	1. completed comprehension test (20 multiple choice items) 2. semantic differential for reaction to main character 3. two weeks later, personality test, questionnaire and semantic differential of self	written, multiple choice semantic differential
21. Saper, Marshall B. (1967). Bibliotherapy as an adjunct to group therapy. (Dissertation).	reader: behavior, attitudes	case histories (self-selected)	adults, hospitalized schizophrenics	18	group therapy, reading, personality tests	oral, attitude and behavior
22. Holdsworth, Janet M. (1968). Vicarious experience of reading a book in changing nursing students attitudes.	reader: behavior, attitudes	novel, 1	nursing students	30	1. pretest concerning attitude 2. read novel on the weekend 3. post-test concerning attitude	written, multiple choice
23. Lawson, James H. (1968). The development of a poetry test for grades 11 and 12. (Dissertation).	text: poetry test	poems, variety	Grade 12 Grade 11	309 297	completed two forms of four-option multiple choice test of four items	written, multiple choice
24. Purves, A. and Ripperre, Victoria. (1968). <u>Elements of writing about a literary work: a study of response to literature.</u>	response: components	unspecified literary work	critics, scholars, teachers, and students	unspec.	completed written response to a literary work	written, free
25. Riggs, Corinne. (1968). <u>Bibliotherapy: an annotated bibliography.</u>	reader: behavior, attitudes	N. A.	adults, students	N. A.	N. A. reporting of over 150 studies including Squire (1964) and Waples, Berelson and Bradshaw (1940)	N. A.

26. Roberts, Percival R. (1968). An experimental study of selected effects upon drawings produced by college age women using poetry as motivation. (Dissertation).	text: as a motivation for creativity	poem, 1	college students	54	1. pretest: drew any picture 2. read or listened to a poem 3. drew a second picture immediately after	drawing
27. Smith, R. J. (1968) The effect of reading for a creative purpose on student attitudes toward a short story.	reader: behavior, attitudes	short story	Grade 12	several classes (4 groups)	1. completed standard writing task (creative or non-creative) 2. read story 3. completed second writing task 4. completed Likert attitudinal scale	writing, directed and free
28. Zaccaria, Joseph S. and Moses, Harold A. (1968). <u>Facilitating human development through reading: the use of bibliotherapy in teaching and counselling.</u> Champaign, Illinois: Stipes.	reader: behavior, attitudes, personality	N. A.	adults	N. A.	N. A. General survey of philosophy, principles and practices of bibliotherapy. Includes and extensive annotated bibliography concerning therapeutic uses of literature	N. A.
29. Rosengren, K. E. (1968). <u>Sociological aspects of the literary system.</u>	author	N. A.	N. A.	N. A.	N. A. explores references to different authors in recent reviews of fiction	N. A.
30. Bleich, D. (1969). Emotional origins of literary meaning.	response: process reader: personality	dramatic text	former college student, researcher	2	written, free association	written, free
31. Choppin, Bruce. and Alan C. Purves. (1969). A comparison of open-ended and multiple-choice items dealing with literary understanding. Also reported in Chopin (1969).	text: methods of evaluating understanding	poems (2) short stories (2)	Grade 12 Grade 11	275 1,000	completed written open-ended and multiple-choice questions	written, multiple choice and open-ended
32. Edgar, Kenneth F. and Richard Hazley. (1969). Validation of poetry therapy as a group therapy technique.	reader: behavior, attitudes	poems	college students in group therapy	16	1. had personality tests 2. participated in group discussion (3. encouraged to write poetry)	group discussion, behavior
33. Edgar, Kenneth F. and Richard Hazley. (1969) Poetry therapy with hospitalized schizophrenics.	reader: behavior, attitudes	poems	adult schizophrenics	7	1. had personality test, interviews 2. wrote a few lines of written response	oral, behavior
34. Livingston, H. F. (1969). The effects of general semantics on responses to a poem.	response: teaching effects	poems	college students	18 classes,	1. gave written responses to poems. (One class had just completed a course in general semantics, one had not)	written, free

35. Osthoff, Irene. (1969). The use of literature in training counsellors.	reader: behavior, attitudes	short stories	college students (Masters level)	3 groups of 29	took pre- and post-test: response to a taped interview with a schizophrenic patient	written, short answer
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TABLE SEVEN

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDIES: 1970 - 9

<u>Study</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>"Literature"</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response Task</u>	<u>Primary Mode</u>
1. Alsbrook, E.Y. (1970). Changes in the ethnocentrism of a select group of college students as a function of bibliotherapy. (Dissertation).	reader: behaviour, attitude	nonfiction books	college students	13 x 4	1. pre and post-test of Adorno Ethnocentrism Scale E 2. groups read additional material and discussed, not discussed, no material 3. personal data sheet	written ranked agreement, questionnaire
2. Grimme, D. A. (1970). The responses of college freshmen to lyric poetry. (Dissertation).	response: as affected by teaching methods	poems (12)	college students		1. free written responses before and after reading 2. listened to poems, free written response, studied, free written	written, free
3. Vele, Charles. A. (1970). Literature and the emotions: a psychology of literary response. (Dissertation).	reader: preference of critical work	N.A.	professors	180	1. requested the one article of literature which most readily comes to memory as having heightened or intensified your literary experience of using the work	oral, interviews
4. Vine, Harold A. Jr. (1970). Affective understanding and the reading of poetry. (Dissertation).	reader: attitude, behaviour or personality	poems (9, dealing with death)	professional readers, senior high school	53 49	1. pre and post-test: semantic differential on death 2. read poems 3. discussion group	semantic differential; discussion
5. Yarlott, G. and W. S. Harpin. (1970-1). 1000 Responses to English literature. Parts I and II.	reader: preference and interests	N.A.	O-level and A-level	1,000	1. questionnaire about attitudes and preferences	written, questionnaire
6. Bleich, D. (1971). Psychological bases of learning from literature.	response: process reader: personality	dramatic text	college student, researcher, doctor	1 1 1	not clearly specified	not clearly specified
7. Cooper, C. (1971). Measuring appreciation of literature: a review of attempts.	general: text, reader and response					
8. Dollerup, Cay. (1971). On reading short stories.	response: process	short stories (3)	college students	26	1. asked to stop and tell anything they noticed while reading but in particular, what pertained to tension, intensity and suspense; requested no school-like responses	oral (thinking aloud while reading

<u>Study</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>"Literature"</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response Task</u>	<u>Primary Mode</u>
9. Hoffman, H. L. (1971). The responses of high school seniors to 19th century English lyric poetry.	response: components	poems (6 - 19th Century)	Grade 12	90	1. asked for ratings of agreement with specific assertions about each poem	written, ratings
10. Morris, William Perot. (1971). Unstructured oral responses of experienced readers to a given poem.	response: components, process	poem	college students		1. tell immediate and growing impressions while reading poem 2. summarize meaning 3. answer questions concerned with typicalness, completeness and quality of response just given	oral, (thinking aloud while reading); written, probed
11. Beach, R. (1972). The literary response process of college students while reading and discussing three poems. Also reported Beach (1973). (Dissertation)	response: process, different modes	poems (3)	college students	36 (3 groups)	1. oral free association or written free association or only reading 2. discussion group 3. 8 students interviewed	multiple: oral, free; written, free; discussion
12. Kirkpatrick, Carolyn. (1972). The college literature class: observation and description of class sessions in <u>The Scarlet Letter</u> . (Dissertation).	response: process, teaching method	novel	professors, college students	7	regular classroom sessions: talk, write	
13. Menchise, D. M. (1972). Racial bias as a determinant of literary preferences and patterns of preference and reflection of literary works whose author's race is known. (Dissertation).	reader: effect of attitudes on judgement	poems	grade 11, grade 12	50 50	1. ranked 10 poems by Black and White authors with photos of author 2. ranked poems without photos	written, rankings
14. Mertz, Maia Pank. (1972). Responses to literature among adolescents, English teachers and college students: a comparative study. (Dissertation).	response: stance reader: development teacher: response	short stories (3)	English teachers college students grade 10	52 52 160	1. wrote from teachers perspective 2. write in either school or informal context	written, directed

<u>Study</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>"Literature"</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response Task</u>	<u>Primary Mode</u>
15. Pollock, John Craig. (1972). A study of responses to short stories by selected groups of ninth graders, eleventh graders and college freshmen. (Dissertation).	reader: development	short stories (2 of 6)	college students grade 11 grade 9	73 (3 groups)	1. wrote free responses after each reading 2. other tests: Burton's short story choice test; Carnegie Mellon's literary preference questionnaire	written, free
16. Tedford, W. H. and C. S. Synott. (1972). Use of the semantic differential with poetic forms.	text: rhythm	poems	college students	129	1. evaluated each foot 4 times: fast and slow reading of iambic, trochaic, anapestic and actylic on 2 different sounding drums	semantic differential
17. DeVries, J. (1973). A statistical analysis of undergraduate readers' responses to selected characters in Shakespeare's 'The Tempest'. (Dissertation).	response: process	dramatic text	college students	100	1. responded on a 15-step semantic differential to certain characters and play in general after each of 10 sections 2. short essay question	semantic differential
18. Hansson, Gunnar. (1973). Some types of research on response to literature.	response: process reader: developmental	poems & texts studied in school	professors college students adults		report of research using semantic differential, rankings, group discussion, free written responses	multiple: semantic differential; rankings; discussion; written, free
19. Holland, Norman. (1973). <u>Poems in Persons.</u>	response: process reader: personality	poems	poet college students	3	1. personality tests 2. unstructured interviews with poet and 2 readers in which the request was "to avoid literary analysis and to talk instead about their feelings and associations"	oral, free; interviews
20. Nicol, Elizabeth Anne. (1973). Student response to narrative techniques in fiction. (Dissertation).	text: narrative techniques	short stories (2)	critics students	unspec.	1. read 2. selected from inventory of thoughts those which matched their own 3. compared to professional critics	written, checklist
21. Silkey, Sharon and Purves, A. C. (1973). What happens when we read a poem?	response: process	poem	college student	1	1. took 2 hours to spare, read and thought about poem until came to reconciliation with it. kept a journal of thoughts about process	written, free

<u>Study</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>"Literature"</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response Task</u>	<u>Primary Mode</u>
22. Weber, Alan Melchior. (1973). The responses of college students to film. (Dissertation).	response: components & process	film (5 feature, 2 shorts, 2 others)	college students	80, 24, 6	1. written free response to films 2. 6 gave oral thoughts while viewing	written, free
23. Auerbach, Leo. (1974). The interaction between social attitude and response to three short stories. (Dissertation).	reader: attitudes	short stories (3 violent, 3 non-violent)	grade 12 grade 11 grade 9	46, 52	1. pre and post-tested with semantic differential on violence 2. written, free and directed after reading	written, free and directed
24. Cornaby, Betty Jean Biddle. (1974). A study of the influence of form on responses of twelfth-grade students in college-preparatory classes to dissimilar novels, a short story and an poem. (Dissertation).	text: effect of different genres	mixed genres: short story (1) novels (2) poem (1)	grade 12	96 (28) (5)	1. read work 2. response preference measure rating scale Rokean Dogmatism Scale E 3. quiz on knowledge of literary items 4. questionnaire on general reading habits	written, multiple choice
25. Hansson, Gunnar. (1974). Litteraturelasning i symasiet. [[Reading literature in the gymnasium]. Information from abstract in Beach and Hynds (1989).	reader: development	poems (4)	college students high school		1. applied semantic differential and written response	semantic differential
26. Heil, Carolyn. (1974). A description and analysis of the role of the teacher's response while teaching a short story. (Dissertation).	teacher response while teaching	short stories (15)	teachers high school students	8	1. free written response 2. taught class 3. made comments on student responses 4. interviews	multiple (including free, written; oral)
27. Morris, E. Cole. (1974). Critique of a short story: an application of Purves' elements of writing about a literary work. Also reported in Morris (1976). (Dissertation).	response: components	short story	doctoral student	1	1. written response using Purves' <u>Elements</u> as a guide	written, guided
28. Sullivan, Katherine M. (1974). The effects of response pattern analysis on the content of high school students' written responses to short stories. (Dissertation).	response: components	short stories (9 and 3)	grade 12 grade 11	30 30	1. read and listened to 9 stories 2. wrote free response 3. analyzed responses using Purves' <u>Elements</u>	written, free

<u>Study</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>"Literature"</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response Task</u>	<u>Primary Mode</u>
29. Cowgill, G. A. (1975). A study of differential effects of short films, audiotapes and class discussions on the unstructured written responses of senior students to poetry. (Dissertation).	response: effects of different moods	poems (4)	grade 12	324	several treatments including 1. studying film followed by written response 2. film, audiotape, discussion in which planned shooting script/poem, and response 3. read silently and response as well as other combinations	written, free
30. Davis, C.W. (1975). The impact of three teaching techniques on the response of junior college freshmen to three short stories.	response: effect of teaching techniques	short stories	community college students	3 classes	1. lecture discussion or semantic differential and discussion or role played excerpts from stories 2. wrote or recorded response to new short story	multiple: written, free; oral
31. Holland, Norman. (1975). <u>Five readers reading</u> . Also reported in Dillon (1982) and Holland (1985).	response: process reader: personality	short story	adults	5	1. psychological tests, interviews about story	oral, free
32. Holland, Norman and Schwartz, Murray. (1975). The Delphi seminar.	response: process reader: personality	short stories and poems	professors college students		1. free written responses, avoiding intellectual, analytic 2. group discussion	written, free; discussion
33. Major, A. (1975). The relationship of a teacher characteristic to student written response to literature.	teacher response: effect of teacher characteristic on student response	passages (5 poetry and prose)	professors, college students		1. written response to question "what do these passages say?" 2. teacher intellectual disposition measured by 10 scale of the Omnibus Personality Inventory	written, free
34. McCurdy, Sarabeth Huntley. (1975). A study of the relationships between goals for the teaching of literature and teachers' attitudes towards the major categories of written student responses to literature. (Dissertation).	teacher response: relationship between goals and attitudes	unspecified variety	teachers		1. given 10 scale of Omnibus Personality Inventory 2. written interpretations 3. ratings of student response	written, ratings
35. Peters, W. H. and A. G. Blues. (1975). Teacher intellectual disposition as it relates to student openness in written response to literature.	teacher response: relationship between teacher disposition and student openness	fictional prose excerpts	professors college students	8 64	1. wrote responses to fragments ("may include both literary criticism and your emotional reactions") 2. (profs) complexity scale of Omnibus Personality Inventory	written, directed



<u>Study</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>"Literature"</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response Task</u>	<u>Primary Mode</u>
36. Purves, A. (1975). Research in the teaching of literature.	reader: developmental	short stories, poems	grades 4-10 grade 12		1. interviews about reactions to the works	oral, interviews
37. Beach, R. and G. Brunetti. (1976). Differences between high school and university students in their conception of literary characters.	reader: developmental	short stories (2)	college students grade 10	40 41	1. read story silently 2. completed adjective checklist 3. a week later, second story 4. evaluated themselves with same checklist	written, checklist
38. McGreal, Shirley Springer (1976). Teacher questioning behavior during classroom discussions of short stories. (Dissertation).	teacher response: questioning behaviour	short stories (3)	teachers grade 8 grade 10 grade 12	3 3 3	1. audiotape of classroom teaching 2. checklist of questions "important to ask" about literature	oral; written, checklist
39. Shedd, P. (1976). The relationship between attitude of reader towards women's changing role and response to literature which illuminates women's role. (Dissertation).	reader: attitude as affecting response	short stories	grade 12		1. read story 2. free verbal response 3. multiple choice comprehension test 4. statements to evaluate affective response 5. Purves' response preference measure to scale	multiple: oral, free; written, probed
40. Chasser, C. C. (1977). How adolescents' affective responses to four short stories relate to the factors of age, sex and intelligence. (Dissertation).	reader: developmental	short stories (4)	grade 7 grade 9 grade 12	50 (x 4)	1. "Pretend the characters are real people. Write a letter to one of the main characters and tell this character what you feel or think about him or her. Write anything you would like to say to that character."	written, directed
41. Culp, M. (1977). Case studies of the influence of literature on the attitudes, values and behaviours of adolescents.	reader: behaviour, attitudes	novels, self selected or taught	college students	158 (5)	1. interviews and autobiographical questionnaire 2. checklist of influence or reading or attitudes	written, short answer
42. Green, M. (1977). An investigation of an objective approach and response-centred approach to teaching renaissance poetry in a survey course.	response: comparison of teaching techniques	poems	college students	30	1. poem A taught using response-centred or objective approach 2. discussion 3. attitude test (multiple choice ranking of agreement)	oral; written
43. Holland, Norman. (1977). Transactive teaching: Cordelia's death.	reader: gender response: process	dramatic text	professors college students	9	1. free written responses to text	written, free

<u>Study</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>"Literature"</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response Task</u>	<u>Primary Mode</u>
44. English Department, State University of New York at Buffalo, Seminar 692. (1978). Poem opening: an invitation to transactive criticism.	response: nature (communal and private)	poem	college students	10	1. written free response to poem 2. written free personal response 3. revision of #2 to be shared with public	written, free
45. Kigar, H. J. (1978). A study in affective sensitivity: the use of value-oriented literature at the community college level.		variety of creative axiological and philosophical literature	community college students	75	1. responded in writing "in any way they felt appropriate"	written, free
46. Cornaby, Betty Jean Biddle. (1978). Literature for gifted young adults and their response to that literature.	text: effect of different genres	mixed genres: novel, poem, short story		unspec.	1. response preference measure, Rokeach Dogmatism Scale	written, checklist
47. Doerr, D. (1979). A study of two teaching methods emphasizing the responses to literature of junior college students. (Dissertation).	response: different teaching methods	excerpts from an anthology	community college students	56	1. pre and post-test: Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal and Personal Orientation Inventory 2. 1 free written response and 1 using Purves' <u>Elements</u> categories as a guide	written, free and directed
48. Tsuruta, Dorothy. (1979). Community college students' responses to selected ethnic poetry and mode of presentation. (Dissertation).	response: different modes of presentation	poems (6)	community college students	64	1. watched video tape of poet reading his/her work 2. read and wrote reactions 3. read only 4. wrote account of one which meant the most to them	written, free
49. Tutton, B. (1979). Response to short stories as related to interest among community college students. (Dissertation).	response: relation to interest	short stories (4)	community college students	117	1. read and responded to stories 2. ranked on Likert Scale from 1 - 5 according to interest	written, rankings
50. Walker, K. (1979). Variables related to the literary response style preferences of high school English teachers. (Dissertation).	teacher response: preferences in style	short story	high school teachers	24	1. wrote a model response 2. lead an oral discussion about story	written, directed

TABLE EIGHT

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDIES: 1980 - 9

<u>Study</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>"Literature"</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response Task</u>	<u>Primary Mode</u>
1. Noda, L. A. (1981). Literature and culture: Japanese and American reader responses to modern Japanese short stories. (Dissertation).	reader: cross-cultural effects on response	short stories (6)	adults	2	1. pre and post-test of rating scales such as uncertainty arousal and hedonic tone 2. extensive interviews	oral, interviews
2. Petrosky, A. (1981). From story to essay: reading and writing.	response: process	short story	college students	2 reported	1. free unguided vs. directed written responses used as a basis for discussion	written, free and directed, group discussion
3. Uffman, B. (1981). Responses of young children and adults to books with a lesson. (Dissertation).	reader: developmental	"books with a lesson"	adults grade 1	40 116	1. responded to questionnaire on each book 2. open ended questions	written, questionnaire, interviews
4. Wade-Maltais, J. (1981). Responses of community college readers to a short story when audience interpretations are not known. (Dissertation).	response: components	short story	community college students	86	1. pretest: attitude questionnaire 2. 2 different teaching approaches 3. response preference measure (modified) 4. short, free response essays	multiple: written, free and checklist
5. Jacobsen, M. (1982). Looking for literary space: the willing suspension of disbelief revisited.	response: components	short stories (2)	college students	26	1. answered questions about stories such as "draw a picture or diagram of yourself reading the passage"	written, short answer
6. Lester, N. (1982). A system for analyzing characters values in literary texts.	text: character's values	short stories (3)	adults	4	1. free written response to stories	written, free
7. Lytle, S. (1982). Exploring comprehension style: a study of twelfth-grade readers' transactions with text.	response: components, process	short expositions	grade 12	21 (6)	1. gave oral free (think-aloud) responses in 5 one-one situations (45 min. each) 2. 6 students selected for detailed analysis	oral, free
8. Amigone, G. (1983). Apprehending a literary work of art: a comparative study of interventions into a poem by experienced and inexperienced readers. (Dissertation).	reader: development	poem	"experienced readers" (professors, poet, college students)	5 10	1. gave free responses as well as reactions to other responses	free and probed

<u>Study</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>"Literature"</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response Task</u>	<u>Primary Mode</u>
9. Beach, R. (1983). Attitudes, social conventions and response to literature.	reader: effects of attitudes on response	short story	college students grade 11	45 45	1. attitude toward poetry scale (Gallo 68) <sup>a)</sup> literature transfer scale (Purves 73) <sup>b)</sup> 2. watched short vignettes parallel to incidents in story 3. rated appropriateness of teacher's behaviour 4. read story, stopped at 3 points and asked to rate teachers' behaviour	written, ratings
10. Coss, D. (1983). The responses of selected groups to social, objective and affective theories of literature. (Dissertation).	reader: response preference	poem	college students		1. responded to poem, statements about poem, statements about theories of literature 2. written response	written, checklist and free
11. Kintgen, Eugene. (1983). <u>The perception of poetry</u> . Indiana University Press.	response: stance, process	poems (3)	graduate college students	6	1. asked to verbalize everything in coming to an understanding in preparation for an academic discussion	oral, free academic
12. Salvatori, M. (1983). Reading and writing a text.	reader: relation of self-concept to response	unspec.	college student	1	1. written free responses completed as part of course assignments	written free
13. Vardell, S. (1983). Reading writing and mystery stories.	response: response and creative writing	short story	grade 6 grade 9 grade 12		1. responded to stories 2. wrote their own 3. completed questionnaire concerning stories they read and wrote	written, free
14. Wheeler, Vicki B. (1983). Field orientation as a predictor of reader response literature.	reader: cognitive style and stance	short story	community college students	6 classes	1. field orientation ascertained through group embedded figures test <sup>c)</sup> 2. written free responses	written, free

a) Gallo, D. (1968). Toward a more effective assessment of poetry teaching methods. Research in the Teaching of English, 2, 125 - 41.

b) Purves, A. (1973). Literature Educations in Ten Countries: an empirical study. Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell.

c) Group Embedded Figures Test (GEFT) is described in Witking, Herman A., Olman, Philip K., Raslan, Evelyn and Korp, Stephen A. (1971). Manual for the Embedded-figures tests. Palo Alto, California: Consulting Psychologist Press. It consists of complex geometrical designs which have embedded within them simple geometric figures. The subjects must locate one of these 8 simple figures in each of the complex patterns. The test booklet illustrates the simple figures on the back of the test booklet in such a way that the subject cannot view complex and simple figures together. The subjects are required to trace the simple figure.

<u>Study</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>"Literature"</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response Task</u>	<u>Primary Mode</u>
15. Zaharias, J. A. and Mertz, M. P. (1983) Identifying and validating the constituents of literary response through a modification of the response preference measure.	reader: response preference	poems (3), short stories (3)	college students	166	1. complete a modified version of response preference measure <sup>2)</sup>	written, checklist
16. Hillocks, G. and Ludlow, L. H. (1984). A taxonomy of skills in reading and interpreting fiction.	response: components, process	short stories (4)	grade 12 grade 11 grade 10 grade 9	122 77 79 112	1. completed short answer questions about stories (inferential and literal)	written, short answer
17. Kintgen, Eugene. and Holland, N. (1984). Carlos reads a poem.	response: process reader: personality and stance	poem	grad student	1	1. completed I-test based on Kelly's personal construct theory 2. oral free response	oral, free
18. Jose, P. (1984). Story interestingness: goal importance or goal attainment difficulty.	text: interestingness reader: developmental	narratives, researcher devised	college students grade 5 grade 3 grade 1	41 -38 -32 -32	1. rated 4 versions of 4 different stories for goal importance and difficulty 2. oral interview	written, ratings
19. Newkirk, Thomas. (1984). Looking for trouble: a way to unmask our readings.	response: process	poems (6)	college students	class	1. instructor and students read and wrote about a poem 2. commented upon circulated sheets specifying problems of interpretation 3. wrote and shared narrative account of readings 4. wrote profiles of themselves	multiple: including free written and group written
20. Parnell, Gary Lester. (1984). Levels of aesthetic experience with literature.	reader: developmental	poems (4)	grades 3, 6, 9, 12 and college students	50	1. oral interviews about poems	oral, interviews
21. Radway, Jane. (1984). <u>Reading the romance: women, patriarchy and popular literature.</u>	reader: gender	romance novels	adult women	42 (16)	interviews	oral
22. Vipond, Doug. and Hunt, Russell. (1984). Point-driven understanding: pragmatic and cognitive dimensions of literary reading.	response: stance	N.A.	N.A.		N.A.	

a) Described fully in Purves, A. (1973). Literature education in ten countries: an empirical study. Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell. Purves, A. (1981). Reading and literature: American achievement in international perspective.

<u>Study</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>"Literature"</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response Task</u>	<u>Primary Mode</u>
23. Beach, Richard. (1985). Discourse conventions and researching response to literary dialogue.	reader: developmental, effect of attitudes and beliefs on response	text of one act play	college students highschool	30 30	1. asked to recall "everything they could remember" from each 1500 word section 2. asked to describe and give reasons for characters' use of 16 speech acts	oral, probed
24. De Beaugrande, Robert. (1985). Poetry and the ordinary reader: a study of immediate responses.	response: components, process	poem	college students		1. in an "unannounced test" during final individual interviews, had to read poem aloud, and then explain first from memory and then with text	oral
25. Hunt, R. and Vipond, D. (1985). Crash-testing a transactional model of literary learning.	response: stance	short story	professors, grad students	12 12 (70,96)	1. several experiments including think aloud, interviews, written probed responses in several different interpretation contexts	oral; written, probed
26. Kintgen, Eugene. (1985). The perception of poetry.	response: process	poem	professor grad students	8 18	1. completed oral responses	oral, free
27. Kintgen, Eugene. (1985). Studying the perception of poetry.	response: process	poem	professor grad students	1 8	1. completed think-aloud in response to poem	oral, free
28. Lee, Sung-ho. (1985). Comparative responses to literature by Korean and American college students. (Dissertation).	reader: cross-cultural	short stories (2)	college students: Korean American	60 40	1. responded in writing to 2 different stories	written, free
29. Miall, David S. (1985). The structure of response: a repertory grid study of a poem.	text structure	poem	college students	21	1. responded to poem using Kelly's <sup>a)</sup> repertory grid 2. interview	repertory grid
30. Sadoski, M.; and Goetz, E. (1985). Relationships between affect, imagery and importance ratings for segments of a story.	response: process	short story	college students	45	1. read story as would for enjoyment 2. rated segments for a) importance; b) visualness and memorability or imagery; and 3) emotional reactions	written, ratings

a) Kelly, G.A. (1955). The psychology of personal constructs. New York: Norton.

<u>Study</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>"Literature"</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response Task</u>	<u>Primary Mode</u>
31. Svensson, Cai. (1985). <u>The construction of poetic meaning: a cultural-developmental study of symbolic and non-symbolic strategies in the interpretation of contemporary poetry.</u> Also reported in Svensson (1987).	reader: developmental	poems (4)	18 yr. olds 14 yr. olds 11 yr. olds	70	1. initial interview about background 2. read or listened to poems and then asked questions such as: "what do you think the poem is about? Why? Could it also be about (nonsymbolic or symbolic)?" 3. responded in writing to prose and poetry versions of same text	oral; written, free
32. Appleman, D. (1986). The effects of heuristically-based assignments on adolescents' responses to literature. (Dissertation).	response: effect of writing task	short stories (2) poems (2)	grade 11 grade 12	213	1. added pre-writing activities to response assignments	written
33. Bleich, D. (1986a). Gender interests in reading and language.	reader: gender response: process	short stories and poems (unspec.)	teachers college students	4 50	1. written retellings and responses	written, free and directed
34. Bleich, D. (1986b). Cognitive stereoscopy and the study of language and literature.	response: components	short story	teachers	2	1. asked to retell and discuss the story in 2 different essays	written, directed
35. Bruner, J. (1986). <u>Actual minds, possible worlds.</u>	text oriented (reader adopted narrator's perspective)	short story	adult	1	1. asked to retell story	oral, free
36. Crowhurst, M. and Kooy, Mary. (1986). The use of response journals in teaching of the novel.	response: process, writing	novels	grade 12 grade 9	14 39	1. kept journals as logs of personal understanding and responding to a novel. Explored issues such as: "what impressed me in this section was...", "I noticed...", and "I wondered about"	written, directed
37. Fisher, R. (1986). A comparison of tenth grade students' discussion to adults' small group discussions in response to literature. (Dissertation).	reader: developmental response: process	short stories	adults grade 10	class	1. group discussion, varying stricture e.g. no leader, no questions; leader and no questions	group discussion
38. Flynn, E. (1986). Gender and reading.	reader: gender response: process	short stories	college students	52	1. completed written free responses during first 20 minutes of class period, using anthology questions as a guide if desired	written, free
39. Fowler, L. J. and K. McCormick. (1986). The expectant reader in theory and practice	text: genre expectations response: process	mixed genres: fairytale, fable, parable, short story	unspec.	class	1. group discussion about expectations	group discussion

<u>Study</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>"Literature"</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response Task</u>	<u>Primary Mode</u>
40. Hansen, Egon. (1986). <u>Emotional processes engendered by poetry and prose reading.</u>	text: various versions	poem: original, more positive version, negative version	college students	155	1. completed written checklists about emotional responses	written checklists
41. Harste, J. (1986). What it means to be strategic: good readers as informants.	response: process	novel	graduate students	73	1. kept a journal (unedited and freely written) of what they were thinking as they were reading the novel	written, free
42. Kintgen, Eugene. (1986). Expectations and processes in reading poetic narratives.	response: process	poem	graduate English students	2	1. gave an oral taped response to poem	oral
43. Maclean, Margaret. (1986). A framework for analyzing reader-text interactions.	response: process	expository texts (6)	retired teachers	3	1. explain cloze test decisions in interview	oral
44. Monseau, V. (1986). Young-adult literature and reader responses: a descriptive study. (From Beach and Hynds abstract)	response: process	young adult novel	teachers highschool students		1. written reading logs 2. group discussion	written free; oral
45. Miall, David S. (1986). Authorizing the reader.	response: process	poem	college students		1. wrote down enough to identify each line of the poem, describing thoughts and feelings	written, free
46. Viehoff, R. (1986). How to construct a literary poem?	response: stance, process	poem (presented one line per page)	college students	16	1. thought aloud, one line per page	oral, free
47. Vipond, R. and Hunt, D. (1986). Literary processing and response as transaction. Evidence for the contribution of readers, texts, and situations. (2 studies)	response: stance, process	short story	college students	96 (12)	1. 2 experiments including response tasks such as: a) at end of each page of story, asked what would happen next, or b) given a letter about a story, thus "framing it"	oral, probed
48. Zaharias, Jane A. (1986). The effects of genre and tone on undergraduate students' preferred patterns of response to two short stories and two poems.	text: effects of genre	short stories (2) poems (2)	college students	166	completed Purves' Response Preference Measure	written, checklist



<u>Study</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>"Literature"</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response Task</u>	<u>Primary Mode</u>
49. Banks, M. (1987). An analysis of nineteenth century black responses to <u>Uncle Tom's Cabin</u> as recorded in selected antebellum black newspapers: 1852-1855.	reader: attitudes	novel	adults (primarily journalists)		1. published opinion about novel during the three years after its publication 1852 - 55	written, published response
50. Beach, R. and Wendler, C. (1987). Developmental differences in response to a story.	reader: development	short story	college students grade 11 grade 8			
51. De Beaugrande, Robert. (1987). The naive reader: anarchy or self-reliance?	response: process	poems (3)	college students	42	1. written free responses supported by "reasons why such responses might be plausible"	written, directed
52. Hoffstaedter, P. (1987). Poetic text processing and its empirical investigation.	text: quality	fragments: poems, prose excerpts	adults	40	1. rated each text on a scale of 1 - 5 as to its degree of poeticity 2. underlined poetic words 3. reformulated passage so that it was non-poetic	written, ratings
53. Hunt, R. and Vipond, D. (1987). The reader, the text, the situation: blocks and affordances in literary reading. (AKA "Contextualizing the text: the contribution of readers, texts and situations to aesthetic reading.")	response: stance	short story (in 2 versions)	professors college students	12 96	1. read story either orally or silently in either a plot-related or frame-related context 2. preserved with list of comments about story and asked to comment	oral, interviews
54. Liebman-Kleine, J. (1987). Reading Thomas Hardy's <u>The Mayor of Casterbridge</u> : Toward a problem-solving theory of reading literature.	response: stance process	novel	adult (researcher)	1	1. applied a problem solving mode of response to the reading of a novel	written, directed
55. McCormick, K. (1987). Task representation in writing about literature.	response: stance reader: preference	poem	unspec.	class	1. wrote 2 paragraphs about the poem (no further details given)	written, free
56. Meutsch, D. (1987). Cognitive processes in reading literary texts: the influence of context, goals and situations.	text: quality response: components	researcher devised fragments	college students	72	1. 2 experiments which included tasks such as rating the literary character of the text, reproducing the text and recognition of the text	written, ratings, reproductions and checklists

<u>Study</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>"Literature"</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response Task</u>	<u>Primary Mode</u>
57. Vipond and Hunt. (1987). Shunting information or making contact?; assumptions for research on aesthetic reading.	response: stance	short story	college students	68	1. read a short story aloud or silently 2. given a comprehension test	oral, interviews
58. Vipond, Hunt, and Wheeler, Lynwood C. (1987). Social reading and literary engagement.	response: stance	short stories (3)	college students	99	1. read short story aloud (in either a social or non-social condition) in preparation for a comprehension test 2. asked open-ended questions	oral, interviews
59. Werner, C. (1987). Responses of college readers with different cultural backgrounds to a short story.	reader: cross-cultural	short story	ESL college students	90 (6 classes)	1. read a short story in English 2. write a response	written, free
60. Nell, Victor. (1988). The psychology of reading for pleasure: needs and gratifications.	reader: attitudes, behaviour, values response: nature, process text: quality	self-selected books	adults (some students)	129 (33)	multiple tasks: personality inventories, comprehension speed tests, reading habits, questionnaire, in-depth interviews	multiple: oral, interviews; tests
61. Sadoski, Mark.; Goetz, Ernest T.; Kangiser, Suzanne. (1988). Imagination in story response: relationships between imagery, affect, and structural importance.	response: process	short story	college students	39	1. rated segments of story according to various criteria	written, ratings
62. Van De Weghe, R. (1988). Making and remaking meaning: developing literary responses through purposeful, informal writing.	response: process	excerpts from fiction, drama and poetry anthologies	college students	70	responded to questions such as: 1. what is your immediate response to the reading 2. how is the work a "document of human experience?"	written, probed
63. Hillocks, G. (1989). Literary texts in classrooms.	teacher's response process	poetry	teachers	2	1. teaching observations and interviews concerning the teaching of poetry	oral, interviews
64. Beach, R. (1990). The creative development of meaning: using autobiographical experiences to interpret literature.	response: process	short stories (5)	college students	unspec.	1. wrote autobiographical journal responses to short stories	written, free