

AN ANALYSIS OF LITERATURE TEXTBOOKS IN THE  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

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AN ANALYSIS OF LITERATURE TEXTBOOKS IN THE  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School  
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by  
Blanche Newsome Hardy

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Educators have disagreed among themselves for many years as to the types of literature which should be taught in secondary schools. Many theories have been advanced. Within the past twenty years the arguments in the high school journals, the English teachers publications, and textbooks in methods of teaching have reached a new height. There are those who would include only the time-tested, established classics; on the other extreme, some feel that there is no time for these older writings, that they have nothing to offer the youth of today, and that only modern and timely prose and poetry should have a place in the present-day curriculum. The question of whether prose or poetry is more suitable for today's high schools is still being argued. There are divisions of thought in the matter of offering more American literature than British, and a growing demand for World Literature as a means of fostering better understanding of other peoples.

#### I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to survey the differing viewpoints of professional educators, makers of curricula, English teachers, and others

in order to ascertain their opinion of the type of literature which should be taught and (2) to determine what trends, if any, the state-recommended textbooks of North Carolina have shown over the past twenty-five years.

Importance of the problem. Inasmuch as an acquaintance with good literature has always been an objective for English courses, the importance of the selections to be presented has been recognized. Teachers, of course, are limited in the amount of time they have in which to accomplish this objective. It has thus been thought imperative to present the types which are considered most worthwhile. Percival M. Symonds said in 1933, "Probably the textbook, whether we like it or not, determines the materials and methods of teaching to a greater extent than any other one factor."<sup>1</sup> Since it is assumed that teachers do teach textbooks, these are pertinent questions: What has the state of North Carolina done in a practical way to express its educational theories? Have the changes in the state-recommended high school literature textbooks shown any significant trends in the past twenty-five years?

## II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Classics. Classics, as used throughout this study,

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<sup>1</sup> Percival M. Symonds, "Needed Research in the Teaching of English," English Journal, 22:449, June, 1933.

will be interpreted to mean established literature, both prose and poetry, which has been tested by the lapse of at least fifty years.

Humanities. The term "humanities" will be interpreted to mean areas of learning, apart from the field of science, which are primarily concerned with culture as manifested by the literature of any race or age.

Periods of time. The time when literary selections were published will be designated as follows: Period I, prior to 1875; Period II, between 1875 and 1900; Period III, after 1900.

Numbers of Series. Textbook series will be designated as follows: Literature and Life of 1922-24, Series I; Literature and Life of 1929-36, Series II; Harcourt Brace Adventures, Series III.

### III. METHODS OF PROCEDURE

Abundant material on the subject was found in the library of Appalachian State Teachers College. Books, magazine articles, courses of study, recommended reading lists, and state-recommended textbooks were read and analyzed. A selected bibliography of material pertinent to the subject was made.

Three sets of state-recommended textbooks were chosen for analysis. The 1922-24 Literature and Life series was obtained from an outside source; the later Literature and Life series was found in the library of the Appalachian State Teachers College; the current Adventures series was obtained from the laboratory high school book room.

A list of the literary selections (items) in each of the twelve chosen textbooks was made. Each selection was then classified as to type (prose or poetry), nationality of the author, and first published date. The total number of items was 1,917. Selections were then grouped according to the time periods specified and also according to the nationality of the author (American, British, or other).

The idea of giving Carl Sandburg's six-line "Fog" the same value for comparison as the one hundred fifteen-page Silas Marner was thought to be illogical. It seemed to be essential to measure the quantity of the selections rather than the number. Since there were column divisions of the literary material to provide space for discussion questions, notes, biographical material, and historical data, it was necessary to measure each portion of the literary selection itself apart from the interspersed material. A column measuring device was made, and each of the 1,917 selections was measured. These measurements were scaled to five one-hundredths of a column. The column figures used in



this analysis refer only to the amount of the literary selections themselves. Since there are two columns to each page, the number of pages can be easily determined. This study deals with columns rather than pages. The total of the columns measured was 11,264.20.

Tables were made as before, substituting the number of columns for the number of items or selections. Since the size of the column and the size of the type used in the three series varied slightly, all figures were then changed into percentages for the sake of validity and were so tabulated.

These data were compiled, analyzed, and interpreted. Significant trends in the state-recommended literature textbooks of North Carolina were found.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Bernice Leary found in 1943 that there had been little research during the three previous years which had made outstanding contributions to the teaching of literature.<sup>1</sup> Dwight L. Burton, in 1949, found substantially the same situation. He saw as reasons for the limited quantity of research the general confusion in objectives of teaching literature for the previous fifteen years and the inability to measure in a scientific manner the rather intangible outcomes of this field of teaching.<sup>2</sup> Monroe, in 1950, agreed with Burton's findings, added that genuine research in the field was hampered by inability to control the relevant factors, and came to the conclusion that the need was for the development of some type of better research technique.<sup>3</sup>

Varied opinions about what constitutes good literature

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<sup>1</sup> Bernice E. Leary, "Literature in School Instruction," Review of Educational Research, 13:88, April, 1943.

<sup>2</sup> Dwight L. Burton, "Research in the Teaching of Literature," Review of Educational Research, 19:125, April, 1949.

<sup>3</sup> Walter S. Monroe, Encyclopedia of Educational Research (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), p. 397.

have been expressed. Matthew Arnold said, "Culture is a knowledge of the best which has been thought and said in the world."<sup>4</sup> Many adults have expressed the belief that the great literature of the world has a definite value in the enrichment and enjoyment of life, that he who is enriched in this way has an approach to life which is influenced by the thoughts of those who have lived before.

In England of the nineteenth century Thomas Carlyle decried the materialism of the times.<sup>5</sup> Modern Americans have done likewise. John U. Nef saw in 1949 a world which seemed to be dividing into two political divisions, and he explored the possibility that this division might be partially caused by an intellectual and spiritual poverty in the midst of material plenty.<sup>6</sup> He said:

If education in the United States is to set an example, to be of service to human nature in its variety and richness, education should cease to serve the material at the expense of the spiritual, the special at the expense of the general.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Matthew Arnold, Culture and Anarchy (William S. Knickerbocker, editor; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925), p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Carlyle, "Signs of the Times," The Works of Thomas Carlyle, Volume XIV (New York: Peter Fenelon Collier, 1897), pp. 462-87.

<sup>6</sup> John U. Nef, "The Chicago Experiment," Forum, 111:1, January, 1949.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 2-3.

Ralph McGill commented in the Atlanta Constitution in 1951:

I find myself hoping we are hoarding some mental preparedness for the years ahead, and not just extra stockings, suits, shoes, tires, refrigerators, etc. When the skies become dark and the fearful clouds come, such treasures don't keep. The mind is the only storehouse where treasures are safe.<sup>8</sup>

Vocational education has made great progress in the past two decades. Some people have felt that too much emphasis has been placed on it. Charles E. Odegaard, speaking before the American Council on Education in Chicago in May of 1950, admitted that education had done a good job in this respect in its training of men to a high level of scientific ability and technological skill, but he voiced doubts that it had done a good job for Americans as citizens. He advocated a greater emphasis in American education on the humanities and a broader knowledge of cultures other than our own.<sup>9</sup>

A state university made a two-year survey of its curriculum and found that the school was doing an excellent job in training its students to make a living, but that it was failing to help them make their living really worthwhile.

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<sup>8</sup> Paul Farmer, "Let Literature Work Its Magic," English Journal, 40:217, April, 1951.

<sup>9</sup> Charles E. Odegaard, "The Humanities Face the World Crisis," The Educational Record, 31:302, July, 1950.

It was found that subjects which did not directly contribute to earning a living were commonly regarded as impractical and of little value. While acknowledging that most people must earn their living, the study pointed out that this alone was not enough for man.<sup>10</sup>

Some technical schools have added courses in the humanities to their almost exclusively technical curriculum of the past. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology has established a course in this field.<sup>11</sup> In 1950 a committee of the American Society for Engineering Education listed as one of its aims in the teaching of English the development of the students' desire to read good literature.<sup>12</sup> H. P. Hammond of this committee stated, "Among the more important recent trends in engineering education is the tendency to devote emphasis and time to . . . the humanities at the expense of engineering specialties."<sup>13</sup>

Herbert A. Sawyer, of the University of Alabama School

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<sup>10</sup> Charles Roll, "The American Humanities Course at Indiana State Teachers College," Teachers College Journal, 21:128, May-June, 1950.

<sup>11</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>12</sup> H. P. Hammond, "Contributions of the Liberal Arts to the Training of Engineers," Journal of Higher Education, 21:192, April, 1950.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 190.

of Engineering, noted that new courses had been introduced almost continuously since the beginning of "civil" engineering over one hundred years ago. This led to a gradual elimination of all but the most practical courses, seemingly without a realization by the planners of what was happening. Engineers themselves realize that the trend has gone too far. Only one-third of their time is spent in engineering and all of their time in living. So-called "meaty" courses in the humanities, including classical literature as the introduction, are now spread over a four-year period.<sup>14</sup> Mr. Sawyer added, "Engineers would liken themselves to the pilot who crowded a pound of chocolate instead of a pound of tomatoes into his cockpit."<sup>15</sup>

At the time of his appointment as dean of Business Education at the University of Southern California, Lawrence C. Lockley defended his field against those who thought that it used degraded material because of its applied nature. He declared that business education could not be considered in the abstract or in a vacuum. He defined the essence of the humanities in terms of emphasis instead of subject matter--

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<sup>14</sup> Herbert A. Sawyer, "Humanities for Engineering Students," Journal of Higher Education, 22:470-3, December, 1951.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 474.

emphasis on scholarship, on aesthetic appreciation, and on the spiritual values of our cultural heritage.<sup>16</sup> He concluded, "And I submit that, as we near our objectives, we will find a closer kinship between the humanities and business education."<sup>17</sup>

There may be no greater or lesser degree of unanimity among English teachers than among members of any other profession. The experimental curriculum in English of the state of Delaware in 1941 had a definite outline and recommendations for every phase of English teaching except the selection of subject matter for literature courses. The committee found the division of opinion "so sharp and irreconcilable that no good purpose could be achieved by making final recommendations" at that particular time.<sup>18</sup>

Olive Eckerson said that we owe no allegiance to the classics; they do not need our support in order to be loved. She entered her plea on behalf of the students themselves when she maintained, "We owe our children that education which will give them a sense of values, grasped, if you will,

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<sup>16</sup> Lawrence C. Lockley, "Business Education and the Humanities," School and Society, 74:418, December 29, 1951.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 420.

<sup>18</sup> H. V. Holloway, State Superintendent, Department of Public Instruction, "An Experimental Curriculum in English for Use and Criticism in the Secondary Schools," State of Delaware, 1941, p. 5.

through intelligent, enjoyed reading of great stories."<sup>19</sup>

Modern educators have stressed the importance of attending to individual differences of pupils, advised against trying to standardize a group too rigidly, and recommended going down to the student's level as the only way of teaching effectively. Over thirty years ago Leonard, in an English methods textbook, cautioned prospective teachers against trying to begin a course above a child's level. He recommended the best possible experiences in literature as being important to all, but especially to those who would not have literature courses beyond the high school level.<sup>20</sup> Luella B. Cook in 1929 was disturbed at what she thought was overemphasis on group education at the expense of education for the individual.<sup>21</sup> She said, "One of the most disturbing aspects of American education today is this worship of the average."<sup>22</sup>

A 1945 textbook author, John W. Bell, wrote in his preface that individual differences made it unwise to

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<sup>19</sup> Olive Eckerson, "Farewell to the Classics?" English Journal, 36:293, June, 1947.

<sup>20</sup> Sterling Andrus Leonard, Essential Principles of Teaching Reading and Literature (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1922), pp. 123-25.

<sup>21</sup> Luella B. Cook, "Individualism in our Composition Classes," English Journal, 18:31, January, 1929.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 32.



demand the same reading from all students, but that all should be encouraged in their reading by being able to understand it.<sup>23</sup>

Luella Cole noted a change during the previous thirty years in the elementary school curriculum which resulted from research done in the field to determine the needs of adults which could be taught at this level. She proposed that this be done for the high schools and that only the minimum essentials be required from all pupils. Literature courses, in her proposal, were to be given only as elective offerings.<sup>24</sup>

Dora V. Smith strongly recommended that only authors who had something to say to adolescents be kept in the literature curriculum and added, "Unwelcome as the task may be, getting rid of the dead timber in the English woodpile is of paramount importance."<sup>25</sup>

Repeated efforts have been made to determine what high school pupils understand, enjoy, and prefer in literary selections. There has been no lack of material; rather, the

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<sup>23</sup> John W. Bell and others, The English We Need (Atlanta: The John C. Winston Company, 1945), vi.

<sup>24</sup> Luella Cole, Psychology of Adolescence (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1942), pp. 596-609.

<sup>25</sup> Dora V. Smith, "Basic Considerations in Curriculum-Making in the Language Arts," English Journal, 37:117, March, 1948.

problem has been to choose wisely. A twelve-year study of reading interests of more than fifty thousand pupils in the state of New York was made under the direction of George W. Norvell.<sup>26</sup> He came to the conclusion that certain classics which were disliked by students should be replaced by those which were liked by them. As You Like It was unpopular with students, but Macbeth and Hamlet rated high; Milton's "Comus" was unpopular; they disliked Whitman's "Song of Myself", but liked "O Captain! My Captain!" This important study suggested that the students' interests be placed first always and that only selections be used of which both students and critics approved.

More than five hundred college students in the School of Education at Miami University in Ohio were asked to list the literary selections which they had disliked most in high school.<sup>27</sup> Macbeth was mentioned forty times; Hamlet, thirteen times. Ranging between these two extremes were Silas Marner, Julius Caesar, Ivanhoe, The Canterbury Tales, A Tale of Two Cities, The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, The Idylls of the King, and The House of the Seven Gables. Students gave as their reason for dislike the fact that they did not

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<sup>26</sup> George W. Norvell, "Some Results of a Twelve-Year Study of Children's Reading Interests," English Journal, 35:531-36, December, 1946.

<sup>27</sup> Martha Wagner, "College Students Evaluate High School Readings," English Journal, 41:251, May, 1952.

understand the stories. Martha Wagner drew the conclusion from her study that, "The question is not whether Hawthorne's works are great literature, but whether they are able to bring about a vivid, personal response on the part of the high school reader."<sup>28</sup>

A junior high school teacher in Detroit in 1929 recommended to senior high schools the methods used in his school. Direct appeal and readability were the only two standards set up.<sup>29</sup> Another junior high school teacher in the same year pleaded for World Literature, as well as American and British, in order to bring home to young readers a consciousness of the whole world. Variety was indicated for the literature program.<sup>30</sup>

Ruth Strang found several commonly disliked characteristics of literature among students of thirty high schools in 1946. Pupils objected to selections which were too difficult, too wordy, slow-moving, monotonous, and too sentimental. The diversity of interests which she found was attributed to the diversity of adolescence itself.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 252.

<sup>29</sup> W. Morrow Washington, "High School Reading Courses," English Journal, 18:846-49, December, 1929.

<sup>30</sup> Stella S. Center, "Junior High School Literature and Reading," English Journal, 18:138, February, 1929.

<sup>31</sup> Ruth Strang, "Reading Interests, 1946," English Journal, 35:481, November, 1946.

John B. Opdycke in 1933 deplored the ushering in of the literary classic and its detailed, dissected, and vivisectioned treatment in the classroom. He believed that teachers should present more and more books without approving or disapproving too strongly of any of them.<sup>32</sup>

William Gillis in 1951 believed that teachers should examine their teaching aims occasionally.<sup>33</sup> He criticized the profession in general as follows:

Let us ask ourselves why we teach literature as one of the humanities. Is it so that every student will have read the 'standard books'? No, it is to give him the advantage of life-long entertainment and moral development of a higher sort. And yet the great works are all in the hands of English teachers and professorial cliques who are accepted by the average practical person as living in an effete world.<sup>34</sup>

Teachers of literature have felt that their subject was in competition with movies, the radio, and television. The co-ordinator of English in the Atlanta High Schools suggested in 1951 that literature itself should be the chief weapon in a counteroffensive and that literature could work its magic if teachers would only let it. He added that the aim should be to bring the students to a genuine love of reading; the discovery of the classics would follow. He

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<sup>32</sup> John B. Opdycke, "The Residues in Literature," English Journal, 22:109-115, February, 1933.

<sup>33</sup> William Gillis, Jr., "Are We Teaching the Wrong Classics?" Clearing House, 26:206, December, 1951.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 208.

believed that more time should be spent on good reading in class and that an English teacher would be justified in spending from one-fourth to one-half of all allotted English time in stimulation and guidance of pupils' reading.<sup>35</sup>

That the classics have endured from generation to generation is proof that they have had something to offer each one. L. A. King saw in the classics very modern issues. The Iliad raised the issue of the cost of loyalty to a group; The Divine Comedy, the idea of man's freedom to love what he will.<sup>36</sup> Walter Barnes found that some of the classics remained as much alive as when they were written, that they were always contemporaneous.<sup>37</sup> James E. Warren, Jr. agreed that the same problems and situations found in classic literature were contemporary ones and suggested that students were more able to understand themselves and others through reading them.<sup>38</sup>

Hook recognized that the greater part of students' reading after finishing school would be from contemporary

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<sup>35</sup> Farmer, op. cit., p. 213.

<sup>36</sup> L. A. King, "Literature for Living," Journal of Higher Education, 21:463, December, 1950.

<sup>37</sup> Walter Barnes, The New Democracy in the Teaching of English (New York: Rand McNally and Company, 1923), p. 8.

<sup>38</sup> James E. Warren, Jr., "Life Is in Books--Help Your Students to Find It," Education, 71:629, June, 1951.

materials and for that reason thought that teachers should try to teach discrimination in reading by using a wide variety of literary types. The classics were looked upon as cultural materials and also as touchstones by which all literature might be judged.<sup>39</sup>

Howard Mumford Jones, a teacher of the classics, addressed a meeting of teachers in Greenville, North Carolina, in 1929. He said that in trying to look in a realistic manner at the question of teaching the classics, it was very doubtful that Willie and Susie were getting much of value from them. He recommended discarding the greater part of them because they were above the comprehension of high school students. His belief was that fewer books should be taught but taught better. Recourse to contemporary literature was not the answer.<sup>40</sup>

The National Council of the Teachers of English as a professional organization has played an increasingly important part in trying to clarify aims of English teachers and in formulating proper procedures for carrying them out.

Edwin Mims addressed a meeting of this group in Los Angeles in 1931 and warned the members to keep in their

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<sup>39</sup> J. N. Hook, The Teaching of High School English (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1950), p. 111.

<sup>40</sup> Howard Mumford Jones, "The Fetish of the Classics," English Journal, 18:221-38, March, 1929.

sight the great tradition of English literature, to stress its importance more than ever.<sup>41</sup> He added:

We must not surrender, either to those who find in vocational and technical training the sole basis of education or to those within our own ranks who insist that we must abandon the great classics in favor of contemporary periodicals and books.<sup>42</sup>

In the same year, Wilbur Hatfield told the National Council meeting in Milwaukee that only present real values became permanent values, but that this must not be carried to the extreme of letting present childish satisfactions determine the curriculum. Eighth grade pupils, he felt, should not be compelled to memorize Hamlet's soliloquy to be used as comfort in the future, but neither should they be allowed to play football for an entire morning because of the immediate pleasure derived from it.<sup>43</sup>

The English Journal reported several important talks which were made at the meeting of the National Council of the Teachers of English in Boston in November of 1952.

Robert C. Pooley praised the organization for being instrumental in getting rid of college entrance requirements as an obstruction to proper curriculum-planning. He also

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<sup>41</sup> Edwin Mims, "The Contemporary Value of English Classics," English Journal, 20:803-6, December, 1931.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 806.

<sup>43</sup> W. Wilbur Hatfield, "The Ideal Curriculum," English Journal, 21:182-91, March, 1932.

praised the group for knocking down the wall of tradition which approved only literary selections by authors who had been dead for fifty years. He pointed out that the way had been cleared for works of contemporary men of letters as well as for newspapers and periodicals.<sup>44</sup>

Virginia Belle Lowers told the group that the older writings had not been thrown out of the curriculum, but that many new ones had been added.<sup>45</sup> She noted:

Textbook publishers have caught on to this need for diverse materials and now make books to meet the requirements of modern schools: books for slow readers, anthologies with stories, poems, essays, and plays of our times.<sup>46</sup>

Lou La Brant stated that contemporary writings have much of value in them.<sup>47</sup> She said that the kind of satisfaction which she gets from Chaucer she also gets from Mauldin's cartoons and a few animated strips. Her advice to English teachers was:

We will remember that much that is transitory in the current scene is nevertheless important. Only the prig waits for the perfect play, the ideal broadcast. We need to be critical, of course, but not aloof. There is a great difference; and young people know it. Ruskin told

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<sup>44</sup> Robert C. Pooley, "Clear for Action," English Journal, 42:125-30, March, 1953.

<sup>45</sup> Virginia Belle Lowers, "What's Right with the Teaching of English?" English Journal, 42:198, April, 1953.

<sup>46</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>47</sup> Lou La Brant, "How Can We Make the Newer Resources Available?" English Journal, 42:81-83, February, 1953.



us about the book of the hour and the book of all time. We often neglect the book of the hour, which is a highly significant part of the present scene.<sup>48</sup>

The developments of the literature curriculum were summarized by Dora V. Smith at the first general session of the Council.<sup>49</sup> She reminded her audience that Noah Webster, as early as 1809, made a plea for American literature to be taught to Americans. Living authors were recommended by a principal in Troy, New York, about this same time. In 1888 the Massachusetts Teachers Association urged less analyzing and dissecting of classics, a greater attention to the prose of the day, and increased emphasis upon American literature. In 1891 Samuel Thurber urged the study of contemporary American writers. Whittier and Lowell were still alive at the time. Charles William Eliot at the same time was demanding that every "reader" be taken out of the schools and that "literature, not ineffable trash," be used instead.<sup>50</sup>

Miss Smith told of the founding of the National Council of the Teachers of English in 1911 and the report of 1917 on the Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools. This report was an attempt to fit the course of

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>49</sup> Dora V. Smith, "'The English Language Arts': A Link Between Yesterday and Tomorrow," English Journal, 42: 72, February, 1953.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., pp. 72-73.

instruction to the best interests of the youth of America. The Council recommended at that time contemporary literature, and compiled a list of comparatively recent books which met its approval. Wide reading was emphasized.<sup>51</sup>

Continuing her historical summary, Miss Smith described the conflict which surrounded the Commission on the English Curriculum when it began its work in 1946. This commission worked on The English Language Arts until early in 1952 when the book was published. Four volumes were to follow on elementary, high school, and college programs and on the preparation of teachers. This report called for a wide range of literary selections with varied readings recommended for members of the same class. It was received by some English teachers and rejected by others, but there was no indifference toward it.<sup>52</sup>

Some of the guides for English teachers, formulated by the Commission on the Curriculum of the National Council of Teachers of English, follow:

1. A wealth of material should be used to provide for individual differences. Both classic and recent should be included; they should be well-written and on the level of the students.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

2. The teacher should possess a knowledge of the reading ability, needs, and interests of her various pupils.

3. Organization of literature around themes or topics is preferable to chronological study. The material for the course should not be confined to any one anthology.

4. All types of modern literature should be presented in order to develop an appreciation of good writing by comparisons.

5. It is believed a worthwhile aim to find satisfaction in a well-told story, in beauty of line and imagery, and in understanding human character as revealed in selections of literature.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> The Commission on the English Curriculum of the National Council of Teachers of English, The English Language Arts (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1952), pp. 380-404.

### CHAPTER III

#### PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The method of obtaining figures used in the tabulations is illustrated in Table I, page 26. This is a sample sheet showing all of the selections from Book 2 of Series II. It will be noted that each item is (1) measured in columns to two decimal places, (2) classified as to prose or poetry, (3) dated according to one of the three specified time periods, and (4) classified as to the nationality of the author.

One reads the first item thus, "There are (1) 16.20 columns (2) in a prose selection (3) written after 1900 (4) by an American author."

Book 2 of Series II, shown in this table, had the fewest number of items of any of the twelve cited. Titles are shortened for convenience. Each book of each series was treated in this same manner. There were 1,917 selections in the twelve books of the three series totaling 11,264.20 columns.

When all of the classifications had been completed, each of the above-mentioned four sets of figures was separated and tabulated. The figures were added on a machine and were checked for accuracy. A simple form of journal sheet used in bookkeeping was set up and all totals were

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balanced as a further check.

Items were counted and tabulated but were not used in the analysis. Tables of items will be found in the Appendix.

TABLE I

SAMPLE SHEET SHOWING METHOD OF COMPILATION OF DATA

Col. <sup>w</sup>	p <sup>x</sup>	TPY	Item	Author	Nat. <sup>z</sup>
16.20	b	3	Third Ingredient	O. Henry	A
30.65	b	2	Red-headed League	A. Conan Doyle	B
25.00	b	1	Purloined Letter	E. A. Poe	A
19.50	b	1	Pit and Pendulum	E. A. Poe	A
6.60	b	2	Gavin Birse Mag Lownie	James Barrie	B
19.30	b	2	The Man Who Was	Kipling	B
29.00	b	2	Three Strangers	Thomas Hardy	B
16.10	b	1	Drowne's Wooden Image	Hawthorne	A
12.70	b	1	Heidegger's Experiment	Hawthorne	A
51.35	b	1	Quentin Durward	Walter Scott	B
231.30	b	1	Silas Marner	George Eliot	B
13.95	b	2	Travels with Donkey	Stevenson	B
25.70	a	1	Enoch Arden	Tennyson	B
2.10	a	1	Ulysses	Tennyson	B
22.00	a	1	Atalanta's Race	William Morris	B
28.20	a	1	Sohrab and Rustum	Matthew Arnold	B
5.80	a	1	Tam O'Shanter	Robert Burns	B
.40	a	1	Sonnet on Chillon	Byron	B
7.80	a	1	Prisoner of Chillon	Byron	B
11.40	a	1	Eve of St. Agnes	Keats	B
13.20	a	3	Tramp Transfigured	Alfred Noyes	B
3.35	a	3	Admiral's Ghost	Alfred Noyes	B
1.20	a	2	Jim Bludso	John Hay	A
.95	a	1	Flynn of Virginia	Bret Harte	A
3.00	a	3	Comrades: An Episode	Robert Nichols	B
115.60	a	1	Idylls of King (4)	Tennyson	B
4.30	a	3	Beau of Bath	C. Mackay	A
16.80	b	3	Enter the Hero	T. Helburn	A
15.40	b	3	Sham	F. G. Tompkins	A
65.85	b	1	She Stoops to Conquer	Goldsmith	B
75.35	a*	1	As You Like It	Shakespeare	B

<sup>w</sup> Number of columns

\* In effect, if not in form

<sup>x</sup> Poetry-a, Prose-b<sup>y</sup> Time period<sup>z</sup> Nationality--American-A, British-B, Other-O

The number of columns of poetry for each time period is shown in Table II on page 28. Books of each series are tabulated, and totals for each of the three series are given.

The first line of this table reads thus, "Of the 343.20 columns of poetry in Series I, Book 1, 318 were written before 1875; 2.30 columns between 1875 and 1900; 22.90 columns after 1900."

Table III on page 29 shows in like manner the number of columns of prose for each book for each time period. The first line in this table reads, "Of the 555.10 columns of prose in Book 1 of Series I, 183.30 were written before 1875; 233.05 between 1875 and 1900; 138.75 after 1900."

TABLE II  
ANALYSIS OF COLUMNS OF POETRY ACCORDING TO TIME PERIODS

		Period I	Period II	Period III	Total
Series I,	Book 1	318.00	2.30	22.90	343.20
	2	260.35	6.70	28.50	295.55
	3	217.10	11.50	30.00	258.60
	4	422.60	13.05	21.20	456.85
Series I,	Total	1218.05	33.55	102.60	1354.20
Series II,	Book 1	323.00	2.65	24.95	350.60
	2	295.30	1.20	23.85	320.35
	3	116.70	49.70	57.80	224.20
	4	375.55	17.65	43.15	436.35
Series II,	Total	1110.55	71.20	149.75	1331.50
Series III,	Book 1	40.90	10.20	32.90	84.00
	2	99.25	83.20	29.85	212.30
	3	81.40	28.35	88.55	198.30
	4	335.85	20.95	47.85	404.65
Series III,	Total	557.40	142.70	199.15	899.25



TABLE III  
ANALYSIS OF COLUMNS OF PROSE ACCORDING TO TIME PERIODS

			Period I	Period II	Period III	Total
Series I,	Book 1		183.30	233.05	138.75	555.10
		2	465.60	90.85	47.70	604.15
		3	370.05	131.10	185.50	686.65
		4	331.95	12.75	100.90	445.60
Series I,	Total		1350.90	467.75	472.85	2291.50
Series II,	Book 1		64.00	238.05	276.15	578.20
		2	421.80	199.50	48.40	669.70
		3	227.15	83.75	283.45	594.35
		4	249.95	58.50	202.25	510.70
Series II,	Total		962.90	579.80	810.25	2352.95
Series III,	Book 1		5.10	68.10	814.80	888.00
		2	228.95	38.95	560.70	828.60
		3	208.30	29.85	602.25	840.40
		4	160.75	45.10	271.95	477.80
Series III,	Total		603.10	182.00	2249.70	3034.80

Because of the slight differences in size of print and size of the printed page in the three series, all of the figures in Tables II and III (pages 28 and 29) were computed in terms of percentages for the sake of validity in making comparisons. Table IV on page 32 is the compilation in percentages of the figures from Tables II and III (pages 28 and 29). In computing percentages, division was carried to three decimal places and then rounded off to two places. Footnotes to the table explain discrepancies where rounding off was not possible. Thus one reads, "In Book 1 of Series I, 92% of the poetry was written before 1875; 1% was written between 1875 and 1900; 7% was written after 1900."

The totals of each series show a progressively smaller percentage of both prose and poetry from Period I. Of all the poetry in Series I, 90% was written before 1875. Series II shows 83% written in this period, while Series III has 62%. Period II shows by series 2%, 5%, 16%. Period III goes from 8% in Series I, to 11% in Series II, to 22% in Series III.

The trend in prose is even more pronounced. Period I begins with 59% in Series I, drops to 41% in Series II, and goes to 20% in Series III. Period II does not show the same pattern but goes from 20% in Series I, to 25% in Series II, and then drops to 6% in Series III.

Period III of prose seems most significant. Here the percentage rises from 21% in the first series to 34% in the second and to 74% in the third. Series III shows a smaller percentage of prose of Period I (20) than does Series I of Period III (21).

TABLE IV  
 PERCENTAGES OF COLUMNS OF POETRY AND PROSE  
 ACCORDING TO TIME PERIODS

Time Period. . . . .		I	Poetry		I	Prose	
			II	III		II	III
Series I,	Book 1	92	1	7	33	42	25
	2	88	2	10	77	15	8
	3	84	4	12	54	19	27
	4	92	3	5	74	3	23
	Series	90	2	8	59	20	21
Series II,	Book 1	92	1	7	11	41	48
	2	92	<sup>x</sup>	8	63	30	7
	3	52	22	26	38	14	48
	4	86	4	10	49	11	40
	Series	83 <sup>y</sup>	5 <sup>y</sup>	11	41	25	34
Series III,	Book 1	49	12	39	<sup>z</sup>	7 <sup>z</sup>	91 <sup>z</sup>
	2	47	39	14	27 <sup>z</sup>	4 <sup>z</sup>	67 <sup>z</sup>
	3	41	14	45	25	3	72
	4	83	5	12	34	9	57
	Series	62	16	22	20	6	74

<sup>x</sup> Below .5%

<sup>y</sup> Plus .4%

<sup>z</sup> Plus more than .5%

Table V on page 34 gives the number of columns of poetry and prose in each book of the three series.

Table VI on page 35 presents a comparison of the volume of prose and poetry by means of percentages. It shows that Book 1 of Series I consists of 38% poetry and 62% prose.

Series I consists of 63% prose; Series II, 64%; Series III, 77%. Prose is advancing in volume in each series and poetry is declining. The difference is greater between the last two series than between the first two.

TABLE V  
NUMBER OF COLUMNS OF POETRY AND PROSE

	Poetry	Prose	Total
Series I, Book 1	343.20	555.10	898.30
2	295.55	604.15	899.70
3	258.60	686.65	945.25
4	456.85	445.60	902.45
Series I, Total	1354.20	2291.50	3645.70
Series II, Book 1	350.60	578.20	928.80
2	320.35	669.70	990.05
3	224.20	594.35	818.55
4	436.35	510.70	947.05
Series II, Total	1331.50	2352.95	3684.45
Series III, Book 1	84.00	888.00	972.00
2	212.30	828.60	1040.90
3	198.30	840.40	1038.70
4	404.65	477.80	882.45
Series III, Total	899.25	3034.80	3934.05

TABLE VI  
 PERCENTAGES OF COLUMNS OF POETRY AND PROSE  
 TO TOTAL VOLUME

	Poetry	Prose
Series I, Book 1	38	62
2	33	67
3	27	73
4	51	49
Series	37	63
Series II, Book 1	38	62
2	32	68
3	27	73
4	46	54
Series	36	64
Series III, Book 1	9	91
2	20	80
3	19	81
4	46	54
Series	23	77

Table VII on page 37 is the computation in columns of author nationality. Prose and poetry are not separated here; the entire number of columns is used.

It will be noted that only American Literature is offered in Book 3 of two series and that only English Literature is offered in Book 4 of the same two series. It has become rather traditional in North Carolina for juniors in high schools to study American Literature and for seniors to study English Literature.

It is obvious that only Series III has authors which can be classified as other than American or British.

Table VIII on page 38 is the percentage computation of the figures from Table VII. The percentage of American writings has increased: Series I, 28%; Series II, 35%; Series III, 57%. The percentage of British writings has decreased, thus: Series I, 72%; Series II, 65%; Series III, 37%. Here again the difference between the last two series is far greater than between the first two series.



TABLE VII  
ANALYSIS OF COLUMNS ACCORDING TO NATIONALITY OF AUTHOR

	American	British	Other	Total
Series I, Book 1	299.65	598.65		898.30
2	338.50	561.20		899.70
3	249.70	695.55		945.25
4	123.20	779.25		902.45
Series I, Total	1011.05	2634.65		3645.70
Series II, Book 1	359.80	569.00		928.80
2	112.75	877.30		990.05
3	818.55			818.55
4		947.05		947.05
Series II, Total	1291.10	2393.35		3684.45
Series III, Book 1	639.55	158.00	174.45	972.00
2	547.35	431.40	62.15	1040.90
3	1038.70			1038.70
4		882.45		882.45
Series III, Total	2225.60	1471.85	236.60	3934.05

TABLE VIII  
 PERCENTAGES OF COLUMNS ACCORDING TO NATIONALITY OF AUTHOR

		American	British	Other
Series I,	Book 1	33	67	
	2	38	62	
	3	26	74	
	4	14	86	
	Series	28	72	
Series II,	Book 1	39	61	
	2	11	89	
	3	100		
	4		100	
	Series	35	65	
Series III,	Book 1	66	16	18
	2	53	41	6
	3	100		
	4		100	
	Series	57	37	6

Percentages for each series have been taken from the various tables and combined in Tables IX, X, and XI. These three tables comprise a summary of the three trends found in the series of textbooks. They are found on page 40.

Table IX (figures taken from Table IV, page 32) shows the decline in the use of literary selections written before 1875 and a corresponding rise in the use of those written after 1900. This change has been greater in the prose than in the poetry.

Table X (figures taken from Table VI, page 35) gives the increase of the volume of prose over poetry.

Table XI (figures taken from Table VIII, page 38) shows the increased emphasis on American authors, the decreased emphasis on British authors, and the addition of some authors of other nationalities.

There is generally a greater difference between Series II and Series III than between Series I and Series II.

TABLE IX

PERCENTAGES OF POETRY AND PROSE  
IN SPECIFIED TIME PERIODS

Series	Poetry Time Periods			Prose Time Periods		
	I	II	III	I	II	III
I	90	2	8	59	20	21
II	83	5	11	41	25	34
III	62	16	22	20	6	74

TABLE X

PERCENTAGES OF POETRY AND PROSE

Series	Poetry	Prose
I	37	63
II	36	64
III	23	77

TABLE XI

PERCENTAGES OF COLUMNS ACCORDING TO  
NATIONALITY OF AUTHOR

Series	American	British	Other
I	28	72	
II	35	65	
III	57	37	6

There is a remarkable degree of consistency in the cited trends throughout the three series of textbooks. The only irregularity at all is in Series III, Prose, Period II in Table IX on page 40.

A noticeable fact throughout is the more radical changes shown in Series III, the series of textbooks now being used in the North Carolina secondary schools. The first two series were published by Scott, Foresman and Company; the last by Harcourt, Brace and Company. It is interesting to note that the latter publishing company continued the trends, but to a more marked degree, shown by Scott, Foresman and Company's Revised Edition (Series II).

It has been definitely established that there has been a trend away from literature written prior to 1875. This may be interpreted to mean that the so-called classics are being discarded in favor of contemporary writings.

There is now being taught 28% less poetry from the period prior to 1875 than was taught in 1928. Freshmen, whose poetry study was formerly composed of 93% of the older poetry, now have only 49% taken from that period. Long selections from Shakespeare and Sir Walter Scott have been taken out of the course of study for freshmen. Andrew Barton Paterson, Nancy Byrd Turner, Ethel Romig Fuller, Carl Carmer, and Boyce House are among those who have been added.

The trend to the contemporary is much more pronounced in prose than in poetry. The emphasis on prose written after 1900 has become greater with each new series. Of all the prose in the present literature textbooks of North Carolina high school students, 74% was written since 1900. Freshmen have 92% of their prose from this period. The largest percentage of prose from any one time period before this series was found in Book 4 of Series I, used by high school seniors, and this was only 74%. The conclusion may be drawn from this comparison that the present-day emphasis on the contemporary is greater than the prior emphasis was on the older or classical type.

In 1928, 59% of the prose offered to high school students was written before 1900. Twenty-five years later only 20% of prose from this period is being studied. There are some abridged versions of or excerpts from selections in the current series. Selections from five of Emerson's essays and a series of famous quotations from his writings are given instead of the original essays and other works which were formerly printed in full. Beowulf is summarized for the seniors of today. The Prologue to The Canterbury Tales and The Nun's Priest's Tale are printed in a modern version. There is a list of famous quotations from Pope. Two sections of The Idylls of the King in Series I occupied 57.30 columns of print; prose summaries of these two occupy 18.20 columns

in the current textbooks.

Reportage is included in today's textbooks. Examples are: "Surgery in a Submarine" by George Weller, "Bomber to Britain" by James L. Peck, "Our Good Friends, the Head-hunters" by Eric Sevareid, "Enter--Atomic Energy" by the editors of Pocket Books, "Britain and the Bombings" by Allen Nevins, and "The Miracle of Dunkirk" by Winston Churchill.

Much more prose than poetry is found in each series. More of the poetry, however, is being replaced by prose with each change in textbooks. The last change decreased the poetry to a greater extent than the previous change.

American teachers of literature have continued to ask that more American writers be studied in their classes. A trend is seen to give them what they have requested. The percentage of columns devoted to British authors has dropped from 72 to 37. It would seem that this change is related to the exclusion of writings before 1875, that older British offerings are being replaced by modern American ones. In the former textbooks there was a greater percentage of literary selections written by British authors than by American. The opposite is now true.

Attention has been directed to the fact that the current series is the only one containing works of any authors who can be classified as other than American or British. These

are all necessarily translations. Some of the authors are: Salom Rizk, Erik Wastberg, Thomas Ybarra, Heinrich Heine, Chan Fang-Sheng, Ronald de Carvalho, Rafael Estrada, Leonid Sobolev, Anton Chekov, Madame Chiang Kai-shek, Luis C. Urbina, and Rafael Pombo.



## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study, up to this point, has consisted of a survey of opinion about what should constitute the high school literature curriculum and an analysis of what this curriculum has been, and is, in North Carolina.

Three different series of literature textbooks were analyzed in an effort to discover any trends which might exist. The analysis consisted of measuring every piece of literature in the twelve textbooks and recording the amount written in three different time periods, the amount of prose and poetry, and the amount written by British and American authors. These figures are presented by means of tables in Chapter III. Comparisons by means of percentages are shown in the same chapter.

Three significant trends were found:

1. Selections written before 1875 are being dropped in increasing numbers with each textbook change. Contemporary literature is receiving much more emphasis now than in the past.

2. Prose is increasing in volume; poetry is decreasing.

3. Writings of American authors are being increased with each change in textbooks and those of British authors

are being decreased. A small amount of World Literature has been introduced.

In the light of these data certain opinions may be advanced. If the present trends continue through two or three more textbook changes, it is likely that the secondary schools of North Carolina will have literature textbooks which contain very little other than contemporary American prose. The remainder of the content will be devoted to classical American and British poetry and to World Literature.

If the theories of the National Council of Teachers of English prevail and if economic conditions within the state permit, anthologies will eventually no longer be used. A guidebook for teachers supplemented by library books, newspapers, and periodicals will constitute the materials with which the teacher of literature will meet the needs and interests of the students. Interest and readability will be the determining factors in choice of literary selections. Books on various reading levels will provide for the vast differences in ability in the same class. As nearly as possible, the reading program for a group will be individualized. Careful planning and close coordination between English teachers and the state curriculum-planners will be mandatory.

In order for this plan to be effective, it follows of necessity that library facilities in schools must be greatly increased. Each classroom where literature is taught, in fact, would need its own book shelves and magazine racks. It is believed that North Carolina is unable at the present time to put a program of this sort into effect.

Educational philosophy is related to world ideologies, to governmental changes--indeed, to the differing basic philosophies of a world culture. It is as subject to change as are they. The pendulum swings, but slowly.

Our democratic way of life has brought into senior high schools many students who, otherwise, would have dropped out at the end of grammar school. The theory that the state must insist on graduation from high school or attendance until the age of sixteen has resulted in changes in the schools. Vocational education is one of the more obvious results. Another, less noticeable but present nevertheless, is the change in the caliber and the attitude of the pupils. No longer is high school looked upon as a preparation for further schooling. It is a democratic way of life which must give those participating what they use and want. Present values must be considered as well as future ones. The very theory of democracy itself is against homogeneous grouping. A typical class is composed of boys

and girls who are representative of the whole group. In our school system this puts in one class pupils with intelligence quotients varying from far below eighty to one hundred thirty-five and even beyond. Reading levels vary as much as six or eight years.

It may be seen what a tremendous problem a typical class poses for the average teacher of literature who probably has from twenty-five to forty pupils in each class. The fact that changes in the literature curriculum have been thought desirable is easily understood when these conditions are kept in mind.

These conditions also lead to the thought that the pendulum in North Carolina has not completed its swing. The trend in literature textbooks will most likely continue its present course.

This study has shown the content of the literature textbooks in the secondary schools of North Carolina for the past and for the present. Predictions cannot be made on that basis except as the trend may continue. The study cannot be a basis for further research until there is a greater degree of unanimity among teachers. It can be continued when the next change in state-adopted textbooks is made.

The information contained in this thesis is valuable to anyone who wants or needs to see what has appeared in

representative literature textbooks in the secondary schools of North Carolina for the past twenty-five years.

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APPENDIX

TABLE I  
ANALYSIS OF ITEMS OF POETRY ACCORDING TO TIME PERIODS

			Period I	Period II	Period III	Total
Series I,	Book 1		39	4	13	56
		2	73	5	19	97
		3	8	9	19	36
		4	210	18	28	256
Series I,	Total		330	36	79	445
Series II,	Book 1		23	4	18	45
		2	14	1	4	19
		3	70	50	56	176
		4	156	19	39	214
Series II,	Total		263	74	117	454
Series III,	Book 1		16	8	32	56
		2	10	11	34	55
		3	43	29	76	148
		4	133	19	37	189
Series III,	Total		202	67	179	448

TABLE II  
ANALYSIS OF ITEMS OF PROSE ACCORDING TO TIME PERIODS

			Period I	Period II	Period III	Total
Series I,	Book 1		11	3	13	27
		2	24	5	6	35
		3	21	4	15	40
		4	39	1	7	47
Series I,	Total		95	13	41	149
Series II,	Book 1		3	2	28	33
		2	7	5	3	15
		3	33	7	24	64
		4	33	3	18	54
Series II,	Total		76	17	73	166
Series III,	Book 1		1	3	59	63
		2	2	3	42	47
		3	38	5	49	92
		4	28	5	20	53
Series III,	Total		69	16	170	255



TABLE III  
NUMBER OF ITEMS OF POETRY AND PROSE

	Poetry	Prose	Total
Series I, Book 1	56	27	83
2	97	35	132
3	36	40	76
4	256	47	303
Series I, Total	445	149	594
Series II, Book 1	45	33	78
2	19	15	34
3	176	64	240
4	214	54	268
Series II, Total	454	166	620
Series III, Book 1	56	63	119
2	55	47	102
3	148	92	240
4	189	53	242
Series III, Total	448	255	703

TABLE IV  
ANALYSIS OF ITEMS ACCORDING TO NATIONALITY OF AUTHOR

			American	British	Other	Total
Series I,	Book 1		41	42		83
		2	117	15		132
		3	41	35		76
		4	13	290		303
Series I,	Total		212	382		594
Series II,	Book 1		48	30		78
		2	10	24		34
		3	240			240
		4		268		268
Series II,	Total		298	322		620
Series III,	Book 1		75	25	19	119
		2	67	23	12	102
		3	240			240
		4		242		242
Series III,	Total		382	290	31	703