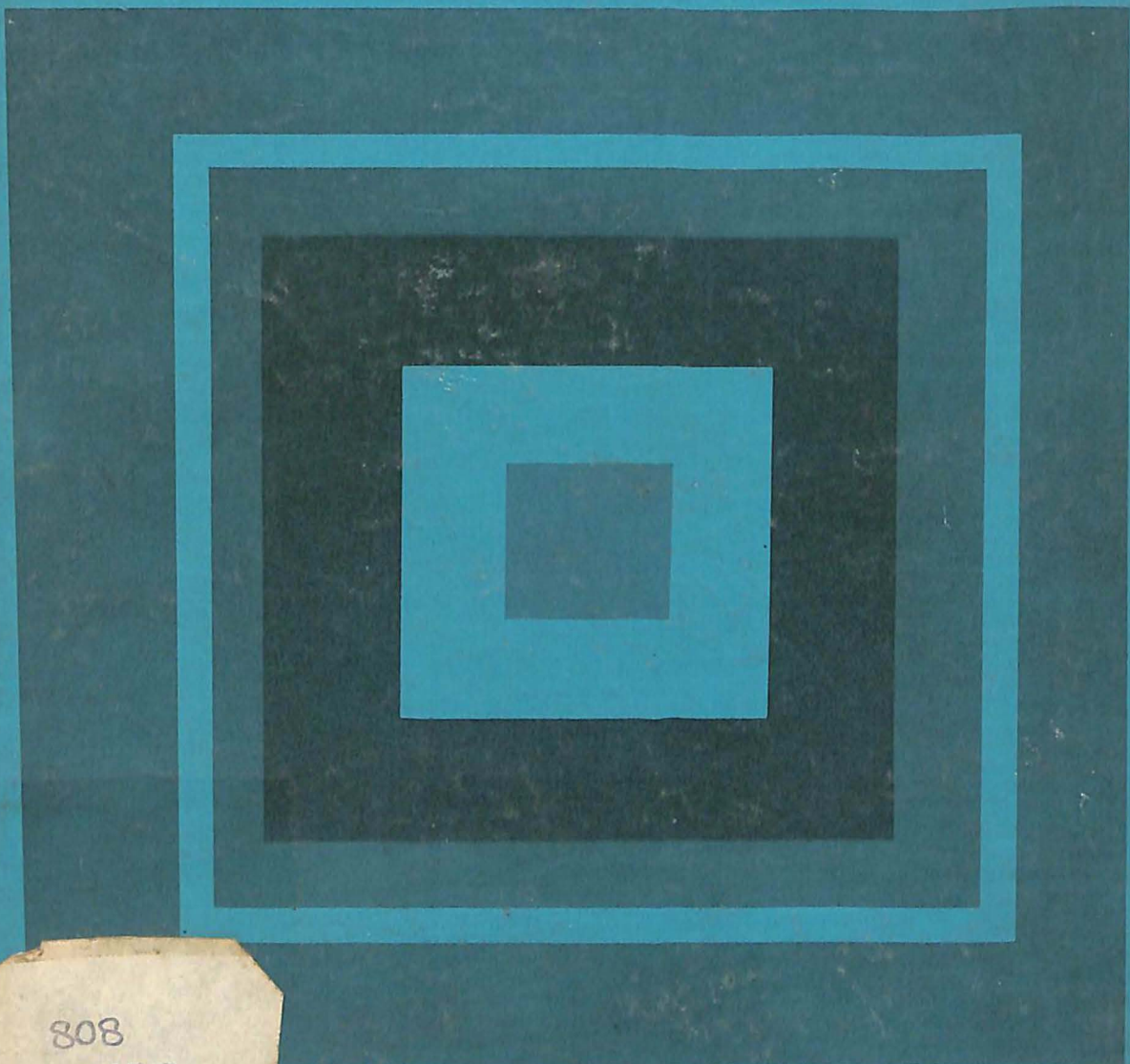


The Structure of Writing

J. Burl Hogins
Thomas Lillard



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J. BURL HOGINS
THOMAS LILLARD

San Diego Mesa College

D. C. HEATH AND COMPANY

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PART ONE

***Problems of
College Writing***

1 OBLIGATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Words can be more powerful, and more treacherous, than we sometimes suspect; communication more difficult than we may think. We are all serving life sentences of solitary confinement within our own bodies; like prisoners, we have, as it were, to tap in awkward code to our fellow men in their neighboring cells.

Lucas

The serious writer is a lonely man. He wants to share his ideas and dreams with others, and have those others understand. Although his friends may give advice, his relatives listen sympathetically, his basic task is one with which no one can help—the task of organizing ideas and feelings into words and putting the words on paper in a way that truly communicates something of his state of mind. Since only the writer knows exactly what is in his mind, only he can do the work.

Almost every writer is a tense man; he must brace himself for another kind of agony once he has finished his work. All sincere writing—even the most formal kind—is very personal, and by the act of writing the author has exposed himself to being read and judged. How will what he has said be received? Will people like his work, his ideas, him?

Because of such emotions, even businessmen or government officials, who have something important to say, and who have expressed their thoughts aloud many times, panic when they have to face that empty sheet of paper, and convert ideas into type. Professors who have to publish or perish may experience the same emotions about the ordeal. Stalling tactics that postpone the painful process are so common among professional writers that there's even a name for the game—pencil-sharpening.

Joseph Conrad, one of the most powerful writers of the English language, said about his writing:

I sit here religiously every morning—I sit down for eight hours every day—and the sitting down is all. In the course of that working day of eight hours I write three sentences which I erase before leaving the table in despair. . . . At night I sleep. In the

morning I get up with the horror of that powerlessness I must face through a day of vain efforts.

William Styron described the process in much the same way :

I get a fine warm feeling when I'm doing well. . . . But that pleasure is pretty much negated by the pain of getting started each day. Let's face it, writing is hell. When I'm writing steadily, I average two-and-a-half or three pages a day—longhand on yellow sheets. I spend about five hours at it, of which very little is spent actually writing.

The same sort of loneliness appears in Ernest Hemingway's monosyllabic comment :

I start with blank paper and put all that I know at the time on blank paper. Most of the time it is tough going.

Where do you fit into all this? You didn't set out to be a second Ernest Hemingway; you just enrolled in a course. What has this loneliness to do with you?

In some ways, you are the loneliest writer of all. You aren't sustained by the incentive that drives the others—the desire to make money, become famous, suffer for art's sake; you don't feel an overwhelming need to communicate your ideas. Your servitude is involuntary and unavoidable; you have few tools and almost no help.

You merely want to get out of this English course with a decent grade. But how can you do it? Your last high school English class may have dealt only with comma splices and dangling participles; now somebody is talking about structure and discourse and logical support. You turn in a twenty-five-page paper discussing what you thought was an excellent topic, "Is abstract art really art," and get it back with a low grade and a note calling it trivial. Another paper, grammatically correct, is marked down because of "inadequate definitions." Your instructor is too busy to answer all your questions, and you don't understand the answers he does give you. You think the books that are supposed to help you are pedantic and that the advice they give is either impossible to follow or irrelevant.

You find yourself all alone trying to face your obligations, waiting for the verdict. There may be no way around the requirements, but with the right help you might find the confrontation easier. You might *even* stop regarding writing as something that is to be done only under compulsion, or avoided whenever possible.

What constitutes help? First, let us, the authors of this text, discuss some approaches to writing that are *not* particularly helpful. We do not feel that an "all-purpose" handbook is the answer. A glance at current works of this type shows that most of them concentrate on such topics as incomplete paragraph development, strong and limp slang, and advice such as "avoid trite phrases." (Does anybody purposely write trite

phrases?) These topics are often referred to as “conventions of . . .” or “mechanics of. . .” Technical matters can be troublesome, but they are not fundamental.

This book makes the assumption that one of three things is true about your relationship to spelling, grammar, and punctuation: (1) those subjects have already been mastered; (2) they are merely occasional problems that can be solved when they arise and are pointed out by instructors; or (3) they are a hopeless mess that no mere handbook can possibly remedy. (What, after all, are you expected to do at this stage of your life about rules regarding the addition of a suffix? Memorize all of them and their exceptions? Look the rules up every time you use such a word?)

The authors have chosen a different emphasis. We will mention matters of style and diction; we will focus on patterns of thinking and the thrust of argument. We will be concerned with thought, not with dangling participles.

Essentially this book is for the student fortunate enough to have an enlightened instructor; one who believes that quality of thinking, content, style, and development are more important than mechanical details.

Some chapters on logic, semantics, and the philosophy of language have been included in this book because they can be very useful tools to the writer.

We’re not trying to turn you into a poet or novelist. We are trying to help you develop some new attitudes toward language, and some systematic habits that will be valuable in dealing with written language. We would like to talk about scholarly writing, and we may occasionally use such a term to refer to the kind of work we hope you will do.

What we are trying to provide is a framework for the obligations you must meet in college. For most of your courses, you will be expected to assimilate a specific body of knowledge and then demonstrate your familiarity with this knowledge by using it in some form, usually written (since the instructor can judge your response at his leisure that way). You may be called upon to present a term paper; you may be asked to report on some research; you may be required to answer some test questions by writing abbreviated essays. All of these assignments have certain elements in common, and we will deal with these elements.

It is unfair to end by saying that you must meet certain obligations, because it makes the picture seem entirely negative. There are also certain challenges and opportunities. You have a chance to acquire weapons—methods of perception and judgment you can use to protect yourself from hokum and propaganda. Above all, you have the opportunity to find a way of presenting *your* thoughts and ideas so that the presentation does you justice. You can develop a style of written communication that is as representative of you as your clothes or the way you wear your hair, a style of which you can be proud.

2 STYLE

In language, as in life, it is possible to be perfectly correct—and yet perfectly tedious, or odious.

Lucas

One of the peculiarities of language is that often a common word will be universally understood and yet will still defy precise definition by the people who use and understand it. This is especially true of slang expressions, but the phenomenon exists in many areas of usage. You can say, for example, that someone “really has class” and if that person really does have class, people will readily agree with your term. But what *precisely* are you talking about? What are the characteristics of *class*? It means about the same thing to large numbers of people, but a precise definition is difficult to find. In many cases, difficulty in defining terms makes no practical difference: we speak, others understand, and precise definition seems irrelevant.

Style is another word that is difficult to define. Most people agree that there is such a thing as style and that styles differ, but the hundreds of scholarly, detailed discussions of style are testimony to the fact that it is a difficult term. But since one of the purposes of this chapter is to discuss the style acceptable to most college writing, a workable definition is needed even if it sacrifices much completeness and precision.

If you can recognize a song written by Bob Dylan even when someone else is singing it, if you can tell that a song is “early” Beatles without looking at the date on the record, you are acting on an understanding of what style is. Other songwriters may also have some of these characteristics, but no one else has them in exactly the same combination. The same is true in any kind of writing, and therein lies the beginning of a definition of style: *that set of characteristics typically found in an author's writing*. Everyone, of course, has his own style, but unless that style is particularly distinctive, it is almost impossible to use style as a basis for identification. When an author does, however, have a distinctive style, his writing almost shouts out his identity on every page. This chapter is not concerned with the development of such distinctive styles;

the interest here is rather to examine the general nature of style and to make some recommendations about stylistic devices to be used in writing acceptable college papers.

CHARACTERISTICS OF STYLE

In defining *style* as the set of characteristics generally found in an author's writing, it is clear that *characteristics* is a rather general term. What kind of characteristics *can* writing have? What are the aspects of writing that need to be examined in order to determine style? Ernest Hemingway and the writers of *Time* and *The New Yorker*, each with an easily recognizable style, can help to answer these questions and so provide a more comprehensive definition of style.

An alert reader can often identify Hemingway's writings by the staccato, clipped language and the realistic, often depressing tone. The conversation is colloquial; the descriptions are precise and usually concrete. Sentences are brief. Such diction suits Hemingway's uncomplicated, often rough characters, who are usually involved in some physical action. Some of these traits are apparent in the following excerpt from one of Hemingway's stories.

In the fall the war was always there, but we did not go to it any more. It was cold in the fall in Milan and the dark came very early. Then the electric lights came on, and it was pleasant along the streets looking in the windows. There was much game hanging outside the shops, and the snow powdered in the fur of the foxes and the wind blew their tails. The deer hung stiff and heavy and empty, and small birds blew in the wind and the wind turned their feathers. It was a cold fall and the wind came down from the mountains.

Hemingway, whose style has been highly praised, breaks one of the rules dear to many purists in matters of style—his sentences often consist of two simple clauses connected by *and*. The last sentence in the excerpt is a good example. Notice how simple the descriptions are. It is simply "cold" with no elaboration on how cold it is or whether it is a damp or a dry cold, or whether it hurts people's fingers. When the lights came on it was simply "pleasant looking in the windows" with no details about how pleasant it was or what could be seen in the windows.

Magazines, as well as individuals, often have their own recognizable styles. *Time* has a propensity for backward sentences, for example. Wolcott Gibbs once ended a *New Yorker* profile on Henry Luce, then publisher of *Time*, with the words, "Where it will all end knows God." *Time's* writers often coin new words (like *cinemactress*) which sometimes become accepted parts of our vocabularies. Another characteristic of *Time's* style is the habit of introducing the subject of an article by putting a string of adjectives about his age, physique, and hair immediately

before his name (for example, "wild-haired, robust, 84-year-old John Jones threw away a fortune today").

These characteristics are fairly obvious. *The New Yorker's* style, on the other hand, almost accomplishes the paradoxical feat of being so unobtrusive that it is obtrusive. It gets on some people's nerves. William H. Whyte once defined this nicely as the Casual Style and listed as some of its features: heightened understatement (a product is not "bad," it is "something less than good"), narcissistic prose ("The audience seemed not to share my boredom"), the planned colloquialism (phrases like "darn" and "as all get out" dropped into the middle of more sophisticated diction) and the omitted word ("man we know told us," and "says they're shaped like pyramids").* The writing of both *Time* and *The New Yorker* is the work of many people, but they all adapt their personal writing styles to fit the general style that the magazines' readers have come to expect. The fact that a writer can deliberately change much of his own style is an idea that will come up again in the discussion of college writing.

EXERCISE 1

Find something (preferably a well-known piece) by John Kennedy, Marshall McLuhan, Tom Wolfe, and Richard Brautigan. Note at least three things that seem characteristic of each style. If the passage you choose is short and the features can be underlined, do so; otherwise, list things like long sentences, many noun modifiers, and so on.

The question was raised earlier as to what aspects of writing need to be examined in order to discuss an author's style, and the preceding discussion considered such things as sentence structure, description, and tone. Style, then, is in part the characteristic manner in which the author treats these things. But still other aspects of writing, such as diction (the type of words chosen) and the use of figurative language, need to be considered. A more detailed examination of some of these aspects of writing will reveal the many different possibilities that exist in describing styles.

Tone

Tone in writing is similar to tone of voice in speaking. The way a man says "good morning" can reveal much about his state of mind. An author generally reveals a consistent tone toward both his subject and his audience. He can be serious or flippant; he can talk down to his audi-

*"You, Too, Can Write the Casual Style" from *Contexts for Composition*, Stanley A. Clayes and David G. Spencer. Des Moines, Iowa: Meredith Publishing Company, 1965.

ence, or he can assume that he is speaking to people who know a great deal about his subject. If he thinks his audience is hostile to his ideas, he will be as persuasive as he can, attempting to convince his audience that he is correct. Or he can assume that his audience is friendly and write in a familiar, intimate manner, reinforcing the agreement that already exists. The opening sentences of Alexander King's *May This House Be Safe from Tigers*, for example, indicate that he does not intend to be serious and that he is treating his subject facetiously:

When I was born I weighed a little less than three pounds. If you look at a broiler that size, you can see that it's barely enough to make a decent meal for two ordinary people. Since there weren't many incubators around in those days, they just wrapped me from head to foot in some absorbent cotton, put me in a frying pan and placed me in a moderate oven for the next three months.

Bertrand Russell, in his preface to *Why I Am Not a Christian*, indicates that he is interested in correcting some misapprehensions and that he will speak very plainly and strongly.

There has been a rumor in recent years to the effect that I have become less opposed to religious orthodoxy than I formerly was. This rumor is totally without foundation. I think all the great religions of the world—Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Communism—both untrue and harmful.

Julia Child's tone is obviously personal, sympathetic, and encouraging as she speaks of a delicate operation in bread making:

If your kitchen is damp, hot and steamy, let the bread rise in another room or dough will stick to the canvas and you will have difficulty getting it off and onto the baking sheet. It will turn into bread in the oven whatever happens, but you will have an easier time and a better loaf if you aim for ideal conditions.

Sentence Structure

A writer often prefers certain types of sentence structure to others, and this can be an important aspect of his style. Hemingway, as has been seen, used many compound sentences. *Time* often inverts normal word order. Henry James is known for his complex sentences, full of subordinate clauses and parenthetical phrases. This example, from *Portrait of a Lady*, is typical.

The little girl had been offered the opportunity of laying a foundation of knowledge in this [school]; but having spent a single day in it, she had expressed great disgust with the place, and had been allowed to stay at home, where in the September days, when the windows of the Dutch House were open, she used

to hear the hum of childish voices repeating the multiplication table—an incident in which the elation of liberty and the pain of exclusion were indistinguishably mingled.

If you look carefully, you will see that that is one sentence. Unskilled writers sometimes go to the other extreme and use a series of short, choppy sentences reminiscent of first grade textbooks.

Diction and Use of Figurative Language

Diction is another area that may show an author's style. What type of words does he predictably choose? He may prefer a little-used or sophisticated word to a simple one. He may say that a story lacks "verisimilitude" rather than that "it doesn't seem real or believable." He may habitually avoid concrete words and use more general ones—"gardening implements" instead of "hoe and rake." He may use slang expressions or he may avoid them altogether.

Figurative language (which is defined in Chapter 3) is employed by writers in varying degrees. Hemingway wrote, "It was cold in the fall in Milan and the dark came very early," using his descriptive language in a strictly literal fashion. Wally Herbert in *A World of Men*, a book about Antarctic exploration, described the cold in a highly figurative manner: "Our voyage South [*sic*] twelve years ago was an escape for long-imprisoned dreams, and the blizzards that beat our backs like whiplashes sang with a cheer in each sting. We saw a paradise in snowscapes and heard colour-music in the wind."

What does all of this have to do with your own style? As you write more, you should become increasingly aware of your own stylistic habits. Learn to emphasize or control them. Practice using the devices that are used by writers you admire. Do not (at least at first) attempt an extremely radical or noticeable style. Consider whether the style you use contradicts or is consistent with the subject matter you are presenting.

EXERCISE 2

Match by style these two sets of quotations or examples of various writing styles.

LIST A

1. She was highly rouged, and looked rather quietly and contentedly silly than anything else.
2. Practice sees a few upper echelon people looking after and coordinating projects which outnumber the staff trying to perform this important duty.
3. Mr. Hayman used to catch a trout or two and eat raw trout with his stone-ground wheat and his kale, and then one day he was so old that he did not feel like working any more, and he looked so old that the

children thought he must be evil to live by himself, and they were afraid to go up the creek near his shack.

4. I do not own a quadruped larger than a cat, and she an indifferent mouser; nor any kind of vehicle, with the exception, possibly, of a wheelbarrow.
5. Both processes seemed to be effected by synapses intermediate between receptor and organ of response; on reaching a synapse two pathways might either aid or interfere with one another.
6. Later, under the influence of the excellent food at the *Coin de France* he began to smoke his evening pipe more enjoyably still—like a pipe of opium. The inner world with its tensions unwound its spools inside him, flowing out and away in lines of thought which flickered intermittently into his consciousness like Morse [code]. As if he had become a real receiving apparatus—these rare moments of good dictation!

LIST B

1. A complete family of policies, procedures and job instructions should be developed and implemented to provide total systems interface and criteria from which to manage and measure performance.
2. The old dirty lift, its seats trimmed with dusty brown braid and its mirrors with rotting lace curtains, jerked them slowly upward into the cobwebbed gloom. Soon, he thought to himself, he would drop through the trap door feet first, arms pinioned by arms, lips by lips, until he felt the noose tighten about his throat and the stars explode behind his eyeballs. Surcease, forgetfulness, what else should one seek from an unknown woman's body?
3. The days of palmy prosperity are not those most favorable to the display of public virtue or the influence of wise and good men.
4. Mrs. Bennet was restored to her usual querulous serenity.
5. In the summer I'd throw endless cords of wood into her basement until I was silly in the head and everything looked like wood, even clouds in the sky and cars parked on the street and cats.
6. Theoretical and experimental conditions alike suggested that the nerve current is a "wave of depolarization" which passes along the nerve fiber whenever a stimulus disturbs the delicate balance of positive and negative ions produced in the metabolism of the nerve.

FORMAL, INFORMAL, AND COLLOQUIAL STYLES

As he develops, a writer adopts some stylistic devices almost unconsciously. After much experimentation he deliberately includes others. Most of the characteristics so far considered are reflections of the personality of the author. But a good writer must learn to make alterations

in his style so that his writing is suitable to his subject, his audience, and his purpose. Thus it is convenient to identify three general types of style: formal, informal, and colloquial. Most writing can be fairly accurately placed in one of these groups, no matter what the individual differences.

Formal Style

Formal style is reserved almost exclusively for the most serious scholarly writing and is almost never spoken. Its tone is dignified and impersonal; its sentence structure is generally long and complex; it does not restrict itself to a simple vocabulary; it avoids slang and contractions; and it abides by some of the finer points of grammar that are generally ignored. This passage from Jacques Barzun is an example.

This suggests that if a just comparison is to be made with the historic romanticists, we must look not at a theoretical classicism found in books or fancied and ancient Greece, but at an actual classicism found at work in modern history. This is another way of saying that we must look behind the Versailles facade of the Age of Louis XIV, with its alliance between an absolute monarchy and an absolute church, and assess the work of the half-century 1661-1715, which established a new order and succeeded in enforcing it upon manners, behavior, language, art, and thought.

Informal Style

This style, which tends to overlap with both the others, is found in the speaking and writing of educated people. Its tone is more relaxed than that of formal English, but it is not familiar or personal; the sentences are somewhat shorter and simpler than in formal style, and the vocabulary is that which is in general use—neither extremely learned nor excessively slangy. Most nontechnical exposition and many textbooks use this style. Note the shorter sentences, simplified vocabulary, use of simple comparisons, and the relaxed tone in the following excerpt from Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock*:

Often we are unaware of the moment when we commit ourselves to one life style model over all others. The decision to "be" an Executive or a Black Militant or a West Side Intellectual is seldom the result of purely logical analysis. Nor is the decision always made cleanly, all at once. The research scientist who switches from cigarettes to a pipe may do so for health reasons without recognizing that the pipe is part of a whole life style toward which he finds himself drawn. The couple who choose the Tiffany lamp think they are furnishing an apartment; they do not necessarily see their actions as an attempt to flesh out an overall style of life.

Colloquial Style

This is the least dignified style and is used primarily in the informal speech of educated people or in writing that deliberately attempts to be personal and relaxed. The sentence structure tends to be quite simple and occasionally ungrammatical, and slang expressions are often used. This is not to be confused with the illiterate or nonstandard language of people with no education. The opening of a recent book review in *Playboy* illustrates colloquial style.

*Wow! Can you imagine it? Actually walking the same streets
Bob Dylan once walked back there in Hibbing, Minnesota.
Actually talking to people who knew him when he was little
Bobby Zimmerman. And seeing the cigarette burns left on the
old pine dresser by the man himself. Too much.*

DEVELOPING YOUR OWN STYLE

It is obvious that the style a writer uses depends partly on his purpose. Thus a student who is required to write a paragraph explaining why he wants to attend a particular school would use language quite different from the language he would use in telling his friends why he wanted to go there. When you borrow a dollar from your brother, you make the request in a manner different from the manner you would use in applying for a loan from a bank. A common problem for college students is choosing the appropriate style for the various writing assignments that confront them. Certainly the formal style in the previous example is considered unnatural by most college students, even graduate students, and an attempt to mimic that style generally leads to pretentious, clumsy compositions in which the style clouds the meaning. On the other hand, writing that is an exact transcription of conversational speech is frowned upon by almost all college instructors. The question, then, is this: Where between these two extremes should the college student aim? You will find that with more practice in writing and more reading of college texts your own style will automatically become more formal and polished. The following recommendations are made to assist in the early stages of college writing.

Tone

No matter what your real feelings for your topic are, you should write about it seriously, and unless specifically required to do so, you should make no reference to your personal feelings about the subject. It is often tempting to insert personal feeling, but it might help to remember that the subject of most papers is not *you* but an *idea* that you are asked to deal with. One of the traditional characteristics of an impersonal style is that it avoids first person and direct address. Some

instructors still prefer this. Thus it is not, "It seems to me that this is the most important factor," but rather, "The most important factor is. . . ." And "It should be clear now that . . ." would be preferred to "You should be able to tell by now that . . .".

Sentence Structure

If your present style includes primarily simple or compound sentences, it is worth some effort to begin to combine these sentences, making them complex, because this automatically lends an air of more formality to your writing. Thus these two sentences—"We spent our vacation in England. The weather was terrible"—might be combined to produce this single sentence—"We spent our vacation in England where the weather was terrible." Combining simple sentences into complex ones often results in what is known as the periodic sentence, another type of structure frequently found in formal writing. In a periodic sentence the main clause or the main idea does not occur until the end. These sentences often begin with a dependent clause or a series of modifying phrases. This example of a periodic sentence appeared in a recent issue of *Newsweek*: "For all its clean air, sparkling water and the majestic backdrop of the Rocky Mountains, *the city of Denver presents a vista that is depressingly familiar.*" In a less formal style the sentence would begin with the portion italicized here.

The parallel sentence is another characteristic of scholarly writing. A parallel sentence is one which has several parts that contain ideas of equal importance and which are expressed in similar grammatical form. Thus if a sentence is to begin with a series of modifying phrases, all those phrases should have the same grammatical construction, that is, they should all be infinitive phrases, or they should all be prepositional phrases. Parallelism refers to any other construction as well, and parallelism can occur with noun clauses, adjective clauses, or single words. Notice the parallel repetitions in the following example from Winston Churchill's *Their Finest Hour*.

We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the field and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this Island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old.

While parallelism is an effective device, faulty parallelism (a mistake easy to make) offends the ear of most readers. Be careful not to

write sentences such as this: "To study effectively, to keep his part-time job, and meeting new girls were his major concerns during college." An important thing to remember in all this is that formal writing *includes*, sometimes frequently, periodic and parallel sentences. It is not made up *solely* of them. Writing only such sentences would result in a hopelessly pretentious, unreadable style.

EXERCISE 3

Make the following sentences parallel.

1. The real creed of a person should be living rather than in words.
2. It is said that Americans cannot enjoy life without a car, watching a color TV, and a summer house.
3. I admire Whitman for his ideas but not his style.
4. A seal watches carefully the action of his fellow seals and how they obey their trainer.
5. People fall into two classes; the borrowers and those who are ready to lend.

Diction

Another important element of formal writing is the diction employed—the kinds of words you use. In the same way that certain styles are inappropriate in certain situations, so individual words have their appropriate use. You will learn much of this automatically as you read scholarly material, but it should be clear that of the following pairs of words and phrases, those on the left are inappropriate to a formal style.

grabbed control of	seized power in
gets really hard to figure out	becomes difficult to understand
you have to remember	one must recall
a lot of	a great deal
get it over with	complete
faced up to	confronted
look up to	admire or respect
what I mean to do	what I intend to accomplish
it's too bad	it is unfortunate
this may look like	this may seem as if (or like)
skinny	emaciated or quite slender

Learning what is appropriate to scholarly writing cannot be done by following a set of rules; experience is the key, but this list should indicate, at least, that there are several ways—some more formal than others—of saying the same thing. You can make a good start by beginning to examine your own usual language to determine how often you use the more informal constructions. Certainly you should avoid all slang

expressions in college writing and should also omit clichés, those worn-out, trite expressions that everyone has heard thousands of times.

Lesser Characteristics

Tone, sentence structure, and diction are the three most important elements of formal writing, but there are a number of other lesser characteristics involved. Some instructors still frown on the use of contractions (*I'll, didn't, shouldn't, we've, don't*) in formal papers. Abbreviations and shortened forms of common words are also avoided. Thus in a term paper you would speak of *television* and not *TV*, and no matter how many times you use the word *government* in a paper, you would always spell it out rather than write *govt*. And you would speak of *professors* and *graduates* rather than *profs* and *grads*. One point that is difficult for many students: formal writing generally inserts the relative pronouns (*that, which, who, whom*) that are almost always omitted in speech. Thus the first form of this sentence would be preferred:

The main reason that he went to work last summer was that he needed money.

The main reason he went to work last summer was he needed money.

Finally a lack of consistency in style generally results in unintentional humor (although it isn't *very* funny) that detracts from the effect of the paper. Notice the many violations of consistency (and other things) in the following excerpt from a student paper.

The Apollo series of moon flights was quite a thing for America when it was first initiated. The successful venture of heaving two men all the way to the moon and bringing them home again safe and sound was of tremendous interest to the majority of the American populace. To a significant number of people, the recent flights were fraught with meaning. Wow! America was the first country to land on the moon. Fantastic! But what about the people whose daily concern is simply to obtain enough nourishment to maintain life. Don't get me wrong. Certainly the first moonlanding was a spectacular event.

Notice here that the language is a mixture of the formal (*fraught with meaning*) and the colloquial (*heaving two men all the way*); observe the incongruity of *Wow!* and the student's concern for the fact that money may be misspent. Notice, too, how tired the phrase *safe and sound* is. With a little thought and some careful revision, this could have been an effective opening for a composition.

Many students complain that achieving some level of formality sounds too difficult and also sounds as if it must result in a hopelessly dead, dry, unnatural style that few would want to read. Carried to extremes, this is all too true. Many scholarly journals and almost all grad-

uate dissertations are unnecessarily dry and stiff, in fact. We are not speaking of extremes here, however, but rather of reasonable expectations. For example, you would probably distrust a calculus textbook filled with slang, ungrammatical sentences, and a devil-may-care attitude toward its subject. This would represent the opposite extreme. But the point should be clear—a scholarly undertaking needs a scholarly approach—your audience expects it. Of course achieving such a style may seem difficult at first, but the initial difficulties are not great enough to warrant giving up the whole idea at the outset.

EXERCISE 4

Examine several selections in at least two issues of one of the following periodicals and write an analysis of the periodical's style: *Esquire*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Newsweek*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Reader's Digest*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Forbes*, *Changing Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *New York Times*.

3 EMOTIVE RESOURCES OF THE LANGUAGE

Speech and writing usually present mixtures of the informative, expressive and directive functions of language. Consider the informative item concerning the diameters of the sun and the earth. Though this language informs, and though it is not its primary purpose to stir our emotions, our feelings may nevertheless be stirred when we learn from Sir James Jeans that there are as many stars as there are grains of sand on all the seashores of the world, for this knowledge may make us realize how infinitely vast is space, and how infinitesimally small is man, crawling for his brief day on an insignificant planet.

Ruby

The effective writer adapts his language to his purpose. Since the scholarly writer wishes to be rational, he must seek to control the emotional level of his language. To do this requires self-discipline and an understanding of figurative and slanted language.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Because we strive for vividness, imagination, concreteness, and emotional effect in our spoken language, we make constant use of figurative language. In fact, we are so accustomed to departing from literal usage that we do it unconsciously, saying things such as "Dr. Jones is a dodo" with little or no awareness that we have spoken figuratively. In informal circumstances such figurative language is usually harmless; it may even have some advantages. Our hearer may find the statement both concrete and accurate. He may realize that it's shorthand for "Dr. Jones is dull; he's passé, and I'll never take another class with him no matter what!" But if we write such a sentence, the reader, not knowing us or the situation, may find our statement vague and inaccurate. In your college writing assignments, you are usually trying to describe, inform, or persuade by rational means, so your use of figurative language should

be deliberate and semantically aware. The first step toward full awareness in this matter is to draw a clear distinction between figurative and literal meaning.

"Jellyfish are spineless creatures" is a literal statement. To understand it, we interpret it *denotatively*: the term *jellyfish* denotes the class of living things whose bodies lack a certain bony part. The statement asserts that a *denotative* relationship exists between the two classes: Whatever is denoted by *jellyfish* is also denoted by the more general term *spineless creatures*. Simple enough. We need go no further. Although both *jellyfish* and *spineless creatures* have additional *nondenotative* meanings, we need not consider them in order to understand the statement.

Now let us compare our literal specimen with a figurative sentence:

LITERAL: *Jellyfish are spineless creatures.*

FIGURATIVE: *Husbands are spineless creatures.*

Notice that, unlike the literal statement, the figurative expression requires us to go beyond denotative meaning. In fact, we recognize *Husbands are spineless creatures* as figurative *because* a denotative interpretation would make it so blatantly absurd that no speaker is likely to intend it that way. Therefore, the term *spineless creatures* must be interpreted according to its *connotative meaning*—for the beliefs, attitudes, and feelings that people seem to associate, sensibly or otherwise, with spineless animals.

We are rarely as certain about the connotations of a word as we are of its denotation, although we may be in doubt about both. For example, take the word *river*. Denotatively, *river* refers to a certain class of moving bodies of water; but if we try to become much more specific in our classification, we find that we cannot draw the denotative line between *river* and, say, *stream* without making arbitrary stipulations. The connotations of *river*, however, are even less clear. We simply cannot say with much certainty what beliefs, attitudes, and feelings are generally associated with the word *river*. The dictionary can give us help with some connotations—especially with fairly obvious examples such as *spineless*—but for the most part our knowledge of connotative meanings depends upon our general familiarity with the language and, more important, with the biases of the people who use it.

Some connotations are generally shared. Some words, though, especially nouns, have many private connotations—some of which contradict the general connotations and alter the effect that a particular piece of writing has on that reader. Consider, for instance, the meaning of the word *home* to someone living in the midst of a large and loving family, to someone brought up in an orphanage, and to someone in a foreign country.

Although the whole subject of connotative meaning is rather fuzzy,

we can say that, generally, words connote meanings of two rather distinctive sorts: evoked characteristics and emotive reactions.

Evoked Characteristics

Qualities or attributes that are usually evoked by a word are a basic part of that word's connotative meaning. The evoked characteristics do not usually apply to *all* of the things denoted by the word, and they may not apply to any. The word *snake* may evoke (and hence connote) the quality *glossiness*. This may be because a healthy snake's skin does in fact have a glistening, shiny look, even though some snakes have dull skins. For most of us, the word *snake* also connotes the quality *sliminess*, although if you handle them, you will find that snakes are not usually slimy at all. As far as connotation is concerned, however, the fact that the connoted quality is not an actual quality is irrelevant: "His sweating fingers looked like snakes" suggests, among other things, that his fingers had a glistening, slimy look. And that meaning may be recognized even by those who know that snakes are not always glossy and are rarely slimy.

The word *snake* evokes not only physical characteristics but qualities of personality and character as well—in part, no doubt, because of statements made in the Book of Genesis. It may seem grossly unfair to the innocuous reptile in the backyard that *snake* brings to mind qualities like *treacherousness* and *deceitfulness*. Even those people who have an affection for snakes are aware that an expression such as "May is as trustworthy as a snake" is not meant as a tribute to May's character. Clearly, connotations are often the result of accidental, ignorant, and unjust association, rather than rational consideration.

Even the sound of a word or syllable may have connotations. The sound of *ex*, for example, has a scientific ring, perhaps because it appears in so many technical words. Hence some companies have given their products names such as *Timex*, *Ex-Lax*, *Kleenex*, and *Sominex* in the hope that to some buyers they will connote accuracy and reliability, or other attributes of science.

Emotive Reactions

If the word *snake* makes most of us think of sliminess, then we are likely to have some emotive reaction to that quality. Since most of us presumably find slimy things repulsive to some degree, our reaction to that quality will be repugnance, and our emotional reaction becomes part of what *snake* connotes. In a very oversimplified way, our reaction to *snake* might be described as "sliminess . . . ugh!" (In many contexts, of course, a different characteristic may be evoked by *snake*, and often several qualities will occur together; but the nature of the emotional response is probably determined by and appropriate to the evoked quality.) Some people, those who are fond of slimy things, may react as

"sliminess . . . ahh!" but they, no doubt, are a minority and may be ignored so far as making use of connotation is concerned. When someone describes his spaghetti as "a quivering glob of tiny white snakes," we know that he finds his dinner repulsive even if we happen to be among those who find the evoked qualities pleasant.

Interpreting Figurative Expressions

Our discussion of connotative meaning must, of necessity, be greatly oversimplified; the connotation of a word varies radically according to the context and the people involved. Connotative meaning, moreover, is almost always multiple: the word *spineless*, for example, connotes not only weakness, vapidity, and cowardliness, but also indecisiveness, dependency, irresoluteness, deceitfulness, furtiveness, immaturity, and, no doubt, many other qualities as well. And *spineless* is not as rich in connotation as some words. A word like *black* evokes an extraordinary number of meanings, and the connotations of a word such as *nature* would probably fill a good-sized book. Because of the multiplicity and instability of connotative meaning, no one can be certain that he knows the complete and proper interpretation of a given figurative expression.

The best guide we have when confronted with a figurative sentence is the context in which it appears. Although they are by no means infallible indications, the words, paragraphs, and sentences that surround a figurative statement often suggest which connotative meanings are *not* meant and thus improve our chances of interpreting the writer's meaning as he intended. When a sentence or phrase occurs out of context, we can offer at best only a very general interpretation. Without the clues of context, we could interpret *Husbands are spineless creatures* to mean, in general, *I have little admiration for married men*. But if a context were given, we could hope to offer a much more specific interpretation. Suppose, for example, that the sentence were uttered by a tired real estate salesman addressing his business partner at the end of a hard but unprofitable day:

"Joe, I tried to sell Mr. and Mrs. Smith a house today; showed them nearly every shack we've got on the list. There must've been at least a dozen places that he liked, but, believe me, what he likes doesn't matter at all. It's Mrs. Smith who makes all the decisions in that family. It's the same old story, I guess. Husbands are spineless creatures."

The context now allows us to infer that the salesman's concluding sentence does not apply to *all* married men, but only to husbands who are dominated by their wives. Moreover, we can see that the exact literal meaning of *Husbands are spineless creatures* is not important, since the salesman spoke informally and was more concerned with venting his emotion than with uttering the truth.

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And figurative language is just as vague and ambiguous when it appears in serious, formal contexts. If your thesis or supporting statements are couched in figurative language, your reader, in all probability, will be unable to judge either their significance or their truth. It follows, surely, that when you want your writing to convey precise information, you ought to state every important claim in literal language.

EXERCISE 1

Connotative and Denotative Meaning

Listed after each of the following words are certain qualities, attitudes, or feelings. Identify each as:

- A often connoted in our culture
- B part of the word's denotative meaning
- C rarely part of the word's meaning

1. Father

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ☐ authority | ☐ strength |
| ☐ maleness | ☐ sternness |
| ☐ tenderness | ☐ joyfulness |

2. Teacher

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| ☐ pettiness | ☐ regimentation |
| ☐ intelligence | ☐ dullness |
| ☐ fairness | ☐ respectability |

3. Policeman

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| ☐ helpfulness | ☐ competence |
| ☐ legality | ☐ efficiency |
| ☐ civil orderliness | ☐ decency |

4. Pig

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ☐ cunning | ☐ insensitivity |
| ☐ grossness | ☐ obesity |
| ☐ stupidity | ☐ swinishness |

5. Communism

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ fanaticism | ☐ compassion |
| ☐ subversiveness | ☐ furtiveness |
| ☐ economic collectivity | ☐ destructiveness |

Figurative Expression

Identify each of the following as:

- A figurative
- B literal

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| ☐ | 1. If you burn your draft card, they'll punish you. |
| ☐ | 2. If you burn your draft card, they'll crucify you. |
| ☐ | 3. He asked for her hand in marriage. |
| ☐ | 4. War is legalized murder. |

- _____ 5. I hate London.
- _____ 6. Hell is a city much like London.
- _____ 7. *Catcher in the Rye* is like *Huck Finn* in many ways.
- _____ 8. *Catcher in the Rye* is like a sweet, sad song of youth.
- _____ 9. *Catcher in the Rye* is a filthy book.
- _____ 10. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

Using Connotative Meaning

Demonstrate the connotative difference between the words in each of the following pairs of synonyms by using the first word in each pair as the connotative element in a figurative sentence. Try to invent a sentence that seems perfectly sensible when the first word is used but which becomes ludicrous when the second word is substituted for the first.

EXAMPLE: *mother/female parent*: "A good kindergarten teacher is the mother of every child in her class."

- 1. brother/male sibling
- 2. ocean/large body of salt water
- 3. meat/muscle tissue
- 4. heart/blood-pumping organ
- 5. salt/sodium chloride
- 6. money/medium of exchange
- 7. weed/valueless plant
- 8. fire/rapid oxidation
- 9. wine/fermented grape juice
- 10. viscera/abdominal organs

Interpreting Figurative Language

Analyze the following paragraphs carefully and develop a literal interpretation of the italicized figurative expression. Be prepared to explain how you arrived at your interpretation.

- 1. "Some Americans believe that in the struggle against Communism God is on our side. Perhaps they're right, but I tend to agree with Napoleon: '*God is on the side of the strongest battalion.*' "
- 2. "The study of science increases our factual knowledge, but *the study of great literature develops our moral fiber as well.*"
- 3. "Almost daily we watch the government transform our old prerogatives into new crimes and our old crimes into new prerogatives. Selling your own home used to be your own business; now the government decides which buyer you'll accept. Selling indecent literature, on the other hand, used to land you in jail; now the enterprise is protected by law. When I was a lad, America was the land of the free. *Today it is a nation of sheep.*"
- 4. "I always vote for the man who, like Lincoln, was born of humble people. *The Rockefellers and the Kennedys may have learned the calculus*

of American society, but only a man who was raised in poverty can fully understand its arithmetic."

5. *"The Lord is my shepherd;/I shall not want/ He maketh me to lie down in green pastures/He leadeth me beside the still waters/He restoreth my soul/He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake/Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death/I will fear no evil/for Thou art with me/Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."*

Figures of Speech

When we turn our attention to particular figures of speech, we begin to appreciate the full, connotative richness of the language. Figures of speech come in well over a hundred different varieties, and many of them submit unwillingly to neat classification or tidy definition. Sometimes, moreover, figures of speech intertwine with such tropical density that you often find a single sentence harboring a half-dozen different specimens. Consider, for example, a sentence by Philip Wylie in which he gloats over having had the chance, as a young clerk, to study the way middle-aged "moms" behaved in a department store:

That anybody such as I, an articulate man with a memory like a tombstone, should be standing behind a counter conducting an inadvertent espionage on the moms has never entered their brawling brains.

Generation of Vipers, p. 201

In this single vituperative sentence there are at least four figures of speech: simile, metaphor, hyperbole, and oxymoron; and a plausible case could be made for claims to irony and synecdoche. We will ignore many figures of speech that are important to the poet and, without too great a loss, confine our attention to the relatively few that occur frequently in the reading and writing of the college writer.

Simile and Metaphor

The *simile* is one of the most common and most easily recognizable figures of speech. By using the words *like* or *as* (or sometimes *so*, *even so*, or *similar to*), the simile directs us to find a connotative similarity between two terms that have no denotative relationship. "There is Jackson standing like a stone wall" is a famous example of this figure, coined—so the story goes—by General Bee during the Battle of Bull Run. The general's sentence directs us to find similarities between the way Jackson is standing and the way in which a stone wall stands, and he uses the word *like* to make doubly sure that his directions are understood. Since *Jackson* and *stone wall* obviously have no denotative relationship, we must find connotative resemblances. A standing stone wall evokes qual-

ities of strength, steadiness, and immovability, and no doubt we should understand Bee's sentence to mean that such qualities were descriptive of Jackson during the battle.

The most effective connotative comparisons are those that are both appropriate and fresh. General Bee's simile was appropriate—history testifies to that—but it was probably not especially fresh even in 1861. Wylie's simile—a *memory like a tombstone*—is much more original and is the kind of language that made his writing popular. The similes that appear in scholarly writing are usually less vivid than Wylie's; the scholarly writer uses the simile not to startle the imagination but more often to help the reader understand the complex by comparing it to the simple. Notice how C. D. Broad uses similes as a supplementary means of explaining a difficult concept in the philosophy of Joseph Butler:

Butler says that we do not fully understand [human nature] till we know what it is for and what are the various functions and relations of the various principles and propensities. According to him none of these is intrinsically evil. Wrongdoing is always the excessive or inappropriate functioning of some principle of action which is right when acting in its due degree and in its proper place. It is like a watch with a spring which is too strong for its balance-wheel, or a constitution in which one of the estates of the realm usurps the functions of the other. [emphasis added]

This use is somewhat similar to the analogy, which will be discussed in Chapter 8.

The *metaphor* is a bolder figure than the simile, stating its comparison without the use of *like* or *as*. With a simile we can guide the reader, saying "His eyes were as dull as pot metal"; with a metaphor we say, "His eyes were pot metal," and hope that the reader imagines the dullness for himself.

SIMILE

He is as strong as a gorilla.

Love is like the morning and the evening star.

All the world is like a stage.

METAPHOR

He is a gorilla.

*Love is the morning
and the evening star.*

All the world's a stage.

In both metaphor and simile, the word used denotatively (for example, *Mrs. Smith* in "Mrs. Smith is a horse") is called the *term*, while the word used for its connotative meaning (for example, *horse* in "Mrs. Smith is a horse") is called a *qualifier*. The qualifier need not be the grammatical predicate of the figure: "Mrs. Smith cantered across the room and nuzzled against the guest of honor" is a metaphor even though its qualifiers, *cantered* and *nuzzled*, are verbs. Similarly, the qualifier can be adjective or adverb, phrase or clause: "Mrs. Smith, sound of wind and limb, managed an expression that was at once coltishly shy and marked with unbridled fervor."

As the last example suggests, a metaphor is easily carried too far. Such extended metaphors can sometimes be effective in informal discourse, but they seem misplaced, even ludicrous, in scholarly writing. You should use metaphor sparingly, less often than simile, keeping both figures relatively tame and unextended. Above all, avoid the *mixed metaphor*, the name given to any figure of speech, metaphor or not, in which the sum of the connotations is incongruous or contradictory:

He was always out on a limb skating on thin ice.

After stalking her for years, he finally wormed his way into her affections.

Hackles rising, he realized that he was as helpless as a fish out of water.

Irony

When, because of emphasis, context, or tone of voice, a statement implies a meaning that is different from its literal sense, the figure achieved is *irony*—or, more precisely, *irony of statement*. The implicit meaning may be less than, more than, or the opposite of the explicit statement. Examples of irony abound in ordinary discourse: when the weather is ugly, we say, "Beautiful day, isn't it?" When Joe retells an ancient joke, we look at him steadily and say, "Joe, the freshness of your humor is always a joy." But the full effect of irony cannot be felt in such trite examples. Notice the sophisticated use of irony in this passage by Somerset Maugham:

The wise always use a number of ready-made phrases (at the moment I write "nobody's business" is the most common), popular adjectives (like "divine" or "shy-making"), verbs that you only know the meaning of if you live in the right set (like "dunch"), which give ease and a homely sparkle to small talk and avoid the necessity of thought. The Americans, who are the most efficient people on earth, have carried this device to such a height of perfection and have invented so wide a range of pithy and hackneyed phrases that they can carry on an amusing and animated conversation without giving a moment's reflection to what they are saying and so leave their minds free to consider the more important matters of big business and fornication.

Irony is often lost on the literal-minded; there are those who would take Maugham's passage as a tribute to American ingenuity.

Irony, of whatever degree or type, involves contrast. In irony of statement, there is a difference between what is literally said and the meaning actually intended. But everyday experience is filled with ironic contrasts that have nothing to do with verbal expression. We have certain expectations about the outcome of events; when the outcome is different, we say "how ironic." The graduate voted most likely to succeed ends his life in the gutter; the prize-winning mathematician is unable

to make his checkbook balance; the unfaithful wife has the happiest of husbands. This is called *irony of event or situation*, and the writer who points out such contrasts achieves an ironic effect even though each of his sentences is literal. Notice with what relish Bertrand Russell describes an ironic feature of Spinoza's life:

Spinoza (1634–77) is the noblest and most lovable of the great philosophers. Intellectually, some others have surpassed him, but ethically he is supreme. As a natural consequence, he was considered, during his lifetime and for a century after his death, a man of appalling wickedness. He was born a Jew, but the Jews excommunicated him. Christians abhorred him equally. Although his whole philosophy is dominated by the idea of God, the orthodox accused him of atheism. Leibniz, who owed much to him, concealed his debt, and carefully abstained from saying a word in his praise; he even went so far as to lie about the extent of his personal acquaintance with the heretic Jew.

Effective verbal irony requires considerable skill. Too subtle irony will pass by all your readers; too heavy-handed or too extended usage of this device may get on their nerves. The difficulties are worth struggling with, however, because sophisticated irony is one of the most delicately effective weapons a writer can have.

EXERCISE 2

A. Identify each of the following as:

- A simile
- B metaphor
- C literal statement

- _____ 1. "Progress is a comfortable disease." (e. e. cummings)
- _____ 2. Like many men his age, my father still prefers a straight razor.
- _____ 3. A good nurse is half angel and half slave.
- _____ 4. His lectures were long and as crisp as wax.
- _____ 5. His job in public relations was meaningless; it was like being paid to dehydrate water.
- _____ 6. Figurative language should sparkle.
- _____ 7. The writer needs an arsenal of words.
- _____ 8. Jack Benny is as famous as Bob Hope.
- _____ 9. "They slump in booths like rags, not even drunk." (Karl Shapiro)
- _____ 10. The nationalization of industry is the fetish of orthodox socialists.

B. Identify each of the following as:

- A mixed metaphor
- B irony of statement

- C irony of even or situation
D literal statement

- _____ 1. On their first date he made some yardage but failed to score a knockout.
- _____ 2. "A motorist who runs over a child gives employment to an ambulance porter, a doctor, an undertaker, a clergyman, a mourning-dress maker, a hearse driver, a gravedigger: in short, to so many worthy people that when he ends by killing himself it seems ungrateful not to erect a statue to him as a public benefactor." (G. B. Shaw)
- _____ 3. After a year's special training in arctic warfare, we were sent to Saudi Arabia.
- _____ 4. Jones faces up to the misfortunes of others with admirable good humor.
- _____ 5. . . . or to take arms against a sea of troubles.
- _____ 6. Since the practice of bargaining encouraged both the shopkeeper and his customer to lie about the value of merchandise, the Quakers declared it immoral and initiated the system of fixed prices. Although the new system did not produce a noticeable increase in morality, it proved so profitable that soon it was adopted in every advanced country.
- _____ 7. *Of Human Bondage* is an autobiographical novel.
- _____ 8. The shoemaker's child is always the poorest shod.
- _____ 9. To succeed, a college student must keep his ear to the ground, his nose to the grindstone, his shoulder to the wheel, and his eye on the ball.
- _____ 10. ". . . almost anyone sick enough to qualify for a heart transplant may already be too sick to survive. Conversely, anyone well enough to survive may not be sick enough to qualify for the still highly experimental surgery." (*Time*)

Paradox and Oxymoron

Paradox is a type of metaphor in which there is an apparent contradiction or a reversal of an obvious truth. Thus, Wordsworth's "The child is father of the man" literally asserts the exact reverse of what we know to be the actual relationship between man and child. After a moment's reflection, however, we can offer a sensible interpretation: "A man's childhood experiences determine what he will be like as an adult." A genuine paradox, like Wordsworth's, always allows a sensible interpretation; otherwise, it is not a paradox. "This patch of color is, at the same time and in the same way, both red and not red" is not paradoxical but simply—and dully—false. A paradox must be a *soluble* puzzle. Here are a few more examples of genuine paradoxes:

Only a man who owns nothing can be truly wealthy.

The more it changes, the more it is the same.

Closely related to the paradox is the *oxymoron* (ox-uh-MOE-ron), a "pointed foolishness." The distinguishing mark of the oxymoron is the presence of contradictory words situated closely together, usually as adjective and noun ("friendly enemy") or as adverb and verb ("to destroy constructively"). The oxymoron is often used to suggest an ironic contrast between appearance and reality: "The dean's policies were conventional innovations which he always announced with a kind of furtive frankness and carried out with a vacillating firmness."

Litotes and Hyperbole

The *litotes* (LIE-tuh-teez) is an effective but easily overused form of understatement. To turn out a litotes, we must reject the frank, affirmative sentence that comes most naturally to mind—"I was overjoyed"—as well as the much less natural negative equivalent—"I did not fail to be overjoyed"—and devise a facetious *diminished negative*—"I was not entirely displeased." The recipe is easily mastered, and the results are not wholly unpleasant. But excessive use of this figure will make your speech or writing seem highly affected, as though you had suddenly adopted a British accent. Here are some examples that are not entirely atypical:

LITERAL STATEMENT	LITOTES
<i>She is beautiful.</i>	<i>She is not unattractive.</i>
<i>He is immensely wealthy.</i>	<i>He is not impoverished.</i>
<i>He is hopelessly insane.</i>	<i>He is not without his quirks.</i>

The reverse of understatement, *hyperbole* (high-PUR-buh-lee), is a deliberate exaggeration, an expression which obviously says much more than it means. Threadbare hyperbole is all too common in everyday speech ("When he learned that she'd spent a fortune, he lost his head and raised the roof") but effective hyperbole requires some literary skill. Oscar Wilde used indirection to offset the obviousness of his hyperbole when he said, "Niagara Falls is the American bride's second greatest disappointment." Mark Twain sometimes combined hyperbole with paradox: "You can walk [to Saint Paul's], but it is best to go in a cab, for there is no place in London which is less than two miles and a half from any other place."

Euphemism and Dysphemism

Euphemism (YOO-fem-ism) is an evasive tactic we resort to when we feel that literal accuracy is somehow indelicate. By substituting a figurative, general, or oblique term for the exact expression, we avoid having to say "Mrs. Smith died," "Johnny stammers," and "Ruth is pregnant," and say instead "Mrs. Smith passed away," "Johnny has a speech impediment," and "Ruth is in a delicate condition." Such expressions frequently have appeared in connection with matters of disease or

death and references to parts of the body and their functions. The kind and number of words that are taboo varies from place to place and from era to era. We would laugh at the Victorian notion of calling legs "limbs" or underwear "unmentionables," but we talk about "inventory shrinkage" and "mature entertainment" rather than stolen goods and the exaggerated depiction of sex.

The euphemism is frequently a wordy circumlocution: the phrase "has a speech impediment" takes four words to say what "stammers" more accurately says in one. The euphemism implies disapproval: to describe Ruth as being in "a delicate condition" is to suggest that there is something a bit shameful or vulgar about her pregnancy or about pregnancy in general. For these reasons, and because euphemistic expressions lack vividness and concreteness, those who wish to write well ought to avoid euphemism, as a general rule.

Euphemism does have its place. Sometimes euphemism actually is a kindness, and often kindness is more important than accuracy. Just as the undertaker is right to tell the widow, "Madam, the deceased has been prepared," rather than "Madam, we've finished embalming the corpse you brought us," there are times when the writer would have a better chance of achieving the desired effect if he calls a spade a garden tool for digging.

Dysphemism (DIS-fem-ism) is the reverse of euphemism. If he senses a vulgarity in "farmer," the euphemizer will resort to "agriculturist," but the dysphemizer will prefer "clodhopper." One expresses his bias with a whisper, the other with a shout. They neatly bracket the subjects that we Americans feel anxious about: social class, race, birth, death, love-making, and the digestive processes. Here are a few printable illustrations:

EUPHEMISM	LITERAL TERM	DYSPHEMISM
<i>passed away</i>	<i>died</i>	<i>kicked the bucket</i>
<i>slender</i>	<i>thin</i>	<i>skinny</i>

Both euphemism and dysphemism pay homage to the irrational taboos and biases of our culture. We ought, at least as writers, to be sparing in our use of these figures.

EXERCISE 3

A. Identify the following as:

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| A simile | D euphemism |
| B metaphor | E oxymoron |
| C irony | |

1. "Most men lead lives of quiet desperation." (Thoreau)
2. Of course, Martha's an immoral woman; why, she always is honest, even about serious matters.

- _____ 3. He's the sort of writer who fills his pen with acid.
- _____ 4. The ballad was as comforting as an old fallacy.
- _____ 5. The law enforcement officers had the remains transported to the place where such things are kept.
- _____ 6. "'Tis with our judgments as our watches, none/Go just alike, yet each believes his own.'" (Pope, "Essay on Criticism")
- _____ 7. "[He was as] familiar as an old mistake, and as futile as regret." (E. A. Robinson, "Bewick Finzer")
- _____ 8. Like most of his friends, he was a successful failure.
- _____ 9. Our butcher is a vegetarian.
- _____ 10. "Oh, I wish I were a bluebird," she chirped.

B. Identify the following as:

- A paradox
- B pseudo-paradox (that is, a self-contradictory statement which implies no sensible, figurative meaning)
- C litotes
- D hyperbole
- E dysphemism

- _____ 1. "Here once the embattled farmers stood/And fired the shot heard round the world." (Emerson)
- _____ 2. "Water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink." (Coleridge)
- _____ 3. The institution of marriage is not without its flaws.
- _____ 4. Socrates, who died in 499 B.C., had married Xanthippe less than ten years earlier, in 490 B.C.
- _____ 5. "My life closed twice before its close." (Dickinson)
- _____ 6. The cops hauled the stiff off to the morgue.
- _____ 7. It is not altogether improbable that some politicians are dishonest.
- _____ 8. Although that flower is surely a rose, it does not seem to be a plant.
- _____ 9. For the noon meal we were served dead cow on toast.
- _____ 10. "Well, Ol' Blue died and he died so hard/That he shook the ground in my backyard." ("Ol' Blue," a folk song.)

C. For each of the following literal sentences, devise a figurative sentence of the sort named in the parentheses. Your figurative sentence will not be the exact semantic equivalent of the literal sentence, of course, since figurative meaning is usually multiple and often vague. But your figurative sentence should *include* the literal sentence among its plausible interpretations. Make your figures as fresh as possible; avoid trite expressions like the plague.

- 1. Mother is very naïve. (*metaphor*)
- 2. My history professor had always longed to visit Greece. (*simile*)
- 3. The required reading list in English literature is very long indeed. (*hyperbole*)
- 4. John Kenneth Galbraith is an urbane, well-traveled man. (*litotes*)
- 5. His wooing of Dorothy was persistent, well-planned, and effective. (*oxymoron*)

SLANTED LANGUAGE

We use slanted language when we choose words whose connotations convey our bias and when we include or exclude particular facts. But slanted language is frequently not a matter of choice; our bias crops up in our writing despite our intentions to be objective. We frequently see what we want to see, forget what we want to forget, record only those things that strike us most forceably. Being an impartial observer is difficult.

Although it is the serious writer's obligation to be honest, to avoid taking advantage of his reader's prejudices, we know that advertisers and politicians frequently use loaded language to sell their wares or themselves. It behooves us, then, to learn to distinguish slanted writing from rational discourse. It is well worth our time, therefore, to study a few of the more common slanting techniques.

Loaded Diction

Consider the following sentences:

Jones has been a police officer for twenty years.

Jones has been a policeman for twenty years.

Jones has been a pig for twenty years.

Denotatively these three sentences make the same empirical assertion; the evidence that served to verify one would verify all three. Connotatively, however, the sentences are not semantic equivalents, for *police officer*, *policeman*, and *pig* each calls for a different emotive reaction. *Policeman* has the least emotive significance; it is most likely to produce a strictly literal interpretation. *Police officer* evokes a mildly positive response, but not strong enough to qualify it as loaded. *Pig*, on the other hand, is strongly emotional; it easily qualifies as a loaded word. Its negative emotive force is so strong, in fact, that it makes a value judgment. The speaker or writer who labels Jones a *pig* not only tells us something about Jones's occupation, but also implies, "I disapprove of Jones's profession and perhaps even of Jones himself."

Stacking the Evidence

In 1955 the career of John Henry Faulk, a popular radio and television personality, was ruined by the suggestion that he was a Communist sympathizer. The damaging insinuation first appeared in a special *News Bulletin*, published by an anti-Communist organization known as Aware Incorporated. Among other things, the editors of the *Bulletin* wrote:

A program dated April 25, 1946, named "John Faulk" as a scheduled entertainer (with identified Communist Earl Robinson and two non-Communists) under the auspices of the Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions

(officially designated a Communist Front, and predecessor of the Progressive Citizens of America).

Faulk brought suit against the editors for libel and conspiracy. In the course of the trial, Faulk's lawyers proved that what the editors had referred to so generally as "a program" was in fact a dinner given in honor of the First Anniversary of the United Nations. Faulk had been "a scheduled entertainer," just as the editors claimed. They had not bothered to point out, however, that Faulk, like the other entertainers, had been hired by the Columbia Broadcasting System, the network that had broadcast the program. The editors, as Faulk's lawyers proved, had "overlooked" several other facts: the program had been presided over by the Honorable Trygve Lie, the Secretary General of the United Nations, and its honorees had consisted of the entire Security Council; the affair had been sponsored not only by the Independent Citizens Committee but also by such honored organizations as the American Bar Association and the National Y.M.C.A.; among the many notable guests had been Edward Stettinius, then the Secretary of State of the United States.

Thus, although the statement made in the *News Bulletin* was factually correct, the editors had carefully stacked the evidence against Faulk, suggesting in a grossly unfair and misleading way that he had participated in an affair sponsored and attended only by Communists.* The slanting device involved is a very simple one. To stack the evidence, you first decide what conclusion you wish your readers to draw; then you construct a case which omits every fact that does not support the desired conclusion. One advantage is that, strictly speaking, you do not have to lie. Another is that your reader has no way of detecting your slant unless he has knowledge of the case from a more trustworthy source.

Building a Straw Man

In order to write a criticism of another man's argument, at some point in your paper you must summarize that man's case, or else the extent and significance of your analysis will fail to be clear. You must state his case briefly, since the emphasis of your paper should be on your own arguments rather than those of your opponent. But brevity must not result in distortion. Your summary should at least include an accurate version of his thesis and his major supporting claims, and should faithfully reflect his reservations and certainties. You must not change his *in many cases* into *all cases*, or his *perhaps* into *surely*. If, deliberately or otherwise, you direct your criticism at a weakened or distorted version of his case, then you are guilty of having erected a straw man.

This slanting technique is more happily named than some; *building a straw man* is a metaphor that aptly suggests the strategy involved.

*For this and other libels—and after six years of litigation—the court awarded Faulk damages totaling over three million dollars. Eventually he collected \$175,000.

You do not attack your real opponent, because such a task would be too demanding; instead you devise a flimsy adversary, christen the invention with your real opponent's name, and proceed to demonstrate the absurdity of the case with devastating logic and wit. If you are clever, every reader who is unacquainted with the views of your real adversary will be convinced. If you go too far, however, your readers may suspect that no actual opponent would ever have left his case so full of holes. Here, for example, is how the segregationist Marilyn R. Allen, writing in 1949, characterized the position of an opponent:

This [proposal to legalize racially mixed marriages] is the same devil-take-the-White Race and the Country as Margaret Halsey expressed in her Color Blind. Never mind what sort of mongrel ancestry we hand down to future generations! Never mind anything except giving the coloreds and the mongrelizers what they want!

In this passage—the only one she devotes to Halsey's position—Allen seems to suggest that Halsey favors racial integration even though she admits it will debase future generations and ruin the country. Without having read *Color Blind* ourselves, we can be quite certain that this characterization of Halsey's position is inaccurate: no one defending a proposal is likely to believe that it will end in disaster. Allen's paragraph is an obvious example of building a straw man.

Verbal Association

The slanting device known as *verbal association* is as popular as building a straw man. Its name may be shorthand for *guilt by verbal association*. By constantly associating certain words, the writer using this technique tries to make his readers respond as though there were a factual connection:

The recent poor people's march on Washington is not the first demonstration that has occurred in our nation's capital. Over seventy years before the arrival of the marching poor people, Coxey's army of the unwashed and illiterate tramped across the Capitol lawn; in 1932, as some of the campaigning poor people no doubt recall, the Communist-inspired "bonus army" camped right on the Capitol steps, not far from the poor people's bivouac area. The marchers accomplished exactly nothing—except to get their pictures in the papers, which was all that most of them really wanted in the first place. The poor people's march . . .

The writer of this paragraph is careful to make no explicit claim about the poor people's march that is either false or derogatory. But by repeatedly placing the name *poor people's march* in close proximity to the names of two earlier demonstrations, he conditions his readers to accept the belief that factual similarities exist. If the technique is suc-

cessful, his readers will attribute to the poor people's march all the alleged characteristics of the earlier marches: the Communist influence, the illiteracy, the unkempt appearance, and the thirst for cheap publicity. The use of verbal association allows the writer to escape the burden of supplying proof and yet at the same time enables him to advance his claims in an effective way.

Poisoning the Wells

Few slanting devices are more frustrating for the victim than the one which Cardinal Newman aptly entitled *poisoning the wells*. The writer who adopts this strategy tries to destroy rebuttal in advance by declaring that his opponent's statements cannot be trusted. More often than not, this technique is combined with loaded diction, because the writer frequently seeks to "prove" the untrustworthiness of his opponent by calling him names. In the following passage, columnist Holmes Alexander combines poisoning the wells with several other slanting devices:

Twice in two years, under separate bills, the U.S. Senate (actually its Democratic majority) has sneaked its way into the Treasury and tried to lay hold of campaign funds.

The chief robber barons, Sens. Russell Long (La.) and Albert Gore (Tenn.), may know not what they do. But abetted by a certain professional in the White House, they offer a number of pious reasons for this \$100 million grab from the public till.

If you believe the raiders, they desire to aid the "poor" among politicians and to produce elections that are "clean" of rich men's lucre. But if Long and Gore were as candid as Willie Sutton, the safecracker, they would say about the Treasury as Willie did about banks: "That's where the money is."

These remarkably compact paragraphs provide us with a convenient chance to review most of the slanting devices we have discussed. The author depends heavily upon loaded diction: the senators are *robber barons* and *raiders*, who, *abetted by a certain professional*, have *sneaked* into the Treasury and, in a *\$100 million grab*, tried to *lay hold* of public funds. Having discredited them with name-calling, the columnist next tries to poison their wells. He refers contemptuously to the senators' case as *a number of pious reasons*, and he calls their credibility into question with *If you believe the raiders*. . . . Clearly, the senators' arguments are not worthy of our attention; if not actually criminals, they are at best men who *may know not what they do*.

In his third paragraph, the author gives us a summary of the senators' case that is brief indeed: They propose the use of public funds . . . *to aid the "poor" among politicians and to produce elections that are "clean" of rich men's lucre*. The quotation marks around *poor* and *clean* allow the author to belittle the senators' statements even while he is in

the act of summarizing them. And his summary is suspiciously economical. He includes no evidence to support the claim that rich candidates sometimes have an undesirable advantage over their less wealthy opponents. Possibly the senators themselves offered no such evidence, but responsibility for the damaging oversight more probably belongs to Mr. Alexander's straw man. The third paragraph also manages to associate the senators' names with the name of a bank robber: . . . *if Long and Gore were as candid as Willie Sutton, the safecracker*. . . . Compared with what has gone before, this simile appears harmless enough—hardly more than a hyperbolic, sarcastic way of saying that the senators lack candor. Having their names linked even figuratively with a notorious criminal can surely do Long and Gore little good, however. The attempt at verbal association, though mild, is certainly present, and in the mind of an impressionable reader it might foster the belief that the senators are criminals *in fact*. In any event, the comparison neatly rounds off a passage that uses all but one of the devices we have considered. Perhaps restrictions of space prevented Mr. Alexander from making use of stacking the evidence.

EXERCISE 4

A. Identify the following as:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| A loaded diction | D verbal association |
| B stacking the evidence | E poisoning the wells |
| C building a straw man | |

- _____ 1. Senator Tydings favors a tighter gun control law. He doesn't believe it'll do much to reduce the crime rate, but he seems to think that the self-punishment such a law would inflict might make us all feel better about the deaths of President Kennedy, Senator Kennedy, and Martin Luther King.
- _____ 2. I'm convinced we should have a Federal right-to-work law, and I speak as an informed taxpayer having no ax to grind. Such a law would insure that no citizen's right to get a job and keep it would be jeopardized because he refuses to join a labor union. The spokesmen of organized labor disagree with me, of course. But their so-called arguments deserve no consideration. You just can't expect organized labor to view the matter with any objectivity; after all, their pocketbooks are involved.
- _____ 3. Baby doctor Benny Spock—a convicted felon—thinks the war in Vietnam is no place for effeminate pacifists.
- _____ 4. Drs. Johnson and Masters have written *Human Sexual Response*, another scientific look at sex. Many sex-dominated books have hit the market in recent years: *The Chapman Report*, *Candy*, and *Couples*, to name just a few. *Human Sexual Re-*

sponse is incomparably thorough and detailed. It should sell at least as well as *Myra Breckinridge*, Gore Vidal's latest sex-novel.

- _____ 5. Lyndon Johnson was a complete failure as President. He transformed our policy in Vietnam from a minor mistake into a major disaster; his statements like those of his cabinet members were so often false or misleading that he lost the confidence of the people; and, finally, he was either unable or unwilling to cope effectively with the problems of our cities.
- _____ 6. Labor boss Walter Reuther has long been the *Führer* of American auto workers.
- _____ 7. Like many other student activists, Joseph McNeadle believes in civil disobedience, the doctrine that says you don't have to obey the law when you find it distasteful to do so.
- _____ 8. There have been many eyewitness reports of flying saucers, but none of them deserves much consideration. How can you trust anyone who claims to have seen a flying saucer?
- _____ 9. The so-called war on poverty is another one of those give-away schemes foisted on us by left-wing semisocialists.
- _____ 10. Today's American Indian has no just cause for complaint. The U.S. has given him equal protection under the law, free education, and spacious reservations. He never had it so good.

B. Write an analysis of the slanted language used in the following passage. Identify the slanting devices used, and predict their probable effects on an unwary reader:

If Judge Roy Bean were around today, he would have been shocked by the decision just handed down by the Court of Appeals in Chicago. Judge Bean was capable of foolish decisions himself: back around 1885, he had a citizen of Langry convicted and hanged "for being a damned nuisance," and on another occasion he fined a corpse \$40 for carrying a concealed weapon.

But Judge Bean's old-fashioned foolishness does not compare with the latest drivel from the bench. Today's judges have just ruled that the kindergarten children of De Kalb, Illinois, violated the Constitution by reciting a four-line stanza.

Was the stanza a juicy bit of hard-core pornography? Did it advocate overthrowing the Government by force? Did it encourage the children of De Kalb to burn their books and murder their beloved teachers? Well, not exactly. Here's how the forbidden stanza goes:

We thank you for the flowers so sweet;
We thank you for the food we eat;
We thank you for the birds that sing;
We thank you, God, for everything.

Now the people who tried to defend the children's right to this verse did not contend that it was deathless poetry or that it would permanently inoculate the children from sin and immorality. They argued simply that the stanza was innocuous, perhaps mildly beneficial, and that if the teachers, parents, and children wanted to recite it in school they had a perfect right to do so. Sound reasonable? Well, Roy Bean might have thought so, but not the Court of Appeals in Chicago.

The law of the land, as "interpreted" by today's judges, jealously protects the children's right to read pornography but makes reciting the bland little four-liner in school taboo.

The "reasoning" behind the Court's half-baked decision has been made public, but don't bother to wade through it unless you have a taste for endless and unfunny sick humor. I suspect the judges, who are old enough to be senile, made their decision quite arbitrarily and then with sly giggles ordered their clerks to cook up something that resembled supporting argument. The clerks strove mightily to bury the mess in legalistic jargon. But the blunder was just too egregious to cover up. Maybe we should still hang men for being damned nuisances.

We have been talking about language which is used for effect. Many of these things you knew intuitively; you picked them up as you grew up. Don't give them up—just become more aware of their potential—and postpone thinking about them further for awhile. For we focus next on a more cognitive use of the language—appeals to emotion give way to the demands of logic. Surely words mean something definite, don't they? If, as we began this book by saying, we want to write material in a style that will be acceptable as college writing, we must now turn our attention to clarity and precision.

PART TWO

***Semantics and
College Writing***

4 DICTIONARIES

As felicitous an instance of futile classicism as can well be found is the conventional spelling of the English language. English orthography satisfies all the requirements of the canons of reputability under the law of conspicuous waste. It is archaic, cumbrous, and ineffective; its acquisition consumes much time and effort; failure to acquire it is easy of detection.

Thorstein Veblen

Of course we all know what a dictionary is—just a bunch of words in alphabetical order that you use to find out how to spell something and just what it means.

But a dictionary is often much less than that. After all, if you have no idea how to spell a word, you can't look it up; so the dictionary can't help you. As for telling you just what a word means, have you ever read something written by someone unfamiliar with a language who has chosen his words on the basis of what the dictionary says they mean?

A dictionary can be much more than words in alphabetical order. *Random House Dictionary* goes so far as to say that man's lexicon is "an index to his ideas and passions, his inventions and achievements, his history and hopes." Somewhat more specifically, a dictionary presents some generally agreed-upon "facts" about selected words. A dictionary is the codification of a language; it is an attempt to freeze for a moment our fluid, constantly changing oral communications.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH DICTIONARY

Western civilization has had a written language for many centuries, and word lists somewhat similar to simple dictionaries appeared as early as the seventh century B.C. The first dictionaries involving the English language were bilingual: they were used by scholars during the Middle Ages to translate Latin into English and English into Latin.

The first exclusively English dictionary was Robert Cawdrey's *A Table Alphabeticall*, which appeared in 1604. This work made some

attempt to standardize English spelling (variations which appear in things like the spelling of Shakespeare's name would make most of today's students agree that some such improvement was needed), but its main focus was the definition or explanation of difficult words.

A concern with hard words, or "inkhorn" terms, as they were sometimes called, was also the reason for the first book in English that actually used the word *dictionary*. *The English Dictionarie: or, An Interpreter of Hard English Words*, published in 1623 by Henry Cockeram, explained such words as *abarsticke* (instable), *basiate* (to kisse), *cucuriate* (to crow like a cocke), *deblaterate* (to babble much), and *exilitie* (slenderness). Cockeram's book had a supplement that might be a useful addition to modern dictionaries—it listed scholarly equivalents of ordinary English words so that by the simple process of word substitution almost anyone could appear educated.

The next addition to information available in the dictionary was the etymology—the origin, formation, and development of a word. *Glossographia*, published by Thomas Blount in 1656, was the first dictionary with this feature.

Successor to these was Nathaniel Bailey's *Universal Etymological English Dictionary*, published in 1721. This work incorporated the elements of etymology, spelling, and usage, and added syllabification and stress as aids to pronunciation. In it Bailey attempted to list all the words current in the English language.

Perhaps the best-known name among the compilers of early English dictionaries is that of Samuel Johnson. In 1755 he published a *Dictionary of the English Language*, which he had edited with the aid of six secretaries and two shelves of reference books. This dictionary dominated English lexicography for a full century.

One of the most scholarly and influential dictionaries took forty-four years to be completed, from 1884 to 1928, under the direction of four different editors. This monumental work, best known as *The Oxford English Dictionary* or *OED* (although the original title, *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, was never completely abandoned), is still highly respected. The compilers tried to include in it every word recorded in the English language since the middle of the thirteenth century—obsolete as well as current—and to give a complete history of each, providing a quotation as an example of every change in form or meaning which the word had undergone.

The original printing of the *OED* was ten volumes in length, or 15,487 pages. It has since been reissued in twelve volumes. In 1933, the same compilers published a supplementary volume which contained additions and corrections reflecting those changes in the language that had taken place during the time the original work was in progress. Finally, it was all abridged in two volumes, *The Shorter Oxford Dictionary*.

EXERCISE 1

In 1710 Jonathan Swift complained that “the war has introduced an abundance of polysyllables which will never be able to live through many more campaigns.” As examples, he cites speculations, operations, preliminary, ambassadors, palisades, communication, circumvallation, and battalions. Assuming that the war to which Swift referred was the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1713), check with the *Oxford English Dictionary* and give evidence to show whether his statement about these words was accurate.

The first important dictionary to deal with American English was published by Noah Webster in 1828. His two-volume *American Dictionary of the English Language* emphasized American spellings, used American settings and illustrations, and greatly influenced subsequent dictionary-making in America. The American spellings he used were mostly those that Webster himself, influenced by Benjamin Franklin, had introduced in an earlier (1806) work. Some of Webster’s simplifications may be seen in our use of *-or* rather than *-our* endings in such words as *honor* and *labor*; in the *-er* rather than *-re* endings in such words as *meter* and *theater*; and the single *l* or other consonants in words such as *traveled* and *traveling*.

Lexicographers have taken two approaches to the compilation of dictionaries: *descriptive* and *prescriptive*. *Descriptive* dictionaries such as the *OED* merely record the current (or historical) usage of a word without indicating whether it should or should not be used in that way. The *prescriptive* dictionaries were set up as arbiters of correctness. Samuel Johnson’s attempt to regularize the English language in his dictionary was the first step in this direction.

Several factors supported this prescriptive view of the dictionary. First, the growth of printing led to a desire to standardize spelling, and a move in this direction had been made by the printing houses themselves. At about the same time, the standardization of language became a trend; learned academies in Europe set about regularizing their native languages. Second, the anxiety of the emerging middle class to be considered “correct” and acceptable, especially concerning their use of language, made them turn with relief to something which was labeled a final authority. Many accepted Johnson as the only recognized expert on the English language, deferring to his *Dictionary* on all matters of meaning and usage and referring to it as THE dictionary.

Johnson himself was not reluctant to set a *goal* of ridding the language of all “vulgar” usages and prescribing immutable standards that would last for all time. But he was not able to accomplish this task. He discussed his efforts in his “Preface”:

Of the event of this work, for which, having laboured it with so much application, I cannot but have some degree of parental fondness, it is natural to form conjectures. Those who have been persuaded to think well of my design, will require that it should fix our language, and put a stop to those alterations which time and chance have hitherto been suffered to make in it without opposition. With this consequence I will confess that I flattered myself for a while; but now begin to fear that I have indulged expectation which neither reason nor experience can justify.

When we see men grow old and die at a certain time one after another, from century to century, we laugh at the elixir that promises to prolong life to a thousand years; and with equal justice may the lexicographer be derided, who being able to produce no example of a nation that has preserved their words and phrases from mutability, shall imagine that his dictionary can embalm his language, and secure it from corruption and decay, that it is in his power to change sublunary nature, and clear the world at once from folly, vanity, and affection.

Although Johnson admits that the task of legislating our language habits cannot be accomplished, many people still cling to the notion that somehow a dictionary has this power. Recent dictionaries profess that they merely record current usage, that they are descriptive instead of prescriptive, but a close look reveals that they reflect the standards and biases of the people who compile them. Of course, it could hardly be otherwise, since choices inevitably have to be made.

Johnson's labels were more forthright. Words were "proper," "corrupt," "barbarous," "low," or "elegant." Our descriptive dictionaries are usually less obvious.

EXERCISE 2

In a current dictionary, locate some labels given to *finalize*, *like* (as a conjunction), and *data* (as a singular noun). Do you agree with the labels? Johnson listed "to swap," "budge," and "coax" as low words. What does your current dictionary say about these?

EXERCISE 3

Look up *check*, *defense*, *plow*, and *tire* in an American dictionary. See if you can find something in the entry that gives the British spelling of the word. Can you suggest a rule that might govern these changes?

KINDS OF DICTIONARIES

Functionally speaking, English language dictionaries may be divided into three general classes: the large, multi-volume, or unabridged works; the single-volume, desk-sized works, commonly referred to as "collegiate"

dictionaries; and specialized dictionaries. Unabridged dictionaries are the best source of complete information about a word or expression. But because of their size, they are hardly portable, and they are generally used as supplements to a desk dictionary. Most libraries have at least one of the following unabridged dictionaries, each of which has certain advantages:

The Century Dictionary, 10 vols. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1901; vols. 11 and 12, 1909; the *New Century*, in 3 vols., 1948.

A Dictionary of American English, 4 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938-44.

New Standard Dictionary of the English Language. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1959.

The Oxford English Dictionary, 13 vols. and Supplement. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888-1933; corrected reissue, 1933. Originally this dictionary carried the title *A New English Dictionary*.

The Random House Dictionary of the English Language. New York: Random House, 1968.

The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933; third edition, 1 vol., with corrections and revised addenda, 1955.

Webster's Third New International Dictionary. Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1961.

The one-volume, desk-size dictionaries began to appear about 1900. They are vital equipment for every student. All of the following dictionaries are good, and one's choice is simply a matter of personal preference:

American College Dictionary. New York: Random House, 1963.

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. New York: American Heritage and Houghton Mifflin, 1969.

The Random House Dictionary of the English Language: A College Edition. New York: Random House, 1968.

Standard College Dictionary, Text Edition. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1963.

Webster's New World Dictionary, College Edition. Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Co., 1964.

Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary. Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1963.

Although it is difficult to predict which special dictionary you might need, you should recognize by the label "special" that these works deal with limited areas or particular subjects. The following are some of the most widely used special dictionaries; if the subject you are interested

in is not covered in one of these, ask your librarian if there is a work in that field:

Dictionary of American Biography
Dictionary of National Biography (British)
Dictionary of Education
Dictionary of Business Terms
Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology
Dictionary of Non-Classical Mythology
Dictionary of Scientific Terms
Illustrated Medical Dictionary
The International Dictionary of Applied Mathematics
Chemical Dictionary
A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psycho-Analytical Terms
Black's Law Dictionary
Roget's International Thesaurus
Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms
Dictionary of Religion and Ethics
Dictionary of Economics
Dictionary of Social Science
Dictionary of Social Welfare
An Encyclopedia of World History

EXERCISE 4

Some of these specialized dictionaries overlap somewhat. See how the medical dictionary and the psychological dictionary handle the term *psychosomatic*. Check the *Dictionary of Scientific Terms* and the *Chemical Dictionary* for treatment of *valence*. Compare the listings given for *stupid* (or *stupidity*) in *Roget's Thesaurus* and *Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms*.

USES OF A DICTIONARY

English is the primary language of over 300 million people on five continents; it is the secondary language of many more millions of people, and as an international language it now occupies the position formerly held by French. The vocabulary of the English language—over 700,000 words—is larger than that of any other known language. Obviously not everything known about all of these words can be included in a dictionary. What can you expect to find in the typical one-volume dictionary?

Spelling and Syllabication

Both of these are the product of a long-established tradition and have little relationship to the way words are pronounced. Main entry

words (those printed in boldface type) are divided into syllables to show how a word is to be divided at the end of a line. The most common American spelling is given, and if there is more than one acceptable spelling, the preferred spelling is usually printed first. Some dictionaries show capitalization; most indicate whether the word, if a compound, is written as one word, with a hyphen, or as two words.

Pronunciation

Pronunciation is indicated through the use of symbols (a list of which is usually printed on the inside front or back cover of the dictionary). The pronunciation most frequently used is generally shown in parentheses immediately after the entry word.

EXERCISE 5

Look up the word *expel*. Copy those symbols that indicate its syllabication and its pronunciation.

Parts of Speech

The key uses of a word are indicated by abbreviations, usually after the pronunciation has been shown—for example, *dis-rate* (*dis-rāt'*), *v.t.* The abbreviation *v.t.* indicates that the entry word—here *dis-rate*—is a transitive verb. If a word can function as more than one part of speech, that fact is noted (often with appropriate examples)—for example, *type* (*tīp*), *n., v.*—indicates that *type* can be either a noun or a verb. Sometimes there is a separate entry for each function of the word, especially if each requires a different set of definitions.

EXERCISE 6

Look up the word *fore*. How many parts of speech are indicated for it? What are they?

Inflected Forms

An inflected form of a word is one showing some grammatical change. The inflected forms most often included within a main entry in a dictionary are those that result from the addition of a suffix, such as *-ence*; those that involve a change in the spelling of the base form, as in the case of some irregular noun plurals and the past tense and past participle forms of some irregular verbs; and words formed by the addition of the comparative and superlative suffixes to adjectives (although the latter may be omitted to save space).

EXERCISE 7

Look up the word *good*. What inflected forms are indicated?

Etymology

The etymology is a brief history of the entry word, indicating its origin and, if it was borrowed from another language, what the word meant in the original language. The extent to which changes in language and meaning are recorded varies from dictionary to dictionary and from word to word. There are some words for which no dependable history has been found.

A glance at the etymology of a word may be useful to the writer. Sometimes there is a directness about the word in the original that would make using it—rather than the word you were looking up—the best word choice. Also, the etymological explanations in unabridged dictionaries often refer to other entries which you may find helpful if you have not completely understood the implications of the definitions given for the original entry.

EXERCISE 8

Below is a passage from Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* (1485):

Thenne within two yeres king Uther fell seke of a grete maladye. And in the meane whyle hys enemyes usurped upon hym, and dyd a grete bataylle upon his men, and slewe many of his people.

Use your dictionary to select five words in the above passage which were taken into English from Old French (after the Norman Conquest). List both the Old French word and the Latin source, if it is given. What are the sources of all the one-syllable words? What is the source of *upon*?

Meanings

Definitions are usually given in numbered sequence, often with brief examples of how the word is used with the given meaning. Some dictionaries list the older meanings first, but it is becoming more usual to list the common meanings of the word first and the rare, archaic, or obsolete senses last.

EXERCISE 9

What were the original meanings of the following words: *democracy*; *monarchy*; *inspiration*; *sanguine*; *Yankee*; *proper*; *amateur*; *nebulous*?

Usage Labels

Usage labels indicate certain cultural and functional levels of usage, for example, colloquial, slang, and substandard. These labels are defined in explanatory notes in the front of every dictionary. You should read the explanation carefully so that you will not be inclined to attach either unwarranted authority or negative connotations to these descriptive terms.

EXERCISE 10

Find at least one word which is labeled by one of each of the following: standard; colloquial; slang; dialectal; illiterate; obsolete (or archaic); technical; poetic.

Selective Treatment of Synonyms and Antonyms

The dictionary often includes synonyms and antonyms to offer the user a choice of alternative words for his writing or speaking. Sometimes there will be a short paragraph after the basic entry showing the shades of difference that exist between that word and words whose meanings are closely related.

EXERCISE 11

List a synonym for each of the following words: *anger*; *see*; *go*; *act*; *change*.

List an antonym for each of the following words: *clear*; *clever*, *greed*; *study*; *quiet*.

If your dictionary has paragraphs comparing and contrasting the usage of certain synonyms, find an example of this feature.

Other Information

Such information as proper names, geographical data, foreign words, or technical terms may be included as regular entries; may appear as special lists; or may be omitted entirely. In some dictionaries there also are special sections for other kinds of information that might need explanations, such as proofreader's marks, tables of weights and measures, or forms of address.

EXERCISE 12

List at least two "special sections" contained in your dictionary. Be sure you know the kind of information that can be found in them.

WHERE DO THE DEFINITIONS COME FROM?

Despite what was said at the beginning of this chapter, many people do think of the dictionary only in terms of providing proper spelling and of giving meanings. As we indicated, there may be some unstated choices made in the depth to which the compilers of a dictionary go to include all strata of society in their sample, at least in terms of usage. It might therefore be a good idea to take a slightly longer look at where the definitions come from and how useful or valid they are.

Where do they come from? Unless there is already some authoritative statement about a definition, as in the case of technical terms, the definitions are usually made up by the compilers. Early dictionaries often reflected an obviously highly individual viewpoint. In fact, some of the definitions in Johnson's dictionary are remembered solely for their noticeable bias. Here are a few:

Job (a low word now much in use, of which I cannot tell the etymology.) 1. Petty, piddling work. 2. A low mean lucrative busy affair.

Oats (Saxon) A grain, which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports people. It is of the grass leavened tribe; the flowers have no petals, and are disposed in a loose panicle: the grain is eatable. The meal makes tolerable good bread.

Patron I, One who countenances, supports or protects. Commonly a wretch who supports with insolence, and is paid with flattery.

Current compilers depend on already existing works and a survey of new usages of old words or new words frequently used in popular or scholarly writing and speaking.

The definition, when based on common usage, is mostly a matter of analyzing the usage and synthesizing the common details. A certain amount of bias is bound to creep in because everyone sees the world his own way, and the formulation of an all-purpose definition is quite difficult. In many ways the definition of—or explanation of—a concrete object is the most difficult, because “everybody knows what one is,” but just try to put it into words. Consider two definitions for the word *door*:

door (dôr, dōr) n. 1. Any movable structure used to close off the entrance to a room, building, vehicle, or covered enclosure, typically consisting of a panel of wood, glass, or metal that swings on hinges. 2. The entranceway to a room, building, or passage: Go through that door and turn left. 3. Any means of approach or access. 4. The room or building to which a door belongs: three doors down the hall.

American Heritage Dictionary

door (dôr), n. 1. a movable barrier of wood or other material, commonly turning on hinges or sliding in a groove, for closing and

opening a passage or opening into a building, room, cupboard, etc.
 2. *a doorway.* 3. *the building, etc., to which a door belongs:* two
 doors down the street.

The American College Dictionary

Do these definitions include everything they should and exclude everything else? Does the use of the word *structure* in the first definition mean that a stone rolled up to your cave would not qualify? Is the first part of the second definition unnecessarily general—for instance, if a door is a barrier of wood or *other material*, this means almost anything, so why specify that much? Does the *etc.* at the end of that same listing mean that the movable barrier on the top of your wooden box is a door rather than a lid?

As you can see, the compilers of dictionaries have taken on a monumental task. They have given you the best and quickest way for finding out the consensus on a word. But in your writing you may have to go further than that—a problem we will consider in the next chapter.

5 DEFINITION

*Take care of the sense and the
sounds will take care of themselves.*

Lewis Carroll

To make sure your reader understands your message, you may have to explain what your key words mean; that is, you must define your terms. This process of defining is not unusual, for we are frequently asked to define “hard” words in everyday conversation.

LEXICAL AND STIPULATIVE DEFINITIONS

Every definition you write will be either *lexical* or *stipulative*. A *lexical* definition is a *report* about the way a word is used by a particular group, perhaps a very small group, of people. A *stipulative* definition, on the other hand, is a *proposal* to use a certain word in a special way for a given bit of discourse.

Both types of definition have their uses, and each has interesting features. Let us first consider the lexical variety. The following is an example that emphasizes the descriptive function :

When referring to words or lines of poetry, English-speaking people customarily use the noun “rhyme” to mean “close similarity of sound, especially of final sound.”

As you can see, this lexical definition is an empirical statement, a claim about how a word is used *in fact*. As is the case with any empirical statement, the truth or falsity of the lexical definition can be proved by observation.

When a lexical definition is false, its report of how people use the word is, in one respect or another, inaccurate. Excluding cases of total misrepresentation or error such as *sparrow* = *a type of mammal*, there are three common types of inaccuracy you should guard against in such definition.

First, the definition may be *too inclusive*, in which case it covers a broader field than does the word being defined. Thus, to define *lemon* as

citrus fruit is to offer too inclusive a definition, since *citrus fruit* includes grapefruit, kumquats, and a number of other fruits besides lemons.

The opposite error occurs when the definition is *too exclusive*, when its denotation is narrower than that of the word being defined. If we defined *uncle* as *brother of one's father*, for example, our definition would exclude the brothers of one's mother.

The third kind of error occurs when a definition is both *too broad* and *too narrow*. To define *cat* as *domestic animal* is to overlook the fact that not all domestic animals are cats, and that not all cats are domestic animals.

Although a lexical definition that contains any of these errors will be false, stipulative definitions are not subject to the same restrictions. Stipulative definitions can be foolish, misleading, or even vicious, but they cannot possibly be false—or true either, for that matter. Stipulative definitions are not claims about the facts of the matter, or statements that can be objectively verified; they are more like directives or warnings to the reader, stating that you propose to use a word in a certain way and that if the reader wants to follow your line of thought, he had better agree to this usage in this context.

Stipulative definitions *may* be used to refine the lexical meaning of a word, making it more specific. But the writer is free to stipulate any meaning he likes, no matter how whimsical or extravagant. In fact, an entire essay may be an examination of an extended stipulative definition.

If a writer becomes too daring, however, he may lose his readers. While our intellects may agree to the new stipulated denotative meaning of a word, our emotions are often less easy to control. We can stipulate that when we say *snake* from now on we will mean *sandwich*, and adjust fairly quickly to the change in literal meaning. But if we are then offered a *snake* for lunch, we are still likely to shudder, while at the same time saying to ourselves, "It's only a *sandwich*!" This connotative lag—the carry-over into a new setting of an emotive response—is what lies behind the slanting device called *persuasive definition*. This kind of definition makes a "loaded word" fit anywhere with literal accuracy. The following is an example:

People seem to dislike George. They say he's crude because he spits on the floor, callous because he's unmoved by the pleas of his braceros for a living wage, and ignorant because he's never read Shakespeare or even heard of Darwin. But I think George is a genuinely noble person. To be noble, as I understand the term, means to be of high rank or position. George, as you know, lives in a mansion, drives a new Cadillac every year, owns some of the finest orchards in California, and is president of his own corporation. If that isn't noble, I guess I don't know what is.

Noble is a word that usually has considerable positive emotive force.

While the lexical meaning—roughly, *of graceful manner, fine sensibilities, and honorable character*—does not really fit George, the writer, by adding the stipulative definition, tailors it to just his size. Thus the writer's use of persuasive definition allows him to accomplish his own ends without risking a charge of inaccuracy.

EXERCISE 1

Distinguishing Lexical from Stipulative Definitions

The clearest way to indicate that you are offering a *stipulative* definition is to put it in the form of an imperative sentence: "By *intelligence*, let us mean. . . ." The clearest way to show that you are asserting a *lexical* definition is to phrase it as a declarative sentence: "By *intelligence*, psychologists do in fact mean. . . ." But in ordinary discourse both kinds of definitions are offered in a variety of ways, and sometimes it is difficult to tell which is which. Try to identify the following as:

L lexical definition

S stipulative definition

- _____ 1. We'd better not consider any community a city unless it has a population of over 50,000.
- _____ 2. Men who've never been married are called *bachelors*.
- _____ 3. In my drivers' training class, we classify as *excessive* any speed that, under existing driving conditions, makes an accident significantly more likely to occur.
- _____ 4. We must stop all this permissive mishmash and describe as excessive *any* speed at which a car is traveling when it gets into an accident.
- _____ 5. In legal circles *obscene literature* refers to any published material that appeals solely to prurient interests and has no redeeming social value.
- _____ 6. Obscenity: the character or quality of being offensive to modesty or decency.
- _____ 7. We on the library committee ought to consider a work of literature obscene whenever any of us feels that it is sexually stimulating.
- _____ 8. I believe man's ability to invent and use symbols is his one essential quality: a creature who lacks that ability should not be called a man.
- _____ 9. Anyone who agrees with St. Anselm would define *God* as a *being greater than which nothing can be conceived*.
- _____ 10. If we take the word *God* to mean *Supreme Being who created and rules the universe*, I think most Christians would agree with us.

The Truth or Falsity of Lexical Definitions

Assume that each of the following has been offered as a lexical definition; then identify each as:

- A true, for at least one meaning of the word
 - B false, because it is too broad (too inclusive)
 - C false, because it is too narrow (too exclusive)
 - D false, because it is both too broad and too narrow
-
- _____ 1. *Brother* = male sibling
 - _____ 2. *Brother* = sibling
 - _____ 3. *Brother* = younger male sibling
 - _____ 4. *Brother* = younger sibling
 - _____ 5. *Simile* = figure of speech
 - _____ 6. *Simile* = figure of speech using the word "like" to make a connotative comparison
 - _____ 7. *Simile* = figure of speech using "like," "as," or similar words to make a connotative comparison
 - _____ 8. *Bicycle* = two-wheeled vehicle
 - _____ 9. *Quart* = liquid measure of capacity
 - _____ 10. *Quart* = liquid measure of capacity equal to two pints

The Use and Misuse of Stipulative Definitions

Consider each of the following as containing a stipulative definition; then identify each definition as:

- A apparently a helpful refinement of lexical meaning.
 - B likely to be misleading since it departs too radically from lexical meaning.
 - C a persuasive definition.
-
- _____ 1. I want to bet you that candidate Forthwrite will win the next election by a landslide, and you want to bet me that he will not. Well, we'd better decide right now what a landslide is; otherwise, the winner will never be able to collect. For the purpose of this bet, why don't we say that a candidate who wins by seven percent or more of the popular vote is a candidate who wins by a landslide—fair enough?
 - _____ 2. Before we begin our survey to determine how many people in our city's ghetto are unemployed, we'd better define *unemployed* so strictly that any person we interview will necessarily be either *employed* or *unemployed*, without a third possibility. Let me suggest this: an *unemployed person* is anyone who is not engaged in an activity that is likely to net him an income of some sort in the next year.
 - _____ 3. Our next unit in this course is "The Psychological Effect of Racial Prejudice." For the purposes of this subject, I think the word *Negro*, as it is used in common parlance, is too vague; and different groups use the word to mean different things. Some peo-

ple, as you know, use the word to refer to anyone having any Negro ancestors, no matter how remote and no matter whether anyone knows of them or not. That definition won't do for our purposes, since it results in there being thousands, perhaps millions, of people who are Negroes without knowing it. Obviously such people do not suffer from white racism. I think a more suitable definition here, at least to begin with, is this: a person is a Negro if others regard him as such and/or he so regards himself. These are the people who are subject to prejudice, whether they have any Negro ancestors *in fact* or not.

- 4. We can't hope to discuss this matter of police brutality sensibly unless we first define our terms. Let's define *brutality*, therefore, as any act in which one party compels a second party to do something that the second party does not wish to do. Now we're ready to discuss intelligently and objectively the question that concerns us all: Are the cops in this city frequently guilty of police brutality?
- 5. We should not end our discussion of Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound" without addressing ourselves to a question that has concerned some well-known scholars—namely, "Is 'Prometheus Unbound' an allegory?" Now, like many literary terms, *allegory* is abysmally vague. Since we wish to concern ourselves with Shelley's work and not with the meaning of a term, I suggest that we precede our discussion with a sufficiently precise definition of *allegory*. Let's agree that to be an allegory a work must meet all of these criteria: first, the work in question must have been described by its author as an allegory; second, it must be *known* that he so described it; third, the . . .
- 6. Fred may *think* he's not a Christian, but I know better. Any man who loves his neighbor and devotes his life to good works is a true Christian no matter what he chooses to call himself. That's what being a Christian means in the broadest and deepest sense.

METHODS OF DEFINING

Avoiding false or misleading definitions will not automatically guarantee that your definitions will be good ones. It takes a deft hand and a logical mind to make your meanings clear. You may want to look for examples of the following four methods of definition in your reading, see how they are done, and try to copy or improve on your models. None of these methods of definition is particularly difficult to master.

Ostensive Definition

The most obvious and concrete of defining techniques consists of offering examples, and the simplest way to offer an example is to point. Let us suppose that you are standing near the Lincoln Memorial, and a

turbaned gentleman asks you, "Please, the meaning of the 'Washington Monument'?" You point to the white obelisk and say, "That." Primitive, perhaps, but clear enough. Had the word been more general, however, your task would not have been as easy. Suppose the man had asked for the meaning of the word *monument*. To define *monument*, a common noun, you would have had to point at edifice after edifice and statue after statue, saying "this and this" and "that and that," until eventually it dawned on the man that *monument* denoted not any *one* thing but a *class* of things. For this form of definition to succeed you would have to be patient and he clever; and *monument* is not a particularly difficult word. What if he had asked you what *cousin* or *erosion* meant?

Offering examples, in writing or speech, is a kind of verbal pointing. Thus, if a kindly old grandmother from Omaha asked you to define *up-tight*, you might say something like this: "Ma'am, do you recall seeing Richard Nixon on TV back in '62? I mean when he harangued those reporters just after he'd lost the race for Governor of California? Well, ma'am, Mr. Nixon was what one would call 'up-tight.'"

The advantages of this technique are obvious. Such examples are vivid and specific. If they typify the sort of thing denoted by the word, they provide the meaning in a way that can be easily grasped and remembered. But there are serious disadvantages too. A single example rarely typifies the entire class.

Definition by Synonym

The defining technique least likely to interrupt the flow of your writing consists of merely offering a synonym in passing. You try to make the meaning of a word clear by the context in which you use it.

My host had warned me that, after the day we'd put in, the absinthe might leave me comatose, and soon after I finished a glass of the green liqueur I did become very sleepy, so lethargic I could scarcely move.

The writer of this narrative passage cannot afford to interrupt his story with definitions; yet he wants to use *absinthe* and *comatose*, two fairly uncommon words. Therefore, he tries to avoid losing the readers who are unfamiliar with the words by offering synonyms in context. *Absinthe* is defined as *green liqueur* and *comatose* as *very sleepy, lethargic*. The technique works only when the word to be defined has a familiar synonym.

Formal Definition

To master the formal definition, you must understand two somewhat forbidding terms, *genus* and *differentia*. Of the two, genus is the more basic.

A genus is a word that is more general than the one you are defining; it denotes the class to which your word belongs. Thus, *fish* is a genus

of *trout*, to *dance* a genus of to *waltz*, and *desirous* a genus of *hungry*. A word usually has more than one genus. For instance, there are several words more general than *sparrow* under which that word would properly be placed—*bird* and *creature*, to name only two. For many words you will have to choose from a dozen or more possible genera.

The best genus is always the most informative one. A genus must be more general than the word to be defined, but it will usually be more helpful if it is relatively specific. "Thing" is always a very poor genus. If you begin a definition of *biplane* as . . . *thing* . . . , you are offering practically no information at all.

The genus *airplane* makes possible a much simpler definition.

Biplane = *two-winged airplane*.

The most specific genus is not always the best, however. The genus must also be a word that your reader is likely to have in his vocabulary. A suitable genus, then, combines three qualities: first, it is a word that is more general than the word you are defining; second, it is one that seems likely to be familiar to your reader; and third, it is one that is as specific as possible, under the circumstances.

A helpful genus locates the word to be defined somewhere within a larger, more familiar, family. The differentia completes the job.

If we wanted to define *tennis* and had decided to use *game* as the genus, we would next develop a list of possible differentias by asking ourselves, "What features must a game have for it to be called *tennis*?" We would probably agree that the most essential characteristics would be how, where, by whom, and with what tennis is played.

Tennis is played: with a ball.

on a rectangular court.

on a court divided by a low net.

outdoors usually.

indoors sometimes.

by two people or by two pairs of people

with rackets.

by batting a ball back and forth over the net.

especially well by Australians.

We would then eliminate the features that seemed to have little to do with our use of the word *tennis*. The items *outdoors usually*, *indoors sometimes*, and *especially well by Australians* seem to fall into this category. Finally, we would combine the remaining items and the genus into a definition:

Tennis = *game played by two people or two pairs of people on a rectangular court divided by a low net over which a ball is batted back and forth with rackets*.

To test our definition we ask two questions: "Is there any game properly called *tennis* that is excluded by our definition?" and "Is there any game *not* properly called *tennis* that is included in our definition?" If we can answer both questions with "no," then our definition may stand.

Extended Definition

Usually the words used to talk about those beliefs that concern men most deeply—the beliefs by which they often claim to live and for which they sometimes die—are meaningless in the sense that they have few concrete referents and can rarely be found in specific examples. We may think that we as writers communicate with words such as *freedom*, *justice*, *tolerance*, *religion*, *knowledge*, and *wisdom*. We may assume readers know what *we* mean by these words. Unfortunately, if we were in a position to carry on a dialogue with our readers and trade examples or even definitions, we would probably discover that one man's patriotism is another man's treason. If such words—"grand words," let us call them—are used without elaboration, they result in discourse that borders on nonsense. When they play an important role in college writing, they should be accompanied by an extended definition. Extended definition is an approach that can combine any or all of the techniques we have considered.

Let us suppose that you have decided to satisfy the term paper requirements of a history course with a paper titled "The Antiliberalism of the New Left." You plan to identify some authors whose views exemplify the doctrines and attitudes of the New Left. After summarizing some of those views, you intend to argue that in certain key respects the position of the New Left is opposed to the principles of liberalism. In large part, the success of your paper will hinge on your handling of the term *liberalism*. Before you can effectively argue that any view is inconsistent with liberalism, you must make reasonably clear what you mean by that "grand word." Your definition will have to be stipulative; the lexical meaning of the word is far too vague to allow accurate comparisons with other doctrines. But you should not simply stipulate a definition that makes your thesis easy to prove. Your reader would object to that. He does not know the "real" meaning of *liberalism* any more than you do, of course; and if he is wise, he is aware that he does not know. But he knows what it means to him, if not precisely, then at least vaguely. If the definition violates anything that he takes to be a guidepost or pillar of liberalism, he will disapprove, and he does know what sort of feeling, good or bad, the word evokes in his breast. If your stipulation seems too inconsistent with that feeling, he will tend to reject any arguments based on it. However much your definition narrows and refines, it must not violate what a poet might call "the spirit of the word."

The most promising way to begin your extended definition, therefore, is to start with a few remarks about the semantic weaknesses of

the word. You try to show why a stipulative definition is necessary. In the case of "liberalism," you might do this by pointing out that the word has undergone several shifts and reversals of meaning:

... when it is used in reference to Jeffersonian liberalism, it includes the view that the power of the federal government should not be increased; but used in the context of the 1930s, it embraces an exactly opposite doctrine. And today ...

By devoting a paragraph to the checkered past of *liberalism*, you should be able to persuade even a reluctant reader that the word needed rehabilitation.

The next step (or the first, if you think no justification is needed) is to choose a genus. Your selection will seem least arbitrary if you begin by proposing several genera; then, having suggested the merits and demerits of each, you finally offer the genus that you think is most suitable. Here, and in every succeeding step, you must show that your definition, though stipulative, is reasonable and fair. With regard to your selection of genus, you might say something like this:

But if one tries, as some authors have, to define liberalism as a particular set of doctrines or even as a political philosophy, he is forced to include such a conglomeration of diverse and conflicting ideas that the essential traits of liberalism are likely to be overlooked. A more promising approach, I think, is to regard liberalism not in terms of particular socioeconomic schemes but in terms of the attitudes common to those people who are generally considered liberal. There are difficulties in this approach too, of course. It requires, among other things, that we distinguish between attitudes that are socially important and attitudes that have only personal significance. But the advantages of this approach ...

Once you have put *liberalism* within a suitable genus, all that is left for you to do is limit the definition. You shouldn't just state your differentia, as you would in offering a formal definition, but rather you should draw your reader into a discussion of possible differentiae. Show him your reasons for selecting some and rejecting others. Make him aware of the problems involved. Your best approach here would be to offer examples, some negative and some positive. If you have proposed *individualistic attitude* as one of your differentiae, you may use a negative example to clarify your meaning:

Sartre's brand of individualism, for example, is not liberal, but romantic. The liberal is concerned with the individualism of others as well as with his own; Sartre's individualism, on the other hand, is much more personal ...

A negative example of this sort tells your reader, "No, this particular attitude should not be called *liberal*," while a positive example, especially if it is near the denotative limits of the word, tells him, "Yes, this sort

of attitude is still included in what I mean by *liberalism*." But while examples of both kinds are helpful indeed, you must sooner or later offer differentiae in the form not of examples but of the *characteristics* of *liberalism*. You must, in other words, eventually say something like this:

By liberalism, then, I mean a set of attitudes that includes an optimism about change and a high regard for individual liberty and fulfillment but that consists, most basically, of a profound benevolence, an intense desire that human beings of every sort should have what they desire as long as it does not involve injury to others.

If you had tried to present this definition without such elaborate preparation, it would have appeared too narrow and arbitrary. A page or two of extended definition, however, will help your reader understand your meaning better and dispose him to accept it, at least provisionally. In any case it will help him later on to decide whether your claims about the antiliberalism of the New Left are true.

It may be profitable to consider another example of extended definition, this time uninterrupted by explanation. Many good examples of extended definition are too extended to be presented here; fortunately, however, Walter Kaufmann's definition of *existentialism*, which follows, is admirably compact but still long enough to illustrate the techniques we have been studying:

Existentialism is not a philosophy but a label for several widely different revolts against traditional philosophy. Most of the living "existentialists" have repudiated this label, and a bewildered outsider might well conclude that the only thing they have in common is a marked aversion for each other. To add to the confusion, many writers of the past have frequently been hailed as members of this movement, and it is extremely doubtful whether they would have appreciated the company to which they are consigned. In view of this, it might be argued that the label "existentialism" ought to be abandoned altogether.

Certainly, existentialism is not a school of thought nor reducible to any set of tenets. The three writers who appear invariably on every list of "existentialists"—Jaspers, Heidegger, and Sartre—are not in agreement on essentials. Such alleged precursors as Pascal and Kierkegaard differed from all three men by being dedicated Christians; and Pascal was a Catholic of sorts while Kierkegaard was a Protestant's Protestant. If, as is often done, Nietzsche and Dostoevsky are included in the fold, we must make room for an impassioned anti-Christian and an even more fanatical Greek-Orthodox Russian imperialist. By the time we consider adding Rilke, Kafka, and Camus, it becomes plain that one essential feature shared by all these men is their perfervid individualism.

The refusal to belong to any school of thought, the repudiation

of the adequacy of any body of beliefs whatever, and especially of systems, and a marked dissatisfaction with traditional philosophy as superficial, academic, and remote from life, that is the heart of existentialism.

EXERCISE 2

Defining Techniques

Identify each of the following, according to the defining technique used, as:

- A ostensive (either pointing or example)
- B by synonym
- C formal

- _____ 1. *Triangle*: closed plane figure having three sides and three angles.
- _____ 2. A *succubus* seems more frightful somehow than an *incubus*; I guess the female of the species is more deadly than the male even where demons are concerned.
- _____ 3. See the color of that rose closest to the fence, Johnny? That's what is called *magenta*.
- _____ 4. By *police brutality*, I mean what was on Huntley and Brinkley last night: ten big cops frisking a couple of teeny-boppers.
- _____ 5. When Hamlet says to Horatio, "Absent thee from felicity awhile," he uses *felicity* to mean *suicide*.
- _____ 6. When Hamlet says to Horatio, "Absent thee from felicity awhile," he uses *felicity* to mean *the act of taking one's own life*.
- _____ 7. By *fear*, let us mean a combination of observable phenomena, including accelerated pulse, trembling, excessive sweating, and incoherency of speech.
- _____ 8. My favorite color is *magenta*; whenever I'm shown a *reddish purple* hat or gown, I just can't resist buying it.
- _____ 9. Any *premeditated, felonious homicide* is considered *murder in the first degree*.
- _____ 10. When Lyndon Johnson declined renomination in order to improve our chances of settling the war, he defined *statesmanship* in a way that anyone could understand.

Selecting a Suitable Genus

Select the item that would make the most suitable genus:

- _____ 1. *lake* (We want a cottage on a *lake*.)
 - a. geographical place
 - b. body of water
 - c. H₂O
 - d. inland

- _____ 2. *to vote* (He always *votes* for the youngest candidate.)
 - a. to express c. ballot
 - b. to do d. to suggest
- _____ 3. *unicorn* (He imagined he saw a *unicorn* in the garden.)
 - a. mythical c. being
 - b. horselike d. creature
- _____ 4. *to lie* (He said he loved her, but he *lied*.)
 - a. to claim c. to belie
 - b. to prevaricate d. to mislead
- _____ 5. *jealous* (Mary is a *jealous* wife.)
 - a. anxious c. malicious
 - b. suspects d. emotional
- _____ 6. *psychosis* (Prolonged isolation often results in *psychosis*.)
 - a. insane c. disorientation
 - b. disorder d. effect
- _____ 7. *chess* (He prefers *chess* to bridge or cribbage.)
 - a. activity c. game
 - b. amusement d. pastime

COMMON ERRORS IN DEFINING

As we have already observed, a lexical definition can err by being either too inclusive or too exclusive or both. We have also considered the persuasive definition, the chief abuse that stipulative definition is heir to. In addition to these types of errors, here are a few of the more common types that appear in both lexical and stipulative definitions.

Uncoordinate Definition

Both halves of a definition should be grammatically alike. Without rupturing syntax, you should be able to use the first half of the definition wherever you can use the second half; if you cannot, the definition is uncoordinate. Thus, the definition of *hungry* as *desirous of food* is coordinate, because in the sentence "Joe is hungry," you can substitute "desirous of food" without making the sentence ungrammatical. But defining *hungry* as *when one desires food* makes the definition uncoordinate, for the sentence "Joe is when one desires food" would turn even the most tolerant grammarian pale. To avoid uncoordinate definitions, define nouns with nouns, adjectives with adjectives, adverbs with adverbs, and so on.

Figurative Definition

Since figurative language is vague, a definition that depends on figurative language is never accurate, whatever else its merits may be:

Poet = nightingale who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sound.

But although a figurative expression is never precise, it can often be

used as a supplement, to provide a clarifying analogy, or to suggest the word's connotation :

Stanza = arrangement of lines of poetry according to a certain scheme or pattern. Stanzas are the paragraphs of poetry.

While a figurative expression should never be offered as a definition's main course, it can make a tasty dessert.

Tautological Definition

A tautological definition is one that is needlessly repetitious.

Analytic statement = claim whose truth or falsity is analytic.

Negative Definition

As we have noted before, differentiae describing only what a word does *not* denote are usually empty.

Knowledge = that which is not unknown.

Sometimes, however, a partially negative differentia can be informative :

Analytic statement = statement whose truth or falsity depends entirely on its meaning, requiring no verifying empirical observations or experiments.

And in the case of words denoting classes having negative characteristics, negative differentiae are perfectly acceptable :

Perfection = state or condition of having no flaws or defects.

Obscure Definition

Finally—and most obviously—the definition must not contain words that are more difficult than the word you are defining. Such definitions are pointless unless you want to impress the reader with your vocabulary rather than communicate with him.

Succubus = preternatural, daemonic quasi-humanoid, feminine in semblance and disposition, which is opined by those whose ontologies include them to impose their affections upon human swains during nocturnal visitations.

EXERCISE 3

Common Errors in Defining Technique

Identify the error in each of the following as:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| A uncoordinate definition | D negative definition |
| B figurative definition | E obscure definition |
| C tautological definition | |

- _____ 1. *Gentleman* = snake with good manners.
- _____ 2. *Emetic* = agent causing reverse peristalsis.
- _____ 3. *Success* = when you get what you're after.
- _____ 4. *Sensual* = having a sensual quality or nature.
- _____ 5. *Megalopolis* = several gigantic crowds trying unsuccessfully to impersonate a city.
- _____ 6. *To love* = to feel that which is neither hate nor indifference.
- _____ 7. *Sophism* = specious but plausible non sequitur.
- _____ 8. *Hunger* = desirous of food.
- _____ 9. *Book* = volume having a number of sheets bound together.
- _____ 10. *To love* = to become one with another yet remain separate.

Using the Formal Technique

Write a formal definition of each italicized word in the following passage. Be sure that your definition supplies the lexical meaning that is most appropriate to the context. When you have finished, evaluate your work by comparing your definitions with those offered in a recent unabridged dictionary. Does the dictionary supply definitions more accurate than yours with regard to the specific context given?

Rudyard Kipling has often been called a racist, but I think that *charge* is somewhat harsh. Bigotry is not his affliction; his problem is naïveté. In *dozens* of his poems—like "Gunga Din," "Fuzzy-wuzzy," and "The Ballad of East and West"—Kipling's obvious point is that, in *ability* and character, black men and brown often equal and even *surpass* the finest of white Englishmen. Kipling *offends* us not by claiming racial superiority but by finding the fact of racial *equality* so *remarkable*. What a more worldly writer would take for granted, Kipling makes the theme of a hundred stories and poems. That is embarrassing, but it is not really racism.

Supplementing Definitions with Examples

For each of the following definitions, provide at least two examples—one negative and one positive—that help to clarify meaning:

1. Consonantal alliteration = melodic effect produced by adjacent or closely situated words that begin with identical consonant sounds.
2. Vocalic alliteration = melodic effect produced by adjacent or closely situated words that begin with identical or very similar vowel sounds.
3. Onomatopoeia = word whose sound resembles in some degree the sound which the word denotes or a sound associated with or produced by that which the word denotes.
4. Synecdoche = figure of speech in which a word denoting a part of something is used in place of the word denoting that something as a whole.
5. Antithesis = rhetorical technique in which two opposed or contrasting beliefs are represented in balanced phrases, clauses, grammatical construction; the contrasting belief.

Using Synonyms to Define in Passing

Complete the following paragraph using synonyms to define the italicized words. Try to do so unobtrusively and without interrupting your narrative:

They both had been told to regard the tree as *sacrosanct*, but Eve, always less *pusillanimous* than Adam, could not resist the temptation for long.

Analyzing Extended Definitions

Write a brief analysis of Walter Kaufmann's extended definition of "existentialism" (page 61). Explain (1) how he justifies the need for a stipulative definition; (2) what genera he rejects and why; (3) what genus he adopts and why; (4) what problems he points out regarding possible differentiae; and (5) what differentiae he finally offers.

Writing an Extended Definition

Assume that you have decided to write a term paper that attempts to answer *one* of the following questions. After each question is at least one of the words you will have to define in order to proceed intelligently. For the word appearing after your question, write an extended definition of at least 250 words in which you (1) show the need for a stipulative definition; (2) suggest the merits and demerits of several possible genera; (3) choose one genus, name it, and note its merits; (4) suggest the problems involved in selecting differentiae by using positive and negative examples; and (5) end by offering a succinct stipulative definition that would allow you to cope with the question. Follow Kaufmann's example in avoiding the use of technical terms (*genus*, *differentia*, *tautological*, and the like); and do not use symbols such as "=" or enclose your definitions in quotation marks.

1. Is communism a religion? (*religion*)
2. Does the present draft system result in racial discrimination? (*discrimination*)
3. Is the American educational system largely a propaganda instrument of the state? (*propaganda*)
4. When, if ever, should any kind of literature or art be considered obscene? (*obscene*)
5. Is our foreign policy entirely rational? (*rational*)

6 SENSE AND NONSENSE

*Whenever people talk to me about the weather, I
always feel certain that they mean something else.*

Oscar Wilde

We use words as symbols in recording or talking about our experiences, hoping that those symbols will be meaningful to others who speak our language. As writers we are particularly concerned with the problem of meaning. How can we know that our statements have been meaningful? First, let us define a “meaningful” statement. The term implies a certain relationship between the sender and the receiver of a message. We will call a sentence meaningful only if it has the effect we want on a reader. Suppose, for example, that you write a note to the milkman saying: “Please leave four quarts of skim milk.” Your note is meaningful since it will almost certainly have the desired effect on the milkman. Something may go wrong, of course; the milkman may be illiterate, or misread your note. But the odds are with you.

A note that says, “Pleez I wanting 4 qarts scim today” would probably also be meaningful. Although the nonstandard spelling and grammar may delay the milkman for a moment or two, he will probably end up by leaving four quarts of skim milk. But if he finds a note that reads “Please leave an adequate supply of dairy products,” he may leave milk or butter and eggs—or knock on the door to ask just what you want. The words, as such, are intelligible; they are just too general to be meaningful.

We can test the semantic adequacy of our writing most readily when, as with the milkman, we give directions that must be carried out physically in a way that we can check directly. “Don’t touch the paint.” “Eat your broccoli.” In such cases we can *see* just how meaningful our discourse is.

But with expository or argumentative writing there is seldom an opportunity to test the reader’s comprehension. Lacking any direct way of measuring the effectiveness and of correcting the inadequacies of our communication, we are prone to adopt a baseless optimism about the

effectiveness of our writing. After all, *we* know what we mean; if our readers are too dull to understand, that is their problem.

Even experienced writers fall into this trap. Consider, for example, this bit of exposition taken from Erich Fromm's *The Art of Loving*. Having declared that "love is primarily giving, not receiving," the eminent psychoanalyst makes a distinction between material and nonmaterial giving:

In the sphere of material things giving means being rich. Not he who has much is rich, but he who gives much. The hoarder who is anxiously worried about losing something is, psychologically speaking, the poor impoverished man, regardless of how much he has.

But the giving of nonmaterial things is Fromm's main concern:

The most important sphere of giving, however, is not that of material things, but lies in the specifically human realm. What does one person give to another? He gives of himself, of the most precious he has, he gives of his life. This does not necessarily mean that he sacrifices his life for the other—but that he gives him of that which is alive in him; he gives him of his joy, of his interest, of his understanding, of his knowledge, of his humor, of his sadness—of all expressions and manifestations of that which is alive in him.

Thus, for Fromm, so far as expressing one's love is concerned, the giving of nonmaterial things is more significant than the giving of material things. Do we agree with Fromm? *Can* we agree with him? Until we are sure that we know what Fromm means, it would probably be unwise to say whether we agree or disagree. So far as we can tell from Fromm's passage, the giving of nonmaterial things *could* include an act as trivial as giving someone the time of day—for knowing the time of day is knowledge, and presumably "alive" in whoever possesses it. The giving of material things, on the other hand, could include acts of great significance: think, for instance, of a father giving his son the car keys for the first time. Or would the father in this case really be giving a nonmaterial thing—his understanding and trust?

The point is this: Fromm's language is so general that we cannot react to it intelligently. He speaks of giving "of his joy, of his interest, of his understanding, of his knowledge, of his humor, of his sadness. . . ." But he neither qualifies nor illustrates. For all we know, giving "of his humor" could mean nothing more than telling a tired old joke at dinner. Fromm's passage could be interpreted in half a dozen ways, and there is no way of knowing which one he intended. We are as frustrated as the milkman who has been asked to leave an adequate supply of dairy products.

THE VERIFIABILITY PRINCIPLE

If you wish to write meaningfully, use this rule of thumb: Qualify, specify, and illustrate until you think you have been clear enough to

enable a good reader to follow your argument. The most damning reaction a reader can have is not to say "I disagree!" but "What do you mean?" The reader who disagrees can be offered evidence and argument; the reader who cannot understand will remain unconvinced and uninformed.

There are problems with both of the following paragraphs:

A. The South continues to ignore the law of the land. The Supreme Court ordered integration; the South thumbed its nose. George Wallace expressed the feeling clearly enough: "Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever." In view of this attitude, I am not surprised that education in the South is deplorable.

B. In 1954, when the Supreme Court outlawed segregation in public schools, six percent of the South's Negro school children were attending integrated schools. In 1964—a decade later—the figure was still less than ten percent, about one Negro child in ten attending an integrated school. Most of the increase, moreover, had occurred in the border states; in Alabama and Mississippi there was virtually no integration at all. This glacial rate of change is, I suggest, both illegal and outrageous.

Of the four statements in paragraph A, only one is verifiable: in his inaugural address in 1963 Governor George Wallace *did* say, "*Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever.*" The first sentence, however, says that *the South* is ignoring the *law of the land*. There is no way of knowing what *the South* denotes, except in the fuzziest way, or exactly which laws of the land are being ignored. The rest of paragraph A is equally hard to pin down—it is so generalized that it is uninformative and unintelligible.

Paragraph B is less tigerish but more meaningful. To be sure, the author of paragraph B uses some general words; he speaks, for example, of *the South's Negro school children*. We cannot be sure which states are included; we do not know whether *school children* denotes *all* students, from kindergarten through college. Still, we can more readily grasp the meaning of *the South's Negro school children* than we can of *the South's* feelings and attitudes referred to in paragraph A. The author of paragraph B uses statistical data, which can be tiresome and unreliable. However, he is at least clear. He tells us the facts and then his feelings about those facts. As readers, we can check the facts and then decide whether or not we share the author's feelings. His paragraph is semantically adequate; we can agree or disagree with him intelligently.

THE GENERALITY OF WORDS

When our writing is filled with general or abstract words, we make it less probable that the reader will react as we intend. The least general kind of word—the proper name—refers to a single thing: *George Washington*, *Atlantis*, *the Nile*. There are also some words or phrases that are equivalent to proper names: *I*, *you*, *my house*, *that policeman on the*

corner. A proper name or its equivalent always refers to something that can be regarded as a single entity, even though it may have billions of parts, possess innumerable qualities, and be constantly changing. The word *Nile*, for example, names an extremely complex and constantly changing physical process. Yet the process we call *Nile* is continuous and stable enough to be considered a single entity, and thus we have no difficulty in assigning it a proper name. The same is true of people. Each of us, like the Nile, is a physical process, complex and constantly changing; yet we are assigned proper names, and do not think it strange that an infant nursing at his mother's breast will be called by the same name when he is ninety-five.

Common nouns (for example, *man*, *country*, *river*) enable us to simplify matters in a different and more dangerous way. The word *man* does not name a continuous process; rather it denotes a class or set of separate individuals which share an unspecified number of more or less similar characteristics. As used in ordinary discourse, common nouns are always somewhat vague; the word *man* is a rough-and-ready device for referring to a group of individual things.

The generality of a common noun depends upon how large a class it denotes; the larger the class, the more general the word. Thus *tool* is a more general word than *hammer*, *dog* is more general than *collie*, and *poem* is more general than *sonnet*. Notice, however, that we can compare the generality of common nouns only when they overlap—when the denotation of one is included within the denotation of another. We know that *poem* is more general than *sonnet* because the denotation of *poem* includes and exceeds the denotation of *sonnet*. But we cannot compare the generality of unrelated words like *dog* and *poem*.

The fact that related common nouns occur on different levels of generality can be illustrated by constructing ladders of generality:

thing	thing	thing
human being	feeling	metaphysical entity
philosopher	aggressive feeling	metaphysical being
Greek philosopher	rage	angel
Socrates	my rage	Gabriel

Notice that the noun or noun phrase on the lowest rung on each of the ladders is the most specific, that on the top rung the most general.

Since we have used a proper name (or its equivalent) for our bottom rung and the word *thing* (which is the most general of all words) for our top rung, our ladders have the greatest possible span. Notice also that ladders can be constructed out of words that denote tangible things like philosophers and out of intangible things like feelings. In fact, the things denoted can be empirical or metaphysical, real or fictional, and (despite what some semanticists have said) concrete or abstract. Abstraction is not the same as generality. The word *human being* is concrete, though very general; the word *two* is abstract, though very specific.

When we speak of generality, in other words, we are referring only to the relative scope of that denoted, not to the kind of thing denoted. We can build a ladder of generality out of *any* sort of common noun. The only principle we need to keep in mind is that the denotative scope of each rung on the ladder must both *include and exceed* the denotative scope of the rung beneath it.

EXERCISE 1

A. Construct four "ladders of generality" using the following words as bottom rungs": *Bob Dylan*, *me*, *Lower Slobbovia*, and *Satan*. Each ladder should have at least four rungs.

B. Rewrite the following sentences making each of them specific enough to verify as true or false. Your rewritten sentences need not be true; but they must be verifiable:

1. According to the mass media, enemy forces have recently sustained serious losses.
2. Some of our leaders are saying that civil disturbances should be met with force.
3. Science says smoking is bad.
4. It is said that the family as an institution is in trouble.
5. Promise our present college students security and comfort, and they will be glad to sacrifice their freedom.

C. Rewrite the following sentences so that each is specific enough to allow a reader to agree or disagree with the value judgment expressed:

1. Things are going from bad to worse.
2. Some pastry is good stuff.
3. Love is the morning and the evening star.
4. Pornography is evil.
5. Joe is a poor student.

D. The letter which follows is so general that it allows many interpretations. Make the best guess you can about the author's meaning, and then rewrite the letter. Your version should consist of verifiable statements.

Editor: Training and learning are not the same. Almost anybody can be trained for one thing or another. But so can monkeys and a seal. To be trained is to be put under pressure, and pressure has a way to make almost any creature miserable.

There are a few people who thrive under pressure, but most of us sooner or later break down, and a lot of us eventually go to pot.

There is no question but that this so-called modern man is a miserable creature who lives under a lot of needless pressure, and who lacks the mental equipment for unwinding the ticker in his head to release the tension on his coil spring. In other words, the key to his mental machine is on somebody else's key ring, and the somebody is not always a friend.

In most cases, the somebody is the one who keeps adding pressure on the spring, just to make his ticker run faster, and who couldn't care less about what it does to the works.

That's the life story of the modern man.

Everything makes sense up to a certain point, and so does pressure. But when man and his modern society reach a degree of wealth where most people are digging graves with their own teeth, increasing pressure makes no sense at all.

At some point of this mad rush to the nut hatch and the hole in the ground, there ought to be a pause to sit down and time taken to look at things with more than just a hole in the head.

SEMANTIC TYPES OF STATEMENTS

Since statements are the usual way of conveying information, most of your college writing will be in that form. Here, for example, is a paragraph taken from a scholarly essay by Elisabeth Schneider:

Coleridge's criticism was not limited to the theoretical, aesthetic, and philosophical aspects of his subject. He delivered several series of lectures on poetry and drama. In these, philosophical criticism was mingled with discussions, often detailed, of individual works. It is a great pity that of all these lectures none was written out for publication by himself. Posterity has retrieved from limbo, however, a considerable bulk of the material. Coleridge left partial notes, some of them fairly full, others sketchy; friends or reporters took notes; one admirer, J. P. Collier, undertook to preserve complete shorthand reports of some of the lectures. Of all this material, the most significant is the criticism of Shakespeare.

Each of Professor Schneider's sentences is a type of statement; she is simply passing on some information and telling us some of her beliefs about Coleridge. To do so she has no need for other kinds of sentences: questions, imperatives, wishes, or exclamations.

The following are three characteristics that usually distinguish statements from other kinds of sentences:

Assertions are truth claims. They express the speaker's (or writer's) beliefs, and they imply that he wishes his listeners (or readers) to share those beliefs.

The truth of an assertion can be affirmed or denied. If someone asserts "Harry is dead," a listener can describe that assertion as true, if he believes it, or false, if he does not. By contrast, it never makes sense

to describe a *nonassertion* as true or false. If someone were to say "Call the doctor," for example, it would not be appropriate to describe his utterance as true or false. Nonassertions do not make truth claims; consequently, they are neither true nor false.

When an assertion is made, we can always ask: "How do you know?" The question may often be impolite or imprudent, of course, but it is always a *semantically* appropriate question to ask. If someone says "Harry is dead," it makes sense to ask him "How do you know?" The speaker may offer rational grounds for his belief (for example, "I heard the doctor pronounce Harry dead") or irrational grounds (for example, "I dreamed last night that Harry died") or no grounds at all (for example, "I just know he's dead, that's all"). But if it makes sense to ask, "How do you know?" the sentence in question is an assertion.

EXERCISE 2

Classify the following sentences as:

A assertions

B nonassertions

- _____ 1. Guess who's coming to dinner.
- _____ 2. Frank said, "Guess who's coming to dinner."
- _____ 3. Everyone wishes this awful war would end.
- _____ 4. George is either a brave man or a fool.
- _____ 5. Semantics is the study of meaning.
- _____ 6. Most of what semanticists say is either trivial or false.
- _____ 7. Give me the simple life.
- _____ 8. The best life is the simple life.
- _____ 9. I like the simple life.
- _____ 10. If we can make dehydrated coffee, we can also make dehydrated water.
- _____ 11. But that is nonsense.
- _____ 12. God is dead.
- _____ 13. A unicorn is a mythical beast.
- _____ 14. Every item on a true-false quiz should be an assertion.
- _____ 15. All snarks are borogroves.

A statement asserts that a certain relationship is the case: it *describes* a state of affairs and claims that its description accurately reports the *actual* situation. Since there are at least four kinds of situations or states of affairs, we can classify statements according to the kind of situation they describe: *analytic*, *empirical*, *valuative*, and *metaphysical*.

Analytic Statements

Analytic statements assert something about a *linguistic* state of affairs. The truth or falsity of an analytic statement depends entirely

upon what rules of language are being used, and usually the relevant rules are the definitions of the terms used in the statement. Before we can verify *any* kind of statement, we must, of course, know what it means; but with an analytic statement *all* we need to know is what definitions are in operation. If we can determine the truth or falsity of a statement merely by considering its meaning, then that statement is analytic.

These examples of analytic statements show how several versions of this type can be analyzed.

1. *Abstract art is art.* (Assuming that the term *art* means the same thing each time it is used, we know that this statement is true by virtue of its meaning alone.)

2. *Abstract art is not art.* (If we assume that *art* means the same thing both times it is used, then we know that this statement is false by virtue of its meaning alone. Note that analytic statements can be true *or* false.)

3. *All brothers are male siblings.* (If we know the meaning of the terms *brothers* and *male siblings*, we can verify the statement as true. We do not have to interview actual brothers to find out whether they are invariably male siblings.)

4. *Tomorrow it will either rain in Los Angeles or it will not.* (To verify this statement, we need not know what the weather will be like in Los Angeles tomorrow, if we know the rules governing *either . . . or* and *not*, we know that the statement is true. Hence, the statement is analytic.)

Analytic statements are no more debatable than algebraic equations are. Once all parties agree on definitions, no *rational* disagreement is possible regarding the truth or falsity of the statement.

Analytic statements can be used for devious ends, as we saw in our discussion of stipulative definitions. If our opponent will agree to abide by any definition we offer, we can make any statement analytic and thus "win" any argument, no matter how absurd our thesis. Suppose we claim that "All English professors are effeminate." Most of our listeners would probably disagree. To "prove" our thesis, we merely stipulate an original definition for one of our terms: "By the term *professor*, I mean a person who is, among other things, effeminate."

Insofar as grammar and diction are concerned, analytic statements look exactly like any other kind of claim. Hence we often mistake analytic for nonanalytic, and, conversely, nonanalytic for analytic. A writer may, for example, say that "All communists are subversive" and, assuming his claim to be analytic, may neglect to offer any supporting evidence. The absence of support is likely to offend any reader who does not consider being *subversive* as part of the meaning of *communist*. More offensive still is the writer who utters an analytic statement of the simplest kind as though it were a profound truth: to tell us that "students are students," "war is war," and "business is business" is to say nothing significant about students, war, or business.

EXERCISE 3

Classify the following as:

A analytic statements

B nonanalytic statements

- _____ 1. Whatever will be will be.
- _____ 2. All Greeks are men.
- _____ 3. Any man who can run the mile in four minutes is a lean athlete.
- _____ 4. Any man who can run the mile in four minutes is an athlete.
- _____ 5. For every man there's a woman.
- _____ 6. I only know what I know.
- _____ 7. I am guilty of every crime I've committed, if any.
- _____ 8. Under capitalism man exploits man; under communism the reverse is true.
- _____ 9. Whatever causes illness is bad for your health.
- _____ 10. Gold is where you find it.
- _____ 11. Everyone has to be someplace.
- _____ 12. I'll either get drafted or I won't.
- _____ 13. I'll either get drafted or I'll get married.
- _____ 14. I am that I am.
- _____ 15. Whatever is an apple is not a nonapple.

Empirical Statements

If a statement would require the observation of a certain physical state of affairs in order to be verified, that statement is empirical. The verification may require sophisticated skills and equipment, but it must not require special "powers" or extraordinary "senses." If the statement is empirical, any person with ordinary senses could, if he were in the right time and place and properly trained and equipped, make the observations that proved true or false. The fact that a statement has not been verified, or that a statement cannot be verified because no one happens to be in the right time or place, does not make the statement nonempirical. Hence, "Aristotle's blood was Type A" is empirical, even though it cannot actually be verified.

Here are five different kinds of empirical statements, each requiring a different kind of verification.

- 1. *It is raining.*
- 2. *It will rain in Los Angeles tomorrow.*
- 3. *By the year 2000, men will have landed on Mars.*
- 4. *I have a headache.* (Since only the speaker can verify this claim by direct experience, this kind of "private knowledge claim" does not fit our definition perfectly. But since we could observe any *symptoms* of the speaker's headache, we often can, to some extent, verify the claim by observation. For the sake of conven-

ience, let us classify such private knowledge claims as empirical —admitting, as we do so, that we are stretching a point.)

5. *If Robert Kennedy had not been killed, he would have been elected President in 1968.* (This statement is empirical even though it rests on a situation which is contrary to fact. If we do as the statement asks and suppose that Kennedy had not been killed, then obviously the question of his being elected is an empirical one. Such statements are usually so difficult to support with evidence that serious argument is unprofitable.)

Unlike any of the other kinds of statements, empirical statements can sometimes be supported by direct evidence of an observational or “scientific” nature. Even when we cannot verify an empirical claim personally, we can usually readily understand the relevant evidence and thus we are often able to judge intelligently the reliability of the testimony offered by witnesses. As writers we shall find that many empirical theses cannot be supported with evidence, and we shall never find an empirical thesis for which our evidence is absolutely conclusive. But with an empirical thesis we can hope to offer something in the way of evidence; with a thesis of any other kind we cannot hope to give our readers a rational basis for accepting our thesis as true.

EXERCISE 4

A. Classify the following statements as:

A analytic

B empirical

- _____ 1. Oswald did not shoot Kennedy.
- _____ 2. Oswald did shoot Kennedy.
- _____ 3. Whoever is against me is not for me.
- _____ 4. Whoever is not for me is against me.
- _____ 5. Joe is either a Republican or a Democrat.
- _____ 6. Joe is either a Republican or he is not.
- _____ 7. Joe appears to be angry.
- _____ 8. Joe is angry.
- _____ 9. Alexander the Great had stomach ulcers.
- _____ 10. Everything is identical with itself.

B. Below, listed sentence by sentence, is the opening paragraph of “Goddesses of the Twenty-First Century,” an essay by R. Buckminster Fuller (*Saturday Review*, March 2, 1968). Classify each of Fuller’s sentences as:

A a nonassertion (that is, question, imperative, etc.)

B an analytic statement

C an empirical statement

- _____ 1. The first population census in the United States was taken in 1790.
- _____ 2. In 1810 the U.S. Treasury conducted the first economic census of the young democracy.
- _____ 3. At that time there were 1,000,000 families.
- _____ 4. There were also 1,000,000 human slaves.
- _____ 5. This did not mean that each family had a human slave; far from it.
- _____ 6. The slaves were owned by relatively few.
- _____ 7. The Treasury appraised the monetary value of the average American homestead—lands, buildings, furnishings, and tools—to be worth \$350.
- _____ 8. The Treasury appraised the slave as worth \$400.
- _____ 9. It was estimated that the wilderness hinterlands of America were worth \$1,500 per family.

Valuative Statements

“This is good” and “That is bad” are valuative statements. The distinctive purpose of such statements is not to describe empirical facts but to report our own attitudes and to influence the attitudes of others. Valuative disagreements often occur when there is no disagreement as to fact. If two men—Martin and Schwartz—clearly observe Mr. Jones spitting on a policeman, we would expect them to agree regarding that fact:

MARTIN: A few moments ago Jones spit on a policeman.

SCHWARTZ: Yes, he did.

But while they agree regarding what happened, their attitudes may differ:

MARTIN: I don’t like that sort of thing.

SCHWARTZ: Really? I happen to dig it.

Although Martin and Schwartz have different attitudes, they do not as yet have a valuative disagreement. Strictly speaking, neither man has uttered a valuative statement, for in reporting his attitude, each man has merely reported an empirical fact about himself. But let us add a different ending to the story:

MARTIN: That sort of thing is bad.

SCHWARTZ: Bull! That sort of thing is good.

Unlike any of their previous statements, these last two are non-empirical. Valuative words like *good* and *bad* do not denote anything observable. As Martin and Schwartz have used them, moreover, *good* and *bad* do more than report attitudes. To say “That sort of thing is bad” is to say more than “I disapprove of that sort of thing.” The additional meaning expressed by the valuative statement can best be captured by adding an imperative: “Do so as well.” For valuative statements, then, we shall offer this formula:

"X is good" means "I approve of X ; do so as well."

"X is bad" means "I disapprove of X ; do so as well."

Since the imperative "Do so as well" is neither true nor false, and since all valiative statements express this imperative as part of their meaning, it follows that no valiative statement is fully verifiable. We can now offer this definition:

A statement is valiative when it can be correctly interpreted as a combination of (1) a statement of attitude and (2) an imperative which directs us to share that attitude.

In determining whether or not a statement is valiative, we must consider the statement as a whole and the context in which it appears. The valiative words themselves are no more than clues. "All pretty women are good-looking" has two valiative words, but the statement itself is analytic, since *pretty* and *good-looking* are synonymous. Similarly, an empirical statement will often possess a valiative word. When a mechanic says, "Your car has a bad battery," he is not likely to mean "I disapprove of your battery ; do so as well." What he means is "Your battery will no longer start your car," clearly an empirical statement. It is quite possible, on the other hand, to make a valiative statement without using valiative words. In an appropriate context the statement "Sally is not wholly unaware of her attractiveness" might mean "I disapprove of Sally's vanity ; do so as well."

Since valiative statements are not completely verifiable, you should use them sparingly. Try to justify your valiative claims as well as you can, especially when your readers are not likely to share your attitude.

EXERCISE 5

A. Classify the following statements as:

- A analytic
- B empirical
- C valiative

- _____ 1. You ought to become more politically active.
- _____ 2. It's your duty to become more politically active.
- _____ 3. The best-selling novel of all time is *Peyton Place*.
- _____ 4. We should admit China into the United Nations.
- _____ 5. Nearly every critic thinks *Hamlet* is a great play.
- _____ 6. Lincoln was a better President than Grant.
- _____ 7. If victory is your criterion, Grant was a better general than Lee.
- _____ 8. Laws that prohibit abortion are inhumane.
- _____ 9. Burt Lancaster is not the best actor in the world.
- _____ 10. *Streetcar* is Williams's most significant play.

B. Write a brief paragraph about yourself using nothing but empirical statements. Avoid even private knowledge claims.

C. Write a brief paragraph about yourself using nothing but valuative statements.

D. Just for fun, write a short paragraph about yourself which consists wholly of *analytic* statements. For example, you might begin, "I am the sort of man who is always someplace or another, having either a good time or not. Whenever I am honest, I am not dishonest; and I am guilty of every crime I have committed, if any. I believe that whatever will be will be, that if I die today, I will not die tomorrow . . ." and so on.

Metaphysical Statements

"This man has an immortal soul" and "The Holy Spirit prevails throughout the universe and beyond" are metaphysical statements, because a qualified observer, having only the usual human faculties of sense and cognition, could make no verifying observations or experiments. When words such as *soul*, *spirit*, *angel*, *devil*, *god*, and *God* are used to denote supersensible entities, they are unobservable—which is merely to say that supersensible entities are supersensible. Often such constructs as the Freudian unconscious or the ego are similarly beyond observation. Whenever a claim is made about such entities, the resulting statement must be nonempirical, either analytic (for example, "God is a metaphysical being") or metaphysical (for example, "God answers my prayers").

Let us venture this definition :

A statement is metaphysical if its verification would require awareness of supersensible entities or of entities not located in space or time.

Very often words such as *soul*, *angel*, *devil*, and *god* are used figuratively. The wife who says "My husband is an angel" is not dabbling in metaphysics if she means "I love my husband" or "My husband is a good man." Her claim is metaphysical only if she means that her husband is a supersensible entity. The context in which she utters the claim will usually tell us which meaning she intends. Nor should we assume that all religious beliefs are metaphysical. "Jesus Christ died on the cross" is an empirical statement, even though it may be considered part of a Christian's religious beliefs; however, "Jesus Christ is the son of God" is metaphysical since its verification would seem to require an awareness of supersensible entities. We should also note that a negative claim about a metaphysical being is every bit as metaphysical as an affirmative claim. Thus "God does not exist" and "God exists" are equally metaphysical.

EXERCISE 6

A. Classify the following statements as:

- A analytic
- B empirical
- C valiative
- D metaphysical

- _____ 1. Jesus is divine.
- _____ 2. Jesus is not divine.
- _____ 3. The gnostics claimed that Jesus was not divine.
- _____ 4. The Bible is the collection of sacred writings of the Christian religion.
- _____ 5. The Bible is the work of men inspired by God.
- _____ 6. The self is a form of not-being and is therefore free to choose itself.
- _____ 7. Jean-Paul Sartre claims that the self is a form of not-being and is therefore free to choose itself.
- _____ 8. Some Christians no longer believe in the devil.
- _____ 9. Adam was the first man.
- _____ 10. Methuselah lived 969 years.
- _____ 11. We are fighting for a good cause.
- _____ 12. Christianity has tended to make men more tolerant and more peaceful.
- _____ 13. The story of Adam and Eve is not history but myth.

B. Select any metaphysical statement and (regardless of whether you happen to believe it yourself or not) write an argumentative essay in which you attempt, by rational means, to prove its truth.

PART THREE

***Logic and
College Writing***

7 FORMAL LOGIC

*Man is a creature who lives not upon bread alone
but principally by catchwords.*

Stevenson

Logic is to writing what arithmetic is to gambling—an essential prerequisite. To be sure, the logic used by most writers is intuitive; they depend upon their native horse sense to get them by. No doubt horse sense is often enough, especially when a writer deals with simple matters. A crapshooter does not have to be a professor of mathematics. But intuitive logic is a treacherous thing. It is muddled by complexities and vaporized by passion. If you desire to deal rationally with difficult subjects, your grasp of the fundamentals of logic had better be conscious and expert.

The first thing to get straight is the meaning of *argument*, because logic is the study of argumentation. In ordinary discourse we often use the word *argument* to mean any sort of heated verbal exchange. In logic, however, the word is used in a narrower sense: when we attempt to demonstrate the truth of our statements *by rational means only*, then we are conducting an argument in the more restricted sense of the word.

The difference in meaning can be confusing. When a college teacher asks you to support your points with argument, he almost certainly means argument in the logician's sense. He expects you to show evidence and to give reasons. He does not want a paper filled with pugnacious emotional appeals.

An argument is made up of two or more statements. Some of the statements are offered as evidence—these statements are called *premises*. One statement is the *conclusion*; it is the statement that the premises are supposed to prove true. Arguments may be stated informally or formally. The advantages of the informal style are brevity and rhetorical effectiveness; normally, therefore, the arguments appearing in ordinary discourse—including scholarly discourse—are stated informally. The advantage of the formal style is that it facilitates logical analysis; for that

reason the arguments used as illustrations in this chapter will usually be stated formally. Here is an example of an argument stated informally: "A few politicians must be honest—John is a politician, and *he's* honest."

When an argument is stated formally, the premises are listed first, and the conclusion last. The line drawn between the premises and the conclusion means "therefore."

John is an honest man ;
John is a politician ;
Some politicians are honest men.

The examples just given are deductive arguments because the conclusion follows *necessarily* from the premises—that is, if the premises are true, then the conclusion *must* be true. Formal logic, the subject of this chapter, is exclusively concerned with deductive arguments. In inductive arguments, which we shall consider in the next chapter, the conclusion is not a necessary, but merely a probable, sequel to the premises. The two branches of logic work hand in hand, of course. With induction you can hope to show that your premises are true; with formal logic you can deduce conclusions that follow necessarily from your premises. An argument which is formally correct and which has true premises is called a *sound argument*.

Truth, as logicians use the term, applies only to *statements*, not to arguments. A statement is true when it asserts what is the case; otherwise it is false. *Validity*, which is the concern of formal logic, applies only to *arguments*, not to statements. When an argument is structurally correct, it is valid; otherwise it is invalid.

Perhaps an analogy will shed light on the distinction between truth and validity. Suppose you have hired an accountant to do your income tax return. The accountant has taken some information from you regarding your income, number of dependents, and so on. He then fills out the tax return, you sign it, and submit it to the Internal Revenue Service. Now there are two distinct ways that your tax return could be defective: (1) you may have given the accountant some misinformation about your amount of income or number of dependents—this would be an error in *truth*—or (2) the accountant may have made a computational error or failed to abide by some IRS rule—this would be an error in structure; the return would not be *valid*. A sound tax return, like a sound argument, must be built upon true data and valid structure. Truth can be judged by empirical observation; validity can be judged by anyone who is able to decide whether the conclusion is a necessary consequence of the premises.

Types of Deductive Argument

A deductive argument can have any number of premises. The simplest deductive argument is *direct inference*, which has only one premise and one conclusion.

All neurotics are troubled people; therefore, some troubled people are neurotics.

Most cases of direct inference are so simple that they present few problems and need little study. On the other hand, deductive arguments having many premises are so complex that they are difficult to analyze. For that reason complex arguments are usually broken down into *syllogisms*, arguments that have two premises and one conclusion. Because it is relatively simple and yet contains all the logical elements appearing in larger arguments, the syllogism is the traditional focus of formal logic.

Syllogisms occur in various types, of which the *categorical* is easily the most familiar. In a categorical syllogism each of the three statements expresses a relationship between two terms. *All men are mortal beings* is the kind of statement used in categorical syllogisms. The two terms are *men*, the *subject term*, and *mortal beings*, the *predicate term*. The words *all* and *are* merely express the kind of logical relationship that exists between the two terms.

A term may consist of any number of words, but regardless of its length a term only labels a class of things; it makes no assertion about that class. The single word *socialists* is a term, since it labels a particular class of people. Similarly, the word group *people who voted for Richard Nixon in 1968* is a term because, even though it consists of several words, it merely labels a class of people. But whenever we make an assertion about the relationship between two or more terms, then we must utter a statement: *No people who voted for Richard Nixon in 1968 were socialists*.

The Diagram Method of Testing Validity

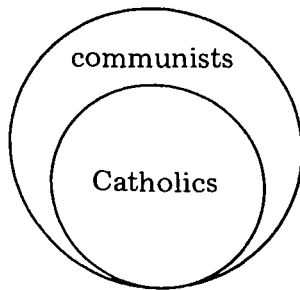
One of the easiest ways of seeing whether an argument is valid is by diagramming it. Here are two examples of the categorical syllogism:

A	B
All Catholics are communists;	All cats are mammals;
All Americans are Catholics;	No fish are cats;
All Americans are communists.	No fish are mammals.

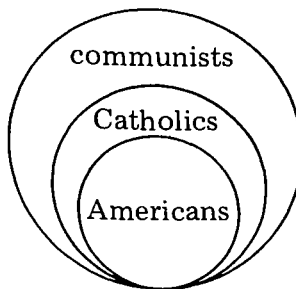
In syllogism A, every statement happens to be false; in syllogism B, every statement happens to be true. Remember, however, that truth is something very different from validity and that in formal logic we are concerned only with validity. Thus, syllogism A, even though made up entirely of false statements, is quite valid; that is, *if* the premises *were* true, then the conclusion would necessarily be true—like the tax return that is mathematically correct but based on false data. Syllogism B, although made up entirely of true statements, happens to be invalid; that is, while the premises are true, they do not establish that the conclusion is *necessarily* true—like the tax return that uses accurate data but contains mathematical errors.

Let us use a simple diagram method to demonstrate that syllogism A is valid. Notice that each premise has two terms: in *All Catholics are communists*, the terms are *Catholics* and *communists*. In *All Americans are Catholics*, the terms are *Americans* and *Catholics*. We can diagram these two premises by using a circle to represent the scope of each of these terms. Since the term *Catholics* is mentioned twice, our completed diagram of the premises will have three circles which should show the relationship of the three terms in the premises.

First we must diagram *All Catholics are communists*.



Now we must add the second premise, *All Americans are Catholics*, to the *same* diagram.

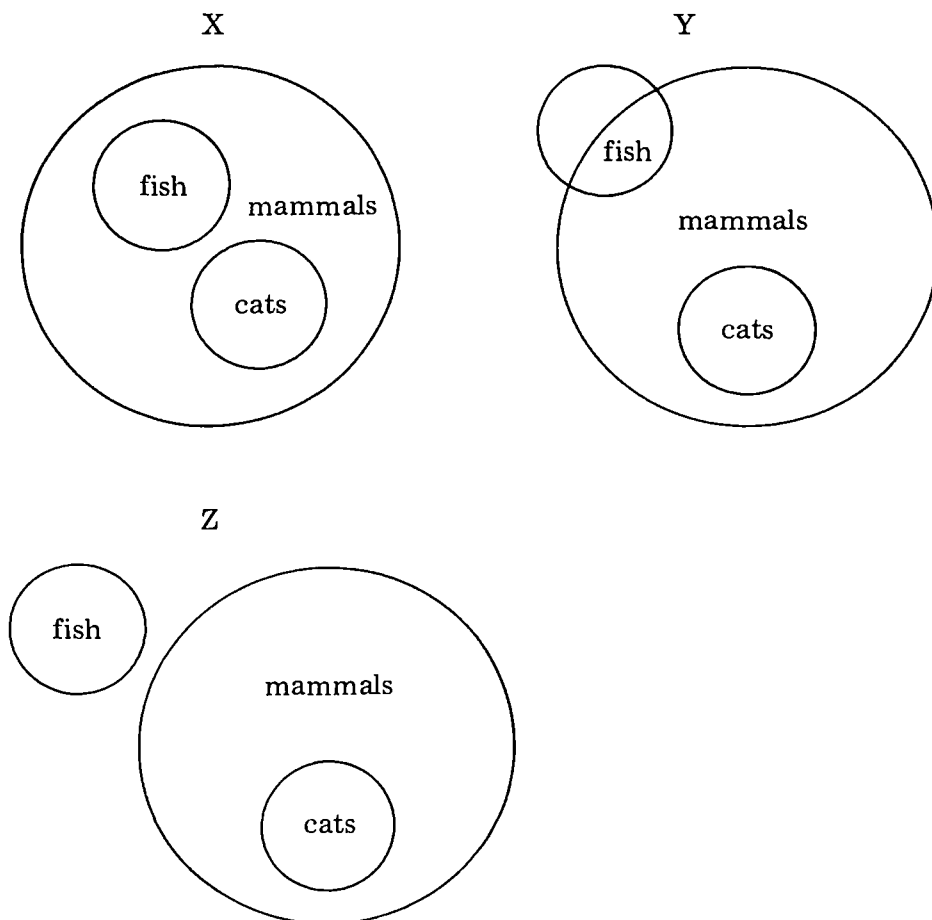


Notice that having diagrammed the two premises we have also diagrammed the conclusion. In fact, there is no possible way we *could* diagram the premises correctly *without* diagramming the conclusion. The circle representing *Americans* *must* go inside the circle representing *communists*. What does this mean? Well, it means that if we assert the two premises, then, by implication, we have also asserted the conclusion. It means that the conclusion *necessarily* follows from the premises. In a figurative way, we could say that the conclusion is "contained" within the premises. Our diagram confirms the validity of this syllogism.

Now let us use the same method to establish that syllogism B is invalid. Syllogism B, you will recall, went like this:

All cats are mammals;
No fish are cats;
 No fish are mammals.

Notice that the premises of this argument can be correctly diagrammed in three different ways.



Since neither diagram X nor Y correctly represents the conclusion—*No fish are mammals*—we have found it possible to diagram the two premises *without* at the same time diagramming the conclusion. Hence, the syllogism is invalid. The conclusion *may* be true—as diagram Z demonstrates—but diagrams X and Y prove that the conclusion does not *necessarily* follow from the premises.

EXERCISE 1

Using the diagram method, test the validity of the following syllogisms:

1. All logicians are rational beings;
 No apes are logicians;

 No apes are rational beings.
2. No hedonists are romantics;
 All Epicureans are hedonists;

 No Epicureans are romantics.
3. All Catholics are communists;
 All Catholics are Americans;

 All Americans are communists.
4. All desserts are fattening foods;
 All sundaes are desserts;

 All sundaes are fattening foods.

Standard Form for Categorical Statements

The diagrams we have been using are called *Euler diagrams*. As you have seen, they provide a very simple way of testing the validity of certain kinds of syllogisms. For some syllogisms, however, the Euler diagrams are very awkward. Although more effective methods of diagramming exist, none of the methods enables you to put into words exactly what is wrong with an invalid argument. You can show that a syllogism is invalid with a diagram method, but you cannot say what particular fallacy has been committed. Because of this shortcoming we have used the diagram method only to provide a “feel” for the class relationships involved in syllogistic argument. A better method for testing validity—one which avoids these shortcomings—is the *rule method*. This method, however, requires that you master a few fundamentals, the first of which is that every statement in a categorical syllogism must be in one of these six standard forms:

1. UNIVERSAL AFFIRMATIVE (UA): *All cats are mammals.*
2. UNIVERSAL NEGATIVE (UN): *No dogs are reptiles.*
3. PARTICULAR AFFIRMATIVE (PA): *Some men are liars.*
4. PARTICULAR NEGATIVE (PN): *Some women are not wives.*
5. SINGULAR AFFIRMATIVE (SA): *Ralph is a bachelor.*
6. SINGULAR NEGATIVE (SN): *Susan is not my sister.*

Notice that as was mentioned earlier, categorical propositions have only two terms. Except for singular propositions (that is, SA and SN), the propositions begin with a *quantifier*. The standard quantifiers are *all*, *no*, and *some*. In logic, the word *some* has a special meaning: it means *at least one, perhaps more, perhaps all*.

The Distribution of Terms

When a term appears in a categorical statement, it is either *distributed* or *undistributed*. There is no third possibility. A term is distrib-

uted whenever the statement asserts something that applies *necessarily* to everything the term denotes. A term is *undistributed* whenever the assertion does *not necessarily* apply to everything denoted by the term.

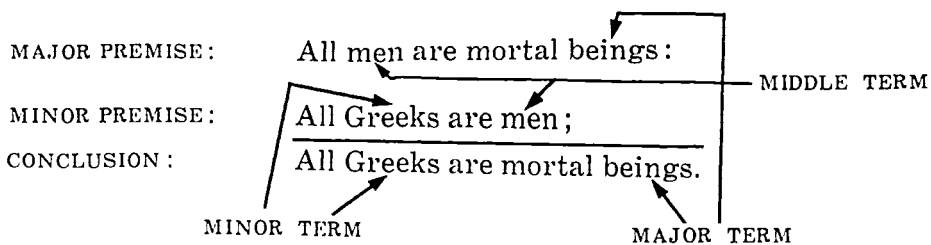
Consider the universal affirmative proposition, for example. In the proposition *All widows are women*, the term *widows* is distributed, since the proposition asserts something that applies to every kind of *widow*: live widows, dead widows, fat widows, young widows, and so on. The term *women*, however, is *undistributed*, since the assertion does not apply to every kind of woman—the statement does not apply to unmarried women, for example.

When categorical statements are in standard form, the pattern of distribution is always the same. In *All widows are women*, the subject term is distributed, the predicate term is not. The same is true for every universal affirmative proposition, no matter what the terms. Thus, standard form makes distribution a simple matter, once you have memorized the pattern for each of the six types of statements. In the following list an *X* has been placed over the distributed terms. Notice that the pattern of distribution for universal and singular statements is exactly the same:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. UNIVERSAL AFFIRMATIVE: | <i>X</i>
<i>All men are mortal beings.</i> |
| 2. UNIVERSAL NEGATIVE: | <i>X</i> <i>X</i>
<i>No fish are mammals.</i> |
| 3. PARTICULAR AFFIRMATIVE: | <i>Some people are Republicans.</i> |
| 4. PARTICULAR NEGATIVE: | <i>Some dogs are not hunters.</i> |
| 5. SINGULAR AFFIRMATIVE: | <i>X</i>
<i>Joe is a student.</i> |
| 6. SINGULAR NEGATIVE: | <i>X</i> <i>X</i>
<i>This apple is not ripe.</i> |

Parts of the Categorical Syllogism

In addition to distribution, you must learn the names of the various parts of the categorical syllogism before you can apply the tests of validity. Consider this diagram:



As you can see, a categorical syllogism always has three categorical statements: two of them are premises, the other is the conclusion. By definition, a categorical syllogism must have three *terms* as well, no more and no less. And each term must appear exactly twice. If an argument

does not have all of these characteristics, it is not a categorical syllogism—it is an argument of a different sort and subject to different rules.

When you identify the parts of a categorical syllogism, always start with the conclusion. By definition the predicate term of the conclusion is called the *major term*. The subject term of the conclusion is called the *minor term*. Both the major and minor terms will appear once more in the premises. The premise in which the major term appears is called the *major premise*. (Customarily, the major premise is placed first, but the order of the premises does not affect validity.) The premise in which the minor term appears is called the *minor premise*. There is always one term which does not appear in the conclusion but which does appear in both premises. This is called the *middle term*.

The middle term is not always the subject of the major premise and the predicate of the minor premise. The middle term can be the subject of both premises, the predicate of both premises, or the subject of one and predicate of the other. All that is required is that the middle term occur once in each premise.

EXERCISE 2

For each of the following syllogisms, identify the three terms—major, minor, and middle—and the three propositions (major premise, minor premise, and conclusion).

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. All logicians are rational;
No apes are logicians;
<hr style="width: 100%;"/> No apes are rational. | 3. No women are men;
All men are egoists;
<hr style="width: 100%;"/> Some egoists are not women. |
| 2. John is a politician;
John is honest;
<hr style="width: 100%;"/> Some politicians are honest. | 4. Some students are honest;
No politicians are honest;
<hr style="width: 100%;"/> Some students are not politicians. |

Testing Validity

There are three rules of validity that apply to the categorical syllogism. Whenever one or more of these rules is broken, a fallacy is committed, and the syllogism becomes invalid.

1. *Improper Negation.* The fallacy of improper negation occurs when this rule is broken: *If the syllogism has any negative propositions at all, it must have two, and one of the negative propositions must be the conclusion:*

- | | |
|--|---|
| No ex-convicts are trustworthy;
Some Senators are not ex-convicts;
<hr style="width: 100%;"/> Some Senators are trustworthy. | Some women are not liars;
All women are daughters;
<hr style="width: 100%;"/> Some daughters are liars. |
|--|---|

2. *Undistributed Middle Term.* The fallacy of the undistributed

middle term occurs when this rule is broken: *The middle term must be distributed in at least one of the premises:*

All snakes are reptiles;
All lizards are reptiles;
 All lizards are snakes.

Some people are not geniuses;
All teachers are people;
 Some teachers are not geniuses.

3. *Illicit Major or Minor Term.* The fallacy of illicit major or minor terms occurs when this rule is broken: If the major term is distributed in the conclusion, it must also be distributed in the major premise, and the same holds for the minor term: (Note, however, that when a term is undistributed in the conclusion, it may be distributed in the premise.)

All churchgoers are religious;
John is not a churchgoer;
 John is not religious.

All scholars are intelligent;
All scholars are students;
 All students are intelligent.

EXERCISE 3

Testing for Validity

Classify the following arguments as either valid or as including one or more of these fallacies:

- A valid
- B improper negation
- C undistributed middle
- D illicit major or minor

- _____ 1. Some wives are not creative;
 All wives are women;
 Some women are not creative.
- _____ 2. Some snakes are not poisonous;
 All snakes are reptiles;
 No reptiles are poisonous.
- _____ 3. Some fiction is realistic.
 All novels are fiction;
 Some novels are realistic.
- _____ 4. No women are men;
 All men are egoists;
 Some egoists are not women.
- _____ 5. All libraries are book houses;
 All libraries are quiet places;
 All quiet places are book houses.
- _____ 6. All pharmacists are drug sellers;
 Some drug sellers are dope pushers;
 Some dope pushers are pharmacists.

- _____ 7. Some nonreligious people are churchgoers;
 All communists are nonreligious;

 No communists are churchgoers.
- _____ 8. All human beings are men;
 No men are women;

 No women are human beings.
- _____ 9. John is a politician;
 John is honest;

 Some politicians are honest.
- _____ 10. All spiders are *eight-legged* creatures;
 No insects are spiders;

 No insects are eight-legged creatures.

The Enthymeme

Categorical arguments rarely take syllogistic form when they appear in ordinary discourse. In order to put your knowledge of the syllogism to practical use, therefore, you must learn to identify and reconstruct such arguments when they appear in nonstandard form.

The most common "disguise" of the categorical syllogism is the *enthymeme* (EN-thuh-MEEM), a syllogism in which one statement is unexpressed. The missing proposition can be either a premise or the conclusion:

First Order Enthymeme (Missing major premise): "Ralph must be intelligent; he's a college graduate."

All college graduates are intelligent people; (constructed)

Ralph is a college graduate;

 Ralph is an intelligent person.

Second Order Enthymeme (Missing minor premise): "Well, Clyde's certainly intelligent, so not all teachers can be stupid."

Clyde is not a stupid person;

Clyde is a teacher; (constructed)

 Some teachers are not stupid people.

Third Order Enthymeme (Missing Conclusion): "It's just my luck to get an English prof for my adviser; they're always confused."

All English professors are confused people;

My adviser is an English professor;

 My adviser is a confused person. (constructed)

Because it is so often used to suppress a doubtful universal proposition, the first order enthymeme warrants special attention. Consider the following argument:

CITIZEN A: Sure John's a fascist; he's a hard-hat isn't he?
 CITIZEN B: But you're implying that *all* construction workers are fascists.

By exposing the suppressed major premise, B has effectively countered A's opening argument. Further debate may raise points of either formal or material logic. Should A respond "That's right; all hard-hats are indeed fascists," he commits an obvious material fallacy (hasty generalization).^{*} To avoid this trap, A will probably decide to hedge:

CITIZEN A: Well, I've been around hard-hats enough to know that nearly every damned one of them is a fascist pig.

Despite the strength of his feelings, A's argument now loses formal validity (undistributed middle). To win the debate, B needs only to point this out:

CITIZEN B: But even if you're right about *most* hard-hats—which I doubt—your argument doesn't prove a thing about John: he could be one of the exceptions. I suggest that little can be inferred about John's character from the fact that he's a construction worker.

Although A's attitudes will probably remain unchanged, his attempt to support his position *rationaly* has failed. Student B's success at rebuttal depended initially on his skill at reconstructing enthymemes.

With practice, you will find that you can reconstruct enthymemes intuitively: the missing proposition will simply present itself to your consciousness. At first, however, it may be necessary to think the reconstruction through step by step. Here is the usual process by which enthymemes are reconstructed:

Enthymeme: "Babs must be the 'friendly type,' to say the least. Haven't you noticed that she's always hanging around Clyde Glunky, that swinger from New York?"

Step I: Eliminate irrelevant statements, figurative language, and non-assertions (that is, questions, exclamations, commands, etc.), and convert the remaining propositions to standard form:

Babs is a promiscuous girl.

Babs is a girl often seen with Glunky.

Step II: Identify each statement as major premise, minor premise, or conclusion, and arrange them accordingly. (In enthymematic arguments, a conclusion ordinarily contains a word such as *must*, or it is introduced by words like *therefore*, *so*, *it follows that*. Premises are often introduced by words such as *since* or *because*.)

^{*}We will consider material fallacies in the next chapter.

- _____ 7. Some nonreligious people are churchgoers;
All communists are nonreligious;

No communists are churchgoers.
- _____ 8. All human beings are men;
No men are women;

No women are human beings.
- _____ 9. John is a politician;
John is honest;

Some politicians are honest.
- _____ 10. All spiders are eight-legged creatures;
No insects are spiders;

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My adviser is an English professor;

My adviser is a confused person. (constructed)

Because it is so often used to suppress a doubtful universal proposition, the first order enthymeme warrants special attention. Consider the following argument:

CITIZEN A: Sure John's a fascist; he's a hard-hat isn't he?

CITIZEN B: But you're implying that *all* construction workers are fascists.

By exposing the suppressed major premise, B has effectively countered A's opening argument. Further debate may raise points of either formal or material logic. Should A respond "That's right; all hard-hats are indeed fascists," he commits an obvious material fallacy (hasty generalization).^{*} To avoid this trap, A will probably decide to hedge:

CITIZEN A: Well, I've been around hard-hats enough to know that nearly every damned one of them is a fascist pig.

Despite the strength of his feelings, A's argument now loses formal validity (undistributed middle). To win the debate, B needs only to point this out:

CITIZEN B: But even if you're right about *most* hard-hats—which I doubt—your argument doesn't prove a thing about John: he could be one of the exceptions. I suggest that little can be inferred about John's character from the fact that he's a construction worker.

Although A's attitudes will probably remain unchanged, his attempt to support his position *rationaly* has failed. Student B's success at rebuttal depended initially on his skill at reconstructing enthymemes.

With practice, you will find that you can reconstruct enthymemes intuitively: the missing proposition will simply present itself to your consciousness. At first, however, it may be necessary to think the reconstruction through step by step. Here is the usual process by which enthymemes are reconstructed:

Enthymeme: "Babs must be the 'friendly type,' to say the least. Haven't you noticed that she's always hanging around Clyde Glunky, that swinger from New York?"

Step I: Eliminate irrelevant statements, figurative language, and non-assertions (that is, questions, exclamations, commands, etc.), and convert the remaining propositions to standard form:

Babs is a promiscuous girl.

Babs is a girl often seen with Glunky.

Step II: Identify each statement as major premise, minor premise, or conclusion, and arrange them accordingly. (In enthymematic arguments, a conclusion ordinarily contains a word such as *must*, or it is introduced by words like *therefore*, *so*, *it follows that*. Premises are often introduced by words such as *since* or *because*.)

^{*}We will consider material fallacies in the next chapter.

Babs is a girl often seen with Glunky.
 Babs is a promiscuous girl.

Step III: Identify the terms which appear only once, and from them reconstruct the missing proposition; if possible construct a valid syllogism. (In the sample enthymeme *promiscuous girl*, the major term, and *girl often seen with Glunky*, the middle term, both appear only once. Consequently, the missing major premise *must* contain these two terms. Since validity will result only if the major premise is affirmative and distributes the middle term, the missing proposition must necessarily be a universal affirmative.)

All girls often seen with Glunky are promiscuous girls;
 Babs is a girl often seen with Glunky;

 Babs is a promiscuous girl.

EXERCISE 4

Reconstruct the following enthymemes and test them for validity. If the enthymeme is invalid, name the fallacy committed; if valid, indicate whether or not you regard the *truth* of either premise doubtful. For every premise you judge doubtful, write a short paragraph giving your reasons. (This part of the exercise will serve as a good introduction to the next chapter.)

1. Martha's always punctual, so she just can't be entirely sophisticated.
2. Since no out-of-state students pay any taxes, it figures that quite a few freshmen are not taxpayers.
3. John's been a teacher all his life; hence at least one teacher's been around the world.
4. Every single rose is a plant, and not a single plant grows on the moon.
5. I submit that wives are unfaithful—every wife is a woman, isn't she?
6. Mr. Kormac simply must be neurotic; nearly all those hippie types are.
7. You can't find any genuine sports cars that're inexpensive; the Mustang, consequently, isn't really a sports car.
8. Beverly owns a Porsche, and only rich people own those.
9. Henry must be a profound thinker; after all, still water runs deep.
10. Any man that's had to meet a payroll understands our economy; but Senator Muskie's never had to meet one.

EXERCISE 5

Rewrite the syllogisms in Exercise 1 in enthymematic form; try to give them the flavor of ordinary speech. If they are invalid, try to make them sound particularly convincing!

EXERCISE 6

Convert the following arguments to syllogistic form and test their validity. You will find that some of these arguments will have to be expressed as interlocking syllogisms; that is, as a series of syllogisms in which the conclusion of one argument is used as a premise of the next. Be sure that your syllogisms retain the exact degree of certainty expressed in the original argument.

1. Surely you'd agree that quite a few poor people are by no means stupid, and since able students always possess good IQ's, it follows that many of our economically disadvantaged students are quite competent academically.
2. FIRST SPEAKER: As you know, my friends, nearly anyone who's spent his lifetime meeting payrolls has necessarily developed a safe and sane view of economics; that's why such men always make the best Presidents. And furthermore, ladies and gentlemen, that is exactly why you should vote for Honest John J. O'Brien, a responsible businessman who hasn't missed a payroll in thirty long years. How can anyone challenge such a qualification?
3. SECOND SPEAKER: My friends, let *me* tell you about Mr. O'Brien—"Old Honest John." You have been asked to vote for this man, and yet what do you actually know about him? Well, there's at least one thing about himself that he's willing to admit: He's a businessman. A big businessman. A *very* big businessman. I look out into your honest, hard-working faces, ladies and gentlemen, and I wonder if anyone here is still so innocent that he (or she) does not know who the big—the really big—businessmen are today? You're not stupid, I can see that. It will be no shock to you when I say that today, while our boys are fighting and dying overseas, every gluttonous war profiteer is a big, a very big, businessman. And because you're not stupid, you know that no such businessman is concerned one iota with the public good, with your good and mine. Such men are concerned wholly with satisfying their own greed for money and power. Particularly for political power. Let me conclude by saying that "Old John"—forgive me if I withhold the word "honest" for a better man—"Old John" does not deserve your vote; he does not deserve it because any man who does deserve it must be one who's concerned solely with the public's welfare and not with his own!

EXERCISE 7

Choose a controversial topic that you feel strongly about and prepare a syllogistic outline of your position. Be sure your arguments are valid; then write an essay based upon your syllogisms.

8 MATERIAL LOGIC

*Everybody has his own delusion assigned to him: but we
do not see that part of the bag which hangs on our back.*

Catullus

The principles presented in the preceding chapter can help us discern the logical structure and test the logical coherence of our own writing or that of others. But formal logic tells us little about the *reliability* of a claim. Whether as writers or as critics, our final concern focuses not on structure but on substance. The question comes to this: Is there sufficient reason to believe that a certain statement is true?

Truth is an awesome and ambiguous word that has at least a dozen meanings, but for the purposes of this discussion, the words *true* and *false* will be taken as a simple description of the relationship between a statement and reality. If we believe that a statement asserts something that is the case, we shall call the statement true; if we believe it asserts something that is not the case, we shall say that the statement is false.

Some statements can be declared true or false merely by examining the form in which they are presented. If we understand the words and syntax, we know that *all corpulent men are obese* is true and that *some married men are bachelors* is false. Similarly, we are in no doubt whatever about the truth of the statement *Either Hitler is alive or he is not*. Once we recognize the meaning of such propositions, we know that their truth or falsity is not debatable. (For another example of this, you may want to refer to what has been said about analytic statements in Chapter 6.)

When something more than meaning is involved, we can never be absolutely certain that a claim is true. Even if we were eyewitnesses to the act of a man biting a dog, we must admit the possibility of our being mistaken: possibly our eyes failed us, possibly our sanity. Thus rational certainty is always a matter of degree; the less the likelihood of error, the greater the probability of truth.

In careful discourse we should attempt to qualify our claims as accurately as we can, basing our degree of certainty not on our feelings

but on the available evidence. If the truth of a claim appears virtually certain, we should leave the claim unqualified; our readers, it is to be hoped, will understand that we (as all rational men must) retain *some* degree of doubt.

GENERALIZATIONS

We tend to place our intellectual reputations in greatest jeopardy when we make broad claims: *All blondes are stupid, Most professors are Democrats*. We call such statements *generalizations* whenever their truth is based on evidence which is at best sufficient but *never* complete.

We cannot hope to avoid making generalizations. Writing containing no such claims would be trivial, limited to direct experience. Without making generalizations, we can say nothing about tomorrow, not even that there will *be* a tomorrow. Without generalizations we can explain nothing about the past: we cannot say *Charles I died because he was beheaded* unless we can generalize that *All men who are beheaded die*. Generalizing is risky but unavoidable. As intellectually respectable individuals, therefore, we must learn to make *reliable* generalizations.

The process by which we arrive at a generalization is *induction*, a mental activity that is often carried on half-consciously. Usually we are not fully aware of the process until we are asked to defend our generalizations, but if we wish them to be reliable, we will have to become more aware of what we are doing.

To illustrate the difference between induction and deduction, let us suppose that there were six people in a class and that the question arose as to whether all of them had read the textbook. Your argument, if formally stated, would look like this:

Student 1 has read the textbook
 Student 2 has read the textbook
 Student 3 has read the textbook
 Student 4 has read the textbook
 Student 5 has read the textbook
 Student 6 has read the textbook
 (There are no more students in this class)

All students in this class have read the textbook.

This argument is not inductive but deductive. Its conclusion is a universal proposition, but it is not a generalization. The conclusion follows necessarily from the premises; as in a valid syllogism, if the premises are true, the conclusion *must* be true. The reason that the conclusion is not a generalization is that the evidence upon which it is based is complete.

Suppose that instead of asking every student in the class, you asked only four, and then reasoned that the remaining students were probably

like the first four and had also read the textbook. Your inductive argument, if stated formally, would look like this :

Student 1 has read the textbook
 Student 2 has read the textbook
 Student 3 has read the textbook
 Student 4 has read the textbook

...

...

Probably all students in this class have
 read the textbook.

This argument is genuinely inductive because its conclusion is based upon evidence that is less than complete. Notice that the conclusion does not follow necessarily but only *probably*. Even if the four premises were true, it would not follow necessarily that the conclusion was true.

Hasty Generalization

In inductive arguments such as the one just discussed, four kinds of defects may occur. If any or all of the defects are present, we say that the argument is a hasty generalization.

1. *Unreliable Evidence*—when there is reason to believe that one or more of the premises is false.
2. *Unrepresentative Sampling*—when in some way the few individual cases used as a basis for making claims about the whole group are not truly representative of the whole group. If, for instance, in a group of males and females, you used the reactions of the females to make statements about the reactions of the group as a whole, you could be accused of unrepresentative sampling.
3. *Insufficient Sampling*—when the proportion of sample to total group is too small. While generalizing from a very small sample is a common defect in inductive arguments, it should be noted that there are occasions when a relatively small sample can provide fairly reliable results. Poll-takers, for instance, often make quite reliable generalizations about millions of people on the basis of a sample of one or two thousand.
4. *Irrelevant Evidence*—when any or all of the premises do not contain the terms appearing in the conclusion. Such premises are irrelevant.

EXERCISE 1

Reliable Generalizations

Analyze the following arguments, assuming in each that the inductive process has been accurately described. When you think the generalization with which

the argument concludes is unwarranted, identify the argument's *most apparent* weakness as:

- A apparently a warranted generalization
- B hasty generalization—unreliable evidence
- C hasty generalization—unrepresentative sample
- D hasty generalization—insufficient sample
- E hasty generalization—irrelevant evidence

- _____ 1. My ex-husband beat me at least twice a week for ten years; men are ill-tempered brutes, I tell you.
- _____ 2. A few ounces of gin and vermouth seem to enhance one's ability to think creatively. We interviewed a random sample of 500 adults after they had drunk several martinis. Two out of three testified that they felt a much greater capacity for creative thought after downing the drinks.
- _____ 3. Capital criminals prefer life imprisonment without chance of parole to execution. Last year the Rockefeller Foundation sent a team of psychologists around to the prisons; they interviewed over 100 men awaiting execution and over 200 lifers who believed they had no chance of parole. Without exception, men in both groups stated a strong preference for life imprisonment.
- _____ 4. Last year in San Francisco, the Girl Scouts combined polltaking with their annual cookie sale. Each girl knocked on a door, made her sales pitch, and then asked this question: "Sir (or madam), do you think that it should be legal for me to smoke marijuana?" Well over 10,000 people were interviewed, and ninety-nine percent of them answered negatively. Obviously, the vast majority of San Franciscans are opposed to legalizing marijuana.
- _____ 5. Senator McCortney is by far the favorite presidential candidate among American voters. Just recently over 10,000 American college students were polled, and they preferred McCortney by nearly two to one.
- _____ 6. When George asked me to invest in his new business, I turned him down. He's a capable businessman, but he lacks stability. He's been divorced twice now, you know.
- _____ 7. George claims that if we tried to liberate Cuba with force, Soviet Russia would not take military action. But when it comes to foreign affairs, George is a poor prophet: less than a week before the Egypt-Israeli war, he predicted peace in the Middle East.
- _____ 8. This city will probably vote against fluoridation in the next election. Over the last two years, I've been keeping track of letters to the editor in the local paper. Nearly every day some-

one writes in about fluoridation, and nine times out of ten the writer is opposed to "poisoning the water supply."

- _____ 9. I think most people would rather be executed than sentenced to life imprisonment without chance of parole. I know that I would.
- _____ 10. During the war, very few Germans disapproved of Hitler's policies toward the Jews. We have thoroughly examined the personal correspondence of several hundred German citizens who admit having known about the mass executions. The letters written while the slaughter was going on make no mention of the matter at all, and every reference to Hitler reflects the writer's loyal approval of the Nazi leader.

CAUSAL ARGUMENTS

The word *cause* is notoriously troublesome. First of all, the word is ambiguous, is used to mean several different kinds of things. In such sentences as "Equality is the black man's *cause*," the word means "social goal or purpose." When we say, "Today's headlines were *cause* for gloom," we mean "justification." In this discussion we shall be using *cause* in a restricted sense: "Overeating *causes* most people to gain weight"; "Eyestrain is sometimes *caused* by reading in a bad light"; "A blowout *caused* the accident." It is not necessary to use the word *cause* itself to utter a causal statement. Scores of English words imply causality; "Brutus *murdered* Caesar" (that is, "Brutus *illegally caused the death of* Caesar"); "One beer *makes* Joe stagger" (that is, "One beer *causes* Joe to stagger").

The purpose of a causal argument is, of course, to give us good reason for believing that a certain causal statement is likely to be true. Conclusive causal arguments are often extremely difficult to come by—consider how hard scientists have had to work to prove that heavy cigarette smoking is an important contributing cause of lung cancer. (The logical intricacies of such arguments are far beyond the scope of this course. All we shall try to do here is to learn something about the most common causal fallacies.)

EXERCISE 2

Causal Statements

Classify the following statements as:

- A causal
B noncausal

- _____ 1. Oswald killed President Kennedy.
- _____ 2. Oswald was a communist.
- _____ 3. After eating the lobster, I became ill.
- _____ 4. Eating that lobster made me ill.
- _____ 5. Capital punishment has a brutalizing effect upon society.
- _____ 6. On the average, college graduates have a much higher income than those who only finish high school.
- _____ 7. One desirable result of getting a college diploma is that it will give you a greater earning capacity.
- _____ 8. Capital punishment deters some criminals.
- _____ 9. The states that have capital punishment also have the lowest crime rate.
- _____ 10. More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.

Causal Fallacies

The two most common causal fallacies are *post hoc* and *oversimplification*.

The Post Hoc Fallacy

The full Latin name for this fallacy is *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, which means, "after this, therefore because of it." The fallacy occurs whenever we argue that event A caused event B merely because event A occurred before event B. Consider the following example:

Harry must be the father of Betty's illegitimate child: they were seeing a lot of each other last semester.

(Obviously, even if sexual intimacy were known to have occurred between Harry and Betty, more would be needed to prove Harry's paternity than that first there was intimacy and then there was pregnancy.)

Oversimplification

Even more common than *post hoc*, perhaps, is the fallacy of oversimplification. This fallacy occurs whenever we attribute to *one* cause what is more probably the effect of *multiple* causes. Consider the following example:

No wonder Albert has a 4.0 average; his I.Q. is 155.

(The fact that many people with fine intellects fail to earn straight A averages should warn us that superior intelligence *alone* would not adequately explain Albert's fine grades. Notice this difference between *post hoc* and oversimplification. With a *post hoc* fallacy, we have grounds for claiming that there is no reason to believe a causal connection of any kind exists. When we complain of oversimplification, however, we may admit that the cause named is indeed a cause; our objection is that it is probably not the *only* cause involved.)

EXERCISE 3*Causal Fallacies*

In each of the following, assume that the premises (whether stated or implied) are true; then identify the fallacy, if any. When an argument seems guilty of *both* oversimplification and *post hoc*, choose the fallacy which is *most* apparent. Identify the statements as:

- A apparently a sound argument
- B *post hoc* fallacy
- C oversimplification

- _____ 1. The present disorder on our college campuses can easily be accounted for: most college students are young, and young people are naturally high-spirited.
- _____ 2. Every time Fred grows a beard I notice that he's taken up some new radical cause—free love or legalizing pot or something. I guess the additional hair on his chin somehow affects his social values.
- _____ 3. In every state that has abolished capital punishment there has, in the last five years, been a dramatic increase in the crime rate. It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that capital punishment has a deterrent effect upon crime.
- _____ 4. Say what you will about Russia's political system, but their economic system has, in only forty years or so, changed that country from one of the most backward to one of the two most wealthy in the world.
- _____ 5. Every time I spend an evening drinking at The Happy Hour I'm sick the next morning. I guess they must not wash their glasses at that place.
- _____ 6. Cigarette smoking doesn't necessarily result in a short life. My grandfather's over ninety now—still hale and hearty—and he's smoked a pack or more a day since he was a boy.
- _____ 7. The violence on TV increased markedly during the 1967–68 season, and we can now grieve over the results: Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King have both been brutally murdered.
- _____ 8. I can't understand why so many people hate unions. Why, the labor movement in this country has made the American worker the best paid and the most productive in the world.
- _____ 9. The impersonality of universities today is easily explained: the great increase in the number of students.

LIMITATIONS OF INDUCTION

When the method is applicable, induction is the most satisfactory means we have of deciding the truth of a claim; but the inductive ap-

proach has two notable limitations, the first of great concern mainly to writers, the second important to anyone who wishes to be rational.

Rhetorical Limitations

Except in the case of highly technical or scientific writing, an author will rarely offer *sufficient* inductive evidence even when such support is available. Inductive evidence tends to be statistical, exhaustive, and tedious. The most we should expect even of serious scholars is a few positive instances by way of example. When the claim is not of central importance to his case, a writer will often leave it entirely unsupported. Most generalizations that occur in writing, therefore, will *appear* to be hasty. But we would be trivial critics if we accused a writer of a "fallacy" that he had no practical way of avoiding. Hence, if we wish to challenge the truth of a claim, we must show not merely that the claim is unsupported but that it is unsupportable.

Similarly, a writer will often sacrifice logical precision for rhetorical effectiveness. He may say *Four-minute milers are lean*, but he is unlikely to specify *all* four-minute milers, past and present. And he will most assuredly not provide a scientific definition of *lean*. If our analysis of his claim should require logical precision, we must provide it ourselves, as fairly as possible, resolving any doubt in the author's favor.

Logical Limitations

Inductive reasoning is applicable only to empirical generalizations. Analytic, metaphysical, and valuative generalizations cannot be supported by supplying positive instances. In the case of analytic propositions, this limitation is of no significance, since the truth of analytic propositions does not depend upon evidence but on meaning. To verify *All brothers are male siblings*, we do not have to look at a single set of brothers. To do so, in fact, would be a logical error.

The claim *All men have souls* is a metaphysical generalization. We cannot support such claims inductively since we are unable to verify a positive instance (for example, *William Buckley has a soul*) by observation. A metaphysical entity is unobservable *by definition*. To be sure, there are many empirical terms that are unobservable *in practice*; *subatomic particles*, *the surface of Venus*, and even *George Washington* are cases in point. But if we can define or describe such entities in terms of their observable *effects*, then we can carry on the inductive process. The fact that we cannot observe metaphysical entities does not, of course, prove that they do not exist, or even that the question of their existence cannot be rationally argued. But our arguments about metaphysical matters cannot be inductive. This will probably be undisturbing to even the most devout among us; those who believe in metaphysical entities are ordinarily quite willing to base their beliefs on faith or on syllogistic reasoning.

Similarly, few of us would be disturbed by the contention that a

valuative generalization such as *All properly prepared cheeseburgers are good* cannot be supported inductively. We would readily agree that a positive instance—*This properly prepared cheeseburger is good*—could not be verified by many observers. If their taste buds were normal, they would taste the meat and cheese and other ingredients, but many of them would be unable to taste the goodness. And even if we like cheeseburgers, we do not taste their goodness in the way we taste empirical ingredients such as meat and cheese. Valuative terms (for example, *good*, *bad*, *beauty*, *ugliness*) denote non-empirical qualities.

But these concessions are much more difficult to make when the valuative generalization in question asserts a *moral* belief. When we say *All acts of torturing children are bad*, most of us want to believe that positive instances are empirically binding. When we see a child being tortured, we shudderingly exclaim *This is horribly bad!* But there are men who not only enjoy such acts but morally approve of them—particularly when the child in question is of a different race or nationality. Presumably they can see the child as well as anyone with normal vision. But they do not “see” the badness—nor do we, in an *empirical* sense.

We should hasten to point out, however, that valuative generalizations *can* be argued for syllogistically. And *typically* empirical generalizations appear as premises in such arguments as the following:

All circumstances that contribute to crime, destructiveness, and antisocial behavior are bad; The misery of children contributes to crime, destructiveness, and antisocial behavior in their adult years;

The misery of children is bad.

The minor premise here is a causal generalization, and we could establish its virtual certainty by inductive argument. Even a sadist who disapproved of social disorder would have to admit that this argument proved the misery of children to be *instrumentally* bad. If he refused to admit the truth of our conclusion, we would point out that his beliefs were logically contradictory; his position is as rationally untenable as that of the man who claims that it is both raining and not raining at the same time and in the same way.

COMMON MATERIAL FALLACIES

Fallacious writing is bad, if only because it wastes our time. When an author's logic is defective, we cannot even console ourselves with the knowledge that his claims are false. We know merely that he has given us no good reason to believe them true.

We have already dealt with formal, inductive, and causal fallacies. Most of the common errors in reasoning that we have not as yet considered can be divided into three categories: *fallacies of irrelevance*, *fallacies of circularity*, and *fallacies of presumption*.

Fallacies of Irrelevance

To ignore the point in question and offer irrelevancies instead is always a logical fallacy. But this kind of logical error can occur in many guises and in various degrees of subtlety. Here we shall consider a few of the more common varieties.

Ad Hominem, Genetic, and "You Too" Fallacies

These three fallacies are all closely related. We commit the *ad hominem* ("to the man") fallacy whenever we ignore the question at hand and shift our attack to the character or motives of our opponents.

Of course Senator Jones favors the war—like you, he has all the sensitivity of a head-hunting aborigine.

The genetic fallacy occurs whenever we attack the *source* of an argument rather than the argument itself.

Of course that argument is unsound; why, it came right out of Das Kapital!

The "you too" fallacy is committed when, having been accused of a fault ourselves, we defend our virtue not by arguing our innocence but by accusing our opponent of the same fault.

You charge me with cheating on this test, Professor Smith, but I heard you admit just yesterday that you had cheated on a test once yourself.

Appeal to Unqualified Authority

We cannot legitimately support the truth of a claim by citing authorities whose specific knowledge does not extend to the case in question.

This farm bill is a fine thing; it's the kind of farm policy Thomas Jefferson would have liked.

We all revere Jefferson, no doubt, and we may respect his expert knowledge of agricultural economics in a *historical* sense. But it is extremely doubtful that his special knowledge extends to the very different problems of today. In a somewhat grosser form this fallacy often occurs in advertising:

Zsa Zsa Gabor endorses AAMCO transmission service.

Sometimes the identity of an authority is so vague or general that expertness cannot be intelligently judged.

*They say . . . ;
As everyone knows . . . ;
The average housewife can tell you . . . ;
Science claims. . . .*

Appeal to Ignorance

Sometimes the truth of a claim will be maintained on the grounds that no contrary evidence exists, a fallacy known as appeal to ignorance. Obviously the mere absence of evidence proves nothing—except that we are ignorant: The claim that Venus is populated by two-headed Irishmen is not made more credible by the fact that it cannot yet be disproved.

Appeal to Emotion

We can legitimately appeal to the feelings of others in order to titillate, entertain, civilize, or ennoble them. But we commit a logical fallacy whenever we substitute an emotional appeal for relevant evidence. The truth of a statement does not depend upon our feelings. Since an appeal to any sort of emotion is logically irrelevant, we can assign a more specific name to the fallacy whenever we can identify the particular emotion involved. Here are some examples:

—Appeal to Pity

STUDENT: Professor, you cannot believe that this term paper is worth no more than a D. If I don't raise my grade point average, I'll have to drop out of school.

—Appeal to Fear

CHILD: Mother, I no longer believe there's a Santa Claus.

MOTHER: You'd better change your mind, honey; otherwise you won't get any toys this Christmas.

—Appeal to Concupiscence (i.e., sexual feelings)

PROFESSOR: Young lady, you were just cheating on your exam.

YOUNG LADY (*smiling seductively*): You couldn't *really* believe that, Professor Yarber; why you're about the handsomest teacher I've ever seen!

EXERCISE 4*Fallacies of Irrelevance*

Identify the fallacy, if any, in each of the following arguments as:

A no apparent fallacy

D appeal to ignorance

B *ad hominem*, genetic, or "you too"

E appeal to emotion

C appeal to unqualified authority

- _____ 1. I wouldn't give much credence to Bernard Shaw's statements, if I were you. Many of his beliefs are still extremely unpopular in this country.

- _____ 2. The riots last summer were carefully planned and deliberately instigated—most probably by the communist agents who have infiltrated black militant organizations. Some sociologists who've studied the riots have doubted that claim, but no one has *proved* that the communists weren't behind the riots.
- _____ 3. My opponents in this election have told you again and again that I am a communist. But, since they have as yet offered no supporting evidence, I assume that no rational voter has taken the charge seriously.
- _____ 4. Mr. Karmac lowered my term paper grade because I made a lot of spelling errors. I think that's unjustified coming from Karmac: I've heard him admit that he's a poor speller himself.
- _____ 5. Author Kaput thinks that capital punishment is the only sure way to protect society from the convicted murderer. Mr. Kaput is a fine novelist, I'm sure; but he is also, unfortunately, a very timid, effeminate man. Most people feel safe enough when a murderer is imprisoned for life.
- _____ 6. Governor Ragland's arguments against gun control legislation should not be given serious consideration. His motives are clear: after all, he's an avid gun collector himself.
- _____ 7. Some critics have said that my latest picture, *Immoral Youth*, is pornographic. I admit that *Immoral Youth* (which coincidentally is now playing in a local theater) does contain a number of shocking scenes. But, unlike some critics, I don't think that's a good reason for not seeing the picture. I could not make an honest picture about the sexual corruption of a beautiful young girl *without* becoming quite explicit. To depict a sordid scene, one must, I'm afraid, become a bit sordid. And nudity, after all, is not necessarily obscenity. The critics have a right to their opinion, of course: but I think *Immoral Youth*, though frank and realistic, is not really pornographic. I think most mature people who see the picture (it's playing at the Bijou now, you know) will agree with me. Sophisticated audiences will like *Immoral Youth*.
- _____ 8. It's true that a few black militants have, on occasion, described all white men as moral degenerates. Some people think that such remarks should be regarded as racist, and I agree that such statements are indeed racist when they're made by a white bigot about black people. But I don't think the reverse is true. The black man has suffered enough, God knows; he should be spared the charge of racism no matter what he says.
- _____ 9. I think it was unwise of us to sign the nonproliferation treaty. You'll recall that George Washington warned us against foreign entanglements.

- _____ 10. Reading pornography has no effect on one's sexual behavior. No scientific study of the subject has found evidence sufficient to establish a causal relationship.
- _____ 11. Dwight Eisenhower was a man much loved by his fellow Americans; but all the experts pretty much agree that Ike was a mediocre President.
- _____ 12. There are no longer any grounds for refusing to believe in extrasensory perception. To be sure, most psychologists still refuse to accept it as an established phenomenon, but their skepticism is scientifically unwarranted: there's not a scrap of evidence indicating that ESP does not exist.
- _____ 13. Candidate Biddle is the father of an illegitimate child; he denied that fact until the court records were produced, but now he admits its truth. I hope no one damns him for his youthful error; certainly I do not. But he did lie about it, and his lie was the recent act of a grown man. We know that Biddle is not a completely honest man. If you believe as I do that a man who's not entirely honest should not hold public office, you'll think twice before voting for Guy Biddle.
- _____ 14. The suggestion that students be represented in the Faculty Senate should be rejected; that's the sort of thing the SDS wants.
- _____ 15. Some men argue that our policies in Latin America have often been exploitative. But no one who has a deep faith in the United States of America will give such arguments a moment's thought.

Fallacies of Circularity

Language lends itself to magic. Frequently, despite our best efforts, we find ourselves engaged in a kind of verbal sleight of hand. We manipulate our terms, slip in an unusual definition or a subtle change of meaning, and—magically—the “truth” appears like a rabbit from a hat. Here are some common tricks:

Circular Argument and Question-Begging

These two fallacies are very much alike. Both operate by slipping in a special definition so that the conclusion becomes “true,” but only in a trivial sense:

Circular Argument. In the following example notice how Mr. A. “wins” his argument by slipping in a special definition of “knowledgeable critic”:

MR. A: All the knowledgeable critics prefer Olivier's *Hamlet* to Burton's.

MR. B: On the contrary, I understand Professor Jones himself prefers Burton's version.

MR. A: Well, I'm afraid old Jones is losing his grip. No one who prefers Burton could possibly know much about drama.

Question-Begging. Writers—especially those who are fearful of rebuttal but fond of bold, unqualified claims—frequently resort to question-begging, a device which enables them to define contrary evidence conveniently out of existence. Suppose, for example, that an author makes this claim: “The hippie generation, despite its avowed devotion to the aesthetic life, has yet to produce any authentic poetry.” Notice that until the author defines *authentic poetry* in precise terms, we cannot say what supporting or contrary evidence would look like, let alone search for any. The author’s claim is frivolous but utterly safe.

Circular Descriptions

When we are asked for a description and offer a definition instead, we are guilty of circular description. Suppose a student had been asked to describe Hemingway’s use of the dramatic narrator in “The Killers.” If the student hadn’t read the story, he might try to get away with an answer like this: “Hemingway *presents* the story in a series of dramatic scenes, letting us know only what we could have seen and heard had we been there ourselves.” The student has defined the dramatic narrator technique, but he has not described Hemingway’s use of the technique.

Circular Explanations and Predictions

Definitions can also be disguised as causal propositions, but invariably the results are inane. Perhaps the most famous example of circular *explanation* is a remark attributed to President Coolidge: “Unemployment is caused by a lot of people being out of work.” More recently a prominent political figure provided this splendid example of a circular *prediction*: “This war in Vietnam will not end until all sides stop fighting.” Such predictions are unchallengeable but trivial.

EXERCISE 5

Fallacies of Circularity

Identify the fallacy, if any, in each of the following, as:

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| A no apparent fallacy | C circular description |
| B circular argument or question-begging | D circular explanation |
| | E circular prediction |

- _____ 1. In 1968, no real Republican wanted Rockefeller to be nominated for President. Lindsay and Percy supported Rockefeller, I know. But men like Lindsay and Percy cannot be accurately described as Republicans.

- _____ 2. Since 1954 every Supreme Court decision has evidenced an extremely permissive attitude toward the lawbreaker. Some observers say that the Court's recent decision about alcoholism was an exception, since the Court rejected the permissive notion that alcoholism is a disease, and ruled that under certain conditions drunkenness is a punishable offense. I disagree. Since the Court itself is permissive, their rulings, including the one about alcoholism, must be regarded as permissive too.
- _____ 3. Yes, officer, I saw the accident, and I can give you an eye-witness account of what happened: the accident that occurred was undoubtedly an unintended incident, nothing more or less than an unfortunate mishap.
- _____ 4. It's hard to say who'll win the game Saturday—as Bernie Bierman used to say, "Footballs bounce in crazy ways." But I think we have the better defensive team. If the breaks don't all go against us and if we can keep them from scoring, I feel confident that we'll come out of it with at least a tie.
- _____ 5. Yes, I saw the game Saturday, I'm sorry to say. I'm not one to second-guess our coach—remember how old Bernie Bierman used to sneer at Monday morning quarterbacks? But I think it's pretty clear why we lost: defensively, we let them score too often; offensively, we didn't score often enough.
- _____ 6. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, my client—Dr. Planch—is charged with manslaughter: the state alleges that my client started to remove the heart of Mr. T. J. Grove before that unfortunate man was fully dead. But you have heard several witnesses testify under oath that Mr. Grove's encephalograph had been "smooth" for several minutes *before* Dr. Planch began to operate. The state has not challenged the credibility of these witnesses or offered any contrary evidence. Instead, the prosecution has advanced the claim that—measured against other criteria—Mr. Grove was still alive at the time that my client began to operate. I see no reason to doubt the state's evidence on this point; I think the truth of their claim may be granted. But while the claim is true, I submit that it has no bearing on this case. As his honor has rightly instructed you, the laws of this state list several legal criteria of death, among them a "smooth" encephalograph reading. And the laws further state that, if any one of the statutory criteria is met, the patient is legally dead. I suggest, therefore, that Dr. Planch is completely innocent of the charge brought against him.
- _____ 7. Some people say that Lyndon Johnson's withdrawal from the presidential race in 1968 was a noble, statesmanlike act; they really believe that he withdrew for the good of the country. But I'm convinced that Johnson's withdrawal, like all his maneuvers, was based on purely selfish motives. He wanted people to think

of him as a statesman, so, in order to fool them, he performed a statesmanlike act. It was typical Johnsonian strategy, and I, for one, was not hoodwinked.

- _____ 8. For years the tortoise was a mystery to science. The mother tortoise, as you know, buries her eggs far up on the beach and leaves them there, never to return. When the eggs hatch, the little tortoises all head directly for the water—even though they can't even see the ocean and don't have a mother around to show them the way. Well, over the years a lot of theories were offered to solve the mystery, but Professor Mordecai Bye was the first to come up with more than mere speculation. He designed a series of experiments—all of which can be and have been repeated by other scientists—proving that the baby tortoises invariably head for the water *because each of them is invariably hydro-oriented*. Professor Bye's discovery may not be as important as some, but he has provided another example of how the scientific method, patiently applied, can triumph over ignorance.

- _____ 9. Some say that our divorce laws should be liberalized, but I think the laws are plenty liberal enough already. Adultery, you know, is grounds for divorce in every state, and as Kinsey has discovered, in most marriages one or both of the partners commit adultery at least once. Thus most marriages provide legal grounds for divorce right now: there's no need for further liberalization.

- _____ 10. Human beings are wholly selfish, and it is impossible for them to be otherwise. When a man is free to choose, he always chooses that which *he* prefers. Even if he elects to sacrifice his life in order to save the life of another, he is still doing what *he* prefers to do; he is doing what pleases *him* most. Thus every human choice is entirely selfish.

Fallacies of Presumption

A fallacy occurs whenever an argument depends upon a groundless or an arbitrary assumption. There are two particularly common fallacies of this type: the faulty argument from analogy and the black and white fallacy.

The Black and White Fallacy

This fallacy results from a misunderstanding of the “either–or” construction. When we say, “Either it will rain tomorrow or it will not,” our use of the word *not* reduces the logical possibilities to exactly two. Since the “either–or” construction allows us to assert both possibilities at once, the proposition is necessarily true. But without the perfect contradiction supplied by *not*, the “either–or” construction leaves other

possibilities open. If we say, "Either it will rain tomorrow or it will snow," our proposition will be false in case the sun shines.

With this in mind consider the following argument: "You say we should avoid war with the Chinese—but I say that if we don't destroy them while we can, they will destroy us when they are able. No one likes to face that fact, but let's try to be realistic: it's better to fight now than to wait around passively for our destruction." This argument has force only if we assume that there are only two alternatives: either we destroy the Chinese or they will destroy us. Logically, however, there are numerous possibilities, among them the possibility that neither nation will destroy the other.

Argument from Analogy

To draw an analogy is to discern a structural or functional similarity between two different things. Thus, to explain the function of the human heart by comparing it with a water pump is to draw an analogy. For the purposes of exposition, such analogies are extremely useful: they enable us to describe the unknown in terms of the known, the complex in terms of the simple. But to *argue* from an analogy is a dangerous business, for many such arguments are likely to be fallacious.

Argument from Analogy—Rationally Unacceptable. Consider this argument: "The riots on our campuses are just like revolutions: the rioters defy constituted authority, resort to violence, and willfully cause destruction of property and loss of life. In a revolution, those who make war against their country are considered traitors; it follows that the rioters should be charged with treason." Only those whose hatred and fear of the rioters had made them gullible would find this argument plausible. The conclusion inferred is expressed with virtual certainty; yet the analogy between riots and revolutions is not really close. Since it can be shown that riots and revolutions differ in many significant ways, there is reason to doubt that they will have any particular characteristic in common. The greater the differences, the weaker the analogy; and the weaker the analogy, the less plausible any conclusion drawn.

Argument from Analogy—Rationally Acceptable. Arguments from analogy are rationally acceptable under three conditions: (1) the analogy must be close—that is, in a *literal* sense, the two things compared must have several similarities *relevant* to the argument and must *not* have many relevant dissimilarities; (2) since analogy is at best a weak form of argument, the conclusion drawn must express a modest degree of certainty; and (3) the subject of the argument should be such that no better form of reasoning is possible.

Here is an argument from analogy that might be considered acceptable: "If we abandon the censorship of pornography entirely, I think it rather unlikely that the rate of sex crime will be greatly affected. Over five years ago the Danes, a people whose culture is very similar to our

own, legalized the publication of pornography. So far, the Danes have experienced no increase in sex crime—in fact, the rate of sex crime has diminished somewhat.”

EXERCISE 6

Fallacies of Presumption

Identify each of the following as:

- A no apparent fallacy
- B black and white fallacy
- C argument from analogy—rationally acceptable
- D argument from analogy—rationally unacceptable

- _____ 1. We must take steps to reduce the violence and disorder in this country. In the 1920s and 1930s the civil disruption in Germany became so intolerable that many Germans turned to Hitler as a leader who could restore law and order. If within our democratic system we do not find an effective way to pacify our cities and campuses, many Americans are quite likely to consider putting a man like Hitler in power.
- _____ 2. Let us compare college students with college faculties and administrators. By and large the students are less knowledgeable about higher education. By and large the students are less experienced in making decisions that affect large numbers of people. By and large the students are less concerned personally with the future of their school. These differences make the question of who should govern our colleges and universities an easy one to answer: members of the faculties and administrators are obviously better qualified to rule.
- _____ 3. The spread of communism in Southeast Asia today is very similar to the spread of fascism in Europe during the 1920s and 1930s. We failed to stop Hitler in 1936 and 1938, and, as a result, we were soon involved in the most destructive war of all time. If we don't stop communism in Southeast Asia now, we will—as surely as night follows day—soon be engaged in an infinitely more tragic holocaust.
- _____ 4. Higher education in this country tends to emphasize a masculine approach to subject matter. Even in the humanities, students are rewarded for being systematic, dispassionate, and logical. The feminine intellect, leaning much more heavily upon feeling and intuition, is discouraged—not because the feminine approach is less effective, but merely because in our colleges and universities the masculine approach is the tradition. As a result, the coed is put at a disadvantage. To succeed, she must repress her inclination toward feeling and intuition and try, however awkward it may seem, to reason like a man. This kind of intellectual discrimination is unfair and wasteful. If we want

the female student to follow her natural bent and fully develop her own kind of intellectuality, then we must modify the coeducational system. More classes, and perhaps more institutions, should be segregated by sex.

- 5. Stricter gun control laws will not diminish crime. North Dakota, a state having no gun control laws to speak of, has a much lower crime rate than New York City—which, as you know, has one of the toughest gun control laws in the country.
- 6. The development of the marvelous heart transplant operation has presented us with a new dilemma. Since there is a shortage of donors, someone must decide which patient gets a new heart and which does not. Two criteria on which to base such a decision have been proposed. Some believe the criterion should be valutive; they propose to give the heart to the patient whose life would be of greatest benefit to society. They would put the decision in the hands of trusted men—a board of judges, clergymen, and the like—who would decide which patient's life would be of greatest value to the community. The second criterion that has been proposed is medical. By this criterion the heart would be given to the patient who is the sickest, and the decision would be made by a board of physicians, who would try to determine, on purely medical grounds, which patient needed the heart most desperately. Frankly, I consider the medical criterion much more workable than the valutive. I think it would be impossible in many cases to say which life would be of greater value to society. What if the choice were between a four-year-old girl and a middle-aged physician? How could anyone decide fairly between Dwight Eisenhower and Harry Truman? The medical criterion, on the other hand, could be applied much more objectively: physicians can usually tell which patient is sickest. I say give the heart to the patient who needs it most, and hope that the other patient lives long enough for another heart to become available.
- 7. Every responsible citizen wishes to put a halt to the growing lawlessness in this country. But pious wishes are not enough. Many of us are too tender-minded to be realistic about this problem. The only way we can restore law and order at this stage of the game is by the quick and ruthless application of police and military force. To make that force effective, we shall—for a time—have to give up some of our most cherished rights. I speak primarily of the rights of free assembly, free speech, and due process. These precious rights are possible only in an orderly society, populated by civilized, responsible, mature men and women. For a time we shall have to give up these rights and learn to tolerate bloodshed and injustice. That is a terrible thing, but the alternative, ladies and gentlemen, is unthinkable worse. If we do not resort to repressive measures now, we shall have anarchy—a condition bloodier and more unjust by far.

- _____ 8. Arthur Drews and a few other reputable scholars have argued that the story of Christ is entirely mythical—that Christ, divine or human, never existed at all. Although these arguments are impressive in some ways, I do not find them very convincing. Admittedly, the evidence upon which Christ's historicity rests is challengeable—historical evidence is seldom beyond challenge. As far as I can see, the evidence that Christ existed is every bit as adequate as the evidence that Socrates existed, and the same is true for many other historical figures whose existence is accepted without challenge. In the case of Christ, Drews and the others have adopted an unreasonably rigorous criterion of proof; if they applied their criterion broadly, they would have to reject much of what we now consider history.

- _____ 9. For any historical event the evidence is, of course, indirect. We base our knowledge of the past on memory or on testimonial evidence of some kind or, in some cases, on archaeological findings. Although such evidence is always less than conclusive, it is the only kind of evidence available. It is unreasonable to insist upon evidence that cannot possibly be made available. There are some skeptics, for example, that refuse to believe that Christ rose from the dead; they argue that all the evidence is purely testimonial, and that the event in question occurred a long, long time ago. But as the skeptics fail to note the same can be said about Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon—that belief is based purely on testimony too, and it occurred even a longer time ago. Yet those who doubt that Christ rose from the dead would not think of doubting that Caesar crossed the Rubicon. Their logical inconsistency betrays them. Their skepticism about the Resurrection is based not on reason but on bias.

- _____ 10. The Air Force refuses to believe in flying saucers no matter what the evidence. As you know, I've been an airline pilot for twenty years. On a dozen occasions I've made routine reports to the Air Force—about weather conditions, the locations of grounded planes, and the like. My reports have always been accepted without question, and they've always proved reliable and accurate. Yet last month, when I reported seeing a flying saucer, Air Force officials grilled me for hours and cooked up half a dozen reasons for doubting my report. Take it from me, those Air Force guys only believe what they want to believe.

EXERCISE 7

Arguing from Analogy

To be argued at all, some questions must be argued on the basis of analogies. This is particularly true when the question involves the future effects of some present social phenomenon, in which case the arguments are usually based on

historical analogies. Listed below are four such questions; choose one of them (unless you can think of a better question yourself), develop a thesis, and write an essay defending your thesis with a *plausible* argument from analogy. Remember that when your argument is based on an analogy, your degree of certainty must be quite modest.

1. Do assistance programs like welfare, medicare, unemployment compensation, and social security tend to make citizens less ambitious and less self-reliant?
2. If we abolished the draft and made careers in the military attractive enough to maintain a professional army, would such an army likely become politically dangerous to our democracy?
3. If the arms race between Soviet Russia and the United States continues and accelerates, will the likelihood of nuclear war be significantly increased?
4. As women become more equal to men socially, politically, and economically, will the behavioral differences between men and women tend to become less distinct?

9 THE HYPOTHESIS AND THE THESIS

*Some circumstantial evidence is very strong,
as when you find a trout in the milk.*

Thoreau

Several of the preceding chapters may have led you to believe that all writing must be reduced to logical formulas and that as long as your compositions follow the rules that have been given, you will automatically be a success. But that isn't exactly the case. Those rules are designed primarily for criticism and analysis of the works of others.

Of course they do apply to your own thinking and writing, because especially in the final stages of composition you will need to subject your work to careful logical analysis. If your objective analysis reveals logical fallacies, then qualify, rework, and polish to insure accuracy. A demanding, critical eye pays off in clear communication.

It is best to save your criticism until your work is nearly finished. When you are just beginning to organize your paper, and when you are groping for ideas, the strict use of logic is more apt to freeze than free you. This is not to deny logic a place even at that point, but it must be the kind of logic that asks merely: Is this likely? What should come next? Where do I go from here?

The Hypothesis

Among scientists the word *hypothesis* is applied to any explanation that falls short of utter certainty. Since no scientific explanation is ever regarded as completely established, it follows that all scientific explanations, no matter how well substantiated by reason and evidence, are hypotheses.

But this usage of the word would seem, for our purposes, to be too general. Instead, we will restrict its meaning to *a preliminary and provisional assumption which is offered not as a truth-claim but rather as a mere conjecture, used to give one's thinking and research direction*. When spoken or written, a hypothesis sounds and looks exactly like a statement, but it differs from a statement in a very significant way. A

statement is *asserted*; it represents one's belief. If we state, "All men are mortal," we intend it to be understood as our unmitigated opinion; if we were a bit pompous, we might say, "Know that all men are mortal." But a hypothesis, unlike a statement, is a *mitigated* assertion. When we state a hypothesis, we say more modestly, "Let us assume for the moment that all men are mortal," or even "What would be the consequences of assuming that all men are mortal?"

The hypothesis is an extremely useful logical device. If the conclusions we draw in our reasoning are intended only as hypotheses, we do not have to confine ourselves to all the strict rules of logic. When we are fishing for ideas to use in organizing our material, the logical rules we will set aside most often will be those governing hasty generalizations and argument from analogy.

How might this work? Let us put aside formal terminology and consider a case in which a detective—of the sort, admittedly, that may exist only in popular fiction—makes use of a hypothesis in the early stages of an investigation. The detective, let us imagine, has been placed in charge of an embezzlement case, has spent most of his first day conducting a routine questioning of the bank's employees, and has returned at last to his office to relax and think things over. There are, it seems, no fewer than a dozen people who could have committed the crime; and that, he decides, is about all he has managed to learn in nearly a whole day's work. But not quite all, perhaps. Although he had not even bothered to make a note of it at the time, the detective suddenly recalls that one suspect—the head teller—had repeatedly stammered and used peculiar words during the interrogation. Of course, there is nothing particularly unusual about a stammering suspect: a police investigation intimidates people, whether they are guilty or not. And, for that matter, so far as the detective knows, the teller may have stammered all his life. Still, some of the man's verbal slips seemed, under the circumstances, to call for a Freudian analyst. Once when he had meant to say, "I started working here right out of college, and I've been here ever since," the teller had stumbled badly over his last two words. Instead of "ever since," he had said something that sounded like "*every sint*."

The detective looks up from his notes and stares blankly at a framed photograph of his wife. The detective once knew a rape suspect whose speech had been flawless except for four-letter words. The fellow had stumbled nearly every time he attempted an obscenity, but no one had placed any importance upon the peculiarity until after the man had confessed. Perhaps the teller's case is not too different. The detective flips through his notebook until he finds the teller's name. He reflects for a moment, tapping his pencil meditatively on the desk blotter. There is, he concluded, little else to go on. The detective pencils a faint "X" in front of the prime suspect's name and closes his notebook.

What shall we say about the detective's reasoning? If we judged it

by the rules of strict logic, we would have to say that it was fallacious on several counts. His recollection of the stammering rapist, for example, suggests an argument from analogy:

The head teller is like the rapist in that both men stammered over words that seemed to suggest the crime in question;
The rapist was guilty;

Perhaps the head teller is guilty too.

Clearly this argument from analogy is weak. Because two men happen to have one characteristic in common (that is, suggestive stammering), it does not necessarily follow that they will share another characteristic (that is, guilt of a crime).

But we can allow his conclusion *as long as it is regarded as nothing more than a hypothesis*. Certainly the detective seems to regard it as no more than this. He intends to investigate the head teller thoroughly as the next step in his effort to solve the case, but unless he finds far more tangible and conclusive evidence, he will not accuse the teller of anything. The detective's mind still is (or should be) quite open. His reasoning has not yet produced anything that might be asserted as a statement; but he has managed, nevertheless, to use logic effectively. If he continues the process—first inferring a hypothesis and then following it up—his investigation will achieve coherence and direction. He may still fail to find the embezzler, of course, but his method will be the kind most likely to succeed.

From Hypothesis to Thesis

Unlike a hypothesis, *a thesis is a statement, a significant truth-claim around which to develop a paper*. You need to have firmly and clearly in mind just what central belief you are trying to elucidate, develop, and support.

Following the detective's method may help you construct a thesis more effectively. The detective was looking for a thesis too; he wanted to be able to point at one of the suspects sooner or later and say, "This man is guilty"—and have enough evidence so that the prosecuting attorney could put together a convincing case. As a writer you combine the functions of detective and attorney: working from a hypothesis, you try to discover a tenable thesis and then construct a case designed to convince readers of the truth and significance of your thesis.

Suppose, for example, that an instructor makes this assignment: "I'd like you to write a paper—five to ten pages, perhaps—that deals with some important phase of the black revolution. You may do as much research as you like, of course, but what I'm really interested in seeing is some of your own thinking."

Here is an opportunity to make some interesting observations on

a controversial topic. The first step is to select an "important phase." After reflecting on generally held ideas about the subject and where your interest lies, do some reading, and try to decide on a topic: "The Recurrent Black Riots in Our Northern Ghettos." In a logical construction, this topic would be a *term*, which in this case names a broad and complex class of social behavior. If you wanted to you could continue to narrow the topic by the process of simple classification, settling perhaps on "The Detroit Riot of July 1967," or, since that seems too broad for a short paper, "The First Half-Hour of the Detroit Riot of 1967." But if you hope to make a significant in-depth investigation, a discussion of even the first half-hour of a riot might require a volume. So merely selecting a term would be a tedious way of arriving at a topic, if in fact it should succeed; a topic narrow enough to handle in a short paper arrived at in this way is almost certain to be trivial. A much more fruitful approach, once a broad topic has been selected, is to search for a thesis—an empirical proposition *specific enough* to be supported and developed adequately in a short paper, *significant enough* to warrant the reader's attention.

A suitable thesis is arrived at not by classifying, but by hypothesizing. As you read reports, articles, and studies dealing with the riots, you must, like the detective, be alert to any things that form a pattern or seem in the least peculiar: repeated sequences of events, clustering of behaviors by age or economic level, inconsistencies, inadequate explanations. These will then be the basis for sorting other information you gather. You may notice, for example, an apparent tendency among rioters to focus their destructiveness on retail stores located in the ghetto. The establishments of white merchants are the most frequent targets, but we note that the stores owned by blacks are by no means exempt. Commentators who attempt to explain this recurrent aspect of the rioters' behavior mention three causes:

1. The black rioters feel a deep hostility toward the white man, and in the ghetto there are few whites except for the store owners. Thus, during an outbreak of violence the white owners' stores become a convenient target.
2. The ghetto store owners, both white and black, tend to gouge their customers and thus help breed the hostility that expresses itself in destruction and looting during a riot.
3. For the many blacks who cannot afford to buy the merchandise displayed in the ghetto stores, the riots provide an opportunity to get by looting what they cannot otherwise obtain. Modern advertising techniques, by stimulating the desire for retail goods, increase the tendency toward looting among low-income Negroes.

While you may agree that these factors contribute to the destruction and looting of retail stores, you may suspect that something is lacking

in this explanation: that it doesn't cover all the important contributing causes. The detective found a helpful analogy when he recalled the stammering rapist, and you might adopt his technique. What are some analogous instances of mob violence? Well, there were the Boston Tea Party, the French Revolution, and the Sepoy Rebellion in India. These seem to be rather remote analogies, but take a closer look. Actually, the Boston Tea Party could hardly be considered a riot at all; throwing the tea overboard was just a symbolic act, signifying the colonials' defiance of England's power. The tea itself did not amount to much—except, of course, as a symbol. Is there a connection here? Is mass violence usually directed at symbolic rather than practical ends? Some of the beheading that occurred in France, for instance, could hardly have had any practical purpose; many aristocrats were obviously harmless in any literal sense.

Your thinking so far can be considered as scarcely more than a private bull session, a tissue of fantasy and forced analogy that proves exactly nothing. Still, your musings suggest a hypothesis that may eventually develop into something more substantial:

To some significant extent, the destruction and looting of retail stores during ghetto riots can probably be explained as symbolic attacks directed at the values, complacency, and power of the American middle class.

Assuming that you eventually decide to follow up this hypothesis as the most promising one you have, the next step is to raise the following question: What would actual evidence look like? Actual evidence, it seems clear, would occur in the form of instances in which an individual rioter looted or helped destroy a store, not for any practical purpose, but in order to vent his rage upon a symbol of middle class America. Since gathering such evidence by personal observation seems out of the question (surely the instructor does not expect this!), you will have to rely on the accounts of eyewitnesses as reported in published articles. Your sample of secondhand evidence will have to be large enough so that it cannot plausibly (1) be explained away as the result of biased, dishonest, or slipshod reporting, or (2) be dismissed as representative of only a very few atypical rioters. If, as is frequently the case, your time and research facilities are so limited that you cannot gather enough evidence, you should advance the claim (if you do so at all) with appropriate modesty, offering it as no more than an interesting hypothesis for which we have found enough supporting evidence to warrant further research. Few intelligent readers will find fault with such an approach.

As you define the hypothesis more clearly and become more familiar with what has been written about the riots, you will probably discover that your thesis is not particularly original. You may find that other writers have said much the same thing. But it would be naive to hope that a defensible thesis would occur to you alone, especially when the

subject is one that has received so much attention. Don't be upset if you can't be completely original. If you have selected your evidence and constructed your case on your own, then you may consider yourself as having achieved your goal.

Selecting the Most Promising Hypothesis

The above account should suggest how logic may be used to help develop material for an original paper. One important problem, however, remains to be considered. At first you will usually concoct not one but several hypotheses, hoping to invent one that will turn out to be a suitable thesis. Having a list of five or six hypotheses obviously improves the chances of finding a workable thesis, but unless you learn to make good preliminary judgments, you are likely to waste time by following up hypotheses which you should have recognized as implausible or unprovable to begin with. There are about four common defects to which hypotheses are prone; learning to avoid them will help to make your research more productive.

The Far-Out Hypothesis

In general, the less a hypothesis has in common with explanations that have proved adequate in analogous cases, the less plausible it is. Not every extraordinary hypothesis is false, of course; the men who claimed the earth was round were once considered crackpots. But such cases are memorable *because* they are exceptions; when you choose the far-out hypothesis, the odds are definitely against you.

The Simplistic Hypothesis

Ordinarily you should consider as implausible the hypothesis that attempts to explain a complex phenomenon in terms of a single cause. An explanation, as Einstein once remarked, should be as simple as possible—but no simpler.

The Inconsistent Hypothesis

Occasionally a hypothesis will be *self*-contradictory because of the way it is stated: "The urban riots are well-planned, deliberately executed guerrilla operations that occur spontaneously in our hate-filled ghettos." Such a claim is necessarily false, of course, since the riots cannot be both deliberate and spontaneous at the same time and in the same way. Since it is usually obvious when a claim is self-contradictory, a little care in phrasing will help you avoid such a trap.

The Ghostly Hypothesis

A hypothesis should offer an empirical explanation of an empirical phenomenon; this means that you must be able to define your hypothesis

in terms of observable phenomena. You should not give serious consideration to a hypothesis that explained the riots as the work of the devil. Such a hypothesis can never be satisfactorily proved or disproved; there is no way to produce evidence—or even to say what actual evidence would look like.

EXERCISE 1

Classify each of the following as:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| A apparently a sound hypothesis | D inconsistent hypothesis |
| B far-out hypothesis | E ghostly hypothesis |
| C simplistic hypothesis | |

- _____ 1. The pollution of our streams, lakes, rivers, and air has been caused by big business.
- _____ 2. Cigarette smoking is an important contributing cause of lung cancer.
- _____ 3. Many of the riots in our cities are the result of the fluoridation of urban water supplies.
- _____ 4. The current unrest on our campuses is solely due to the war in Southeast Asia.
- _____ 5. The phenomenon of so many of our servicemen turning to drugs is explained by the fact that our military leaders have enlisted in Satan's army.
- _____ 6. It's clear what a witch's spell can do: since Mary started practicing witchcraft, her enemies have either died, been drafted, or left the country.
- _____ 7. The startling increase in homosexuality among our youth is due to a like increase in the consumption of polyunsaturated fats.
- _____ 8. Many healthy, stable, intelligent college students are unable to get good grades because of their emotional immaturity.
- _____ 9. Some of our current unemployment is caused by shifting to a peacetime economy.
- _____ 10. The recent increase in multiple births is the result of the underground testing of atomic devices in Nevada.

EXERCISE 2

Propose several explanatory hypotheses for each of the following situations:

1. There is a trout in the milk.
2. In 1968, the citizens of Arkansas voted for W. Rockefeller (Republican), W. Fulbright (Democrat), and G. Wallace (American Independent).
3. Suzy Lapointe, homecoming queen, got an A in freshman English.
4. A relatively small percentage of Negro Americans graduate from college.

5. College graduates have a much higher average income than those who have only a high school education.

EXERCISE 3

Following the steps in this chapter, develop a paper on one of the following topics.

1. Campus Unrest
2. The New Feminism
3. Regulation of Drugs
4. U.S. Foreign Policy
5. Marriage and the Family

PART FOUR

***The Rhetoric of
College Writing***

10 ORGANIZING DISCOURSE

Every work of a writer should be a first step, but this will be a false step unless, whether or not he realizes it at the time, it is also a further step. When a writer is dead, one ought to be able to see that his various works, taken together, make one consistent oeuvre.

W. H. Auden

The intermediate step between thesis and finished paper is the outline. Although a few writers can organize their ideas and facts without using an outline, most writers benefit from making and following a carefully prepared skeleton.

Perhaps one of the best ways to learn how to outline is by outlining something someone else has written. Such a skill will improve your comprehension by giving you insight into the organization of well-written material and will provide a compact résumé of textbook chapter or magazine article. Outlining reading assignments is frequently a course requirement.

To outline an essay, follow a few simple rules:

1. First, read through the essay, noticing especially major divisions. These may be supplied by the author or they may be hidden in the essay. If they are not specifically supplied, you will need to look more carefully for them.
2. Formulate a central idea or thesis and write it down. Once you get this important step completed, the other parts of the outline will tend to fall into place with facility.
3. Observe the title to see how it affects the central idea of the thesis. Certainly a title can be a vital key to the author's theme or main purpose.
4. Notice the opening and closing paragraphs of the essay. Often these reveal much about the nature of the author's intent.
5. List the main points in the essay and also supply the supporting details to these main headings.
6. Review the entire outline to see that each detail supports the point it further divides, and to see that the outline is an accurate

digest of the original essay. Where there is conflict or disagreement, you will need to adjust the outline accordingly.

Sentence Outline

The following sentence outline of James B. Conant's essay "Athletics: The Poison Ivy in Our Schools" is typical of the kind you are frequently asked to construct. It includes the following: (1) a statement of the central idea (thesis), (2) the major divisions (roman numerals), (3) the subdivisions (capital letters), and (4) the supporting details (arabic numerals and lowercase letters). Such an outline gives the reader a quick reference to the contents of an essay.

THESIS: There is an overemphasis on competitive athletics in our schools and colleges which is seriously destructive of our entire educational system.

- I. There is certainly a need to develop physically the youth of our country.
 - A. We need more programs emphasizing bodybuilding and physical exercise.
 1. One period of bodybuilding and coordination daily is ideal.
 2. A daily program, though ideal, would be expensive.
 - a. Such a program would require extensive facilities for each school.
 - b. An extensive program would require more instructors, also at additional expense.
 - B. President Eisenhower established the "Council on Youth Fitness" in response to this need.
- II. Some schools focus physical training instruction, in the form of athletics, on a small, select group.
 - A. This is partly to meet the demands of the community for public entertainment in the form of games.
 - B. This usually results in a mediocre program for the majority of the students who do not participate in athletics.
- III. Interscholastic athletic competition at the junior high level should be eliminated.
 - A. Those who want junior high athletics have yet to show any educational values derived from athletics.
 - B. Opponents of junior high athletic competition offer several supporting reasons why they are opposed.
 1. Youngsters are being exploited to satisfy spectators of the community.
 2. Children are being conditioned to become future members of cheering sections.

3. The development of intellectual and physical talents suffers.
- IV. Interscholastic competition at the high school level, with its attendant emotional involvement, should be contained.
 - A. The spirit generated by the zeal for winning teams is corroding in nature.
 - B. Citizens can help control the situation in several ways.
 1. They can support the elimination of state championship type games as New York state has already done.
 2. They can compare the expenses of athletic competition, including band expense, etc., with the amount expended for library books.
 3. They can determine whether or not proper proportions of student time are spent on schoolwork.
 4. School boards can check total effectiveness of physical education programs.
 - a. Are nonathletic boys and girls being helped?
 - b. How do children rate on nationwide fitness tests?
 5. Citizens can take a searching look at community pressure to determine the academic emphasis present.
 - V. The disease of athletic overemphasis runs throughout our high schools and colleges.
 - A. It started in colleges, and commercialism and professionalism continue to be fostered there.
 - B. College recruitment tactics adversely affect high school students.
 1. The athletes are appealed to by commercial rather than academic inducements.
 2. Other students observing this quite naturally tend to regard all education in terms of commercial values.
 - C. Under the guise of more participation the involvement has spread to include bands, drill teams, flag twirlers, etc.
 - D. This disease distorts our values.
 1. Participation for public entertainment becomes the goal.
 2. The emphasis on academic pursuits is subordinated.
 - VI. The fundamental change that is required is a change of attitude.
 - A. The community needs to change its attitude toward the secondary schools.
 - B. The public needs to change its attitude toward the colleges and universities.

Quite possibly one could study this outline and, without actually having read the essay, pass a test on its contents.

EXERCISE 1

Read the following paragraph and select from the three outlines made from it the one you think is best:

Prejudice is a false generalization about a group of people—or things—which is held onto despite all facts to the contrary. Some generalizations, of course, are true and useful—often needed to put people and things into categories. The statement that Negroes have darkly pigmented skin and nearly always curly hair isn't a prejudice but a correct generalization about Negroes.

Outline 1:

THESIS: Some generalizations are true.

- I. There is a differences between a generalization and prejudice.
 - A. Generalizations are statements about people which are true and useful.
 - B. Prejudices are generalizations about people which are not true.

Outline 2:

THESIS: There is a difference between prejudice and generalization.

- I. Generalizations are true statements.
- II. Prejudices are false statements.

Outline 3:

THESIS: Prejudice is a false generalization.

- I. Prejudice is a belief held despite the evidence.
 - A. It can be about people or things.
 - B. It is maintained despite facts.
- II. Some generalizations are true.
 - A. It is true most Negroes have dark skin.
 - B. It is true most Negroes have curly hair.

Analysis:

The first outline begins with a misleading thesis. The author tells the reader what a generalization is, only by examples, and only to contrast it with his major idea—what prejudice is. A second weakness is that the outline contains thirty-two words, more than half as many as the original paragraph. It can be shortened considerably and actually be more effective.

The second outline contains only fourteen words, an excellent contrast with the number of words in the original paragraph. The thesis is inaccurate because it implies that a prejudice is not a generalization and vice versa. The two main points are succinct, but it contains a false statement because all generalizations are not true statements.

The third outline begins well in that the thesis reflects that which the author intended. Main point I is clear and the supporting subpoints are relevant. Main point II also correctly summarizes the author's comments. A weakness of this outline is that it too is more than half as long as the original writing.

Topic Outline

Thus far in the discussion, we have been talking about the sentence outline exclusively. This form of outline is desirable when one major theme or controlling idea dominates the writing. Complete sentences help develop more fully the plan or theme of the material. In addition to the sentence outline, however, there is one other type, the *topic outline*, that is used more frequently by college students. Topic outlines are easier to work with than complete sentence outlines. Topic outlines are developed through the use of key words and phrases. They are best used when the material has no overriding central idea. Notice the following example of the topic outline used to reduce the paragraph on prejudice to a simple form for study:

THESIS: Prejudice is a false generalization.

- I. False generalizations
 - A. about people and things
 - B. ignore facts
- II. True generalizations
 - A. classify people & things
 - B. are useful

EXERCISE 2

Outline the following paragraph, using first the sentence outline form, then the topic outline.

Ours is an age without heroes—and, when we say this, we suddenly realize how spectacularly the world has changed in a generation. Most of us grew up in a time of towering personalities. For better or for worse, great men seemed to dominate our lives and shape our destiny. In the United States we had Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt. In Great Britain, there were Lloyd George and Winston Churchill. In other lands there were Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini, Clemenceau, Gandhi, Kemal, Sun Yat-sen. Outside of politics there were Einstein, Freud, Keynes. Some of these men influenced the world for good, others for evil; but, whether for good or for evil, the fact that each had not died at birth made a difference, one believed, to everyone who lived after them.

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.

Using an Outline

How can all this be applied to your work? Your first step will be to make a very loose working outline (which may even include notes in parentheses as reminders to yourself of such things as the points you need to investigate further). At this stage you will want to set down your purpose or thesis statement, the major units of development, and your conclusion. This outline may be made on a regular sheet of paper,

or it may be made by shuffling and reshuffling 4×6 note cards until they begin to fall into some sort of sequence. The outline at this stage is far from sacred. You may find you need to add some points (which will mean doing further work to substantiate them) in order to create a smooth, unified, and coherent progression. You may want to drop some points.

Once you think you are close to the ideal organization, go over the whole thing again. Note concrete details that you will want to include in the final version of your paper. In short, add—in the form of notes or subpoints—anything that is necessary to the development but that might be overlooked in the heat of creation.

Most advocates of formal outlines stress a number of concerns that contribute to a uniformly appearing outline: one which might receive a good grade from the instructor—if he asks for outlines to be turned in. The ban on single subheadings and the like are more conventional than important influences on the organization of your writing. However, you should be concerned that the headings of any one level of the outline represent a division of the previous level and are equal in rank or importance. Sometimes it is only in examining your outline to check the uniformity of headings and subheadings that you discover an entire level of development that is missing. Or you may find that what you had designated as headings at one particular level were actually subdivisions of another larger heading.

After you have revised your outline and feel that it adequately represents the trend of your argument, you are ready to write your paper. You know where you will begin and end, and what goes on in between those points. Transferring that knowledge to print should be a simple matter.

EXERCISE 3

Construct an outline on one of the following subjects, and use it to write a three- or four-page personal essay.

1. My Introduction to Women's Liberation
2. Encountering Prejudice
3. Facing the Draft
4. The Most Important Decision I Ever Made
5. Confronting the Opposite Sex

11 STRUCTURING THE PARAGRAPH

Arts and sciences are not cast in a mould, but are formed and perfected by degrees, by often handling and polishing, as bears leisurely lick their cubs into form.

Montaigne

My college education was no haphazard affair. My courses were all selected with a very definite aim in view, with a serious purpose in mind—no classes before eleven in the morning or after two-thirty in the afternoon, and nothing on Saturday at all. That was my slogan. On that rock was my education built.

It is easy to recognize the above opening of a Robert Benchley essay as a paragraph. In fact, the paragraph is one of the most readily identifiable written constructions. Even a mind not trained to understand vocabulary or the composition of a sentence can spot the architecture of a paragraph. It is enough just to see the indentation of the first line or a last line that does not always extend to the right margin. When several paragraphs appear in sequence—as in any essay—they become even more obvious as integral building units.

However, there are cases in which a paragraph does not fit the description just given. For example, there is one paragraph in Benchley's essay which reads: "I can't open." This statement consists of three words, indented and followed only by white space on the same line. The next line is also indented. Technically, then, this is a three-word paragraph.

A single line of dialogue usually constitutes a paragraph by itself, because the subsequent words will be another thought or the words of another speaker. But what about a one-line paragraph which is not dialogue? A few lines farther on, Benchley says: "And the seminar would be on." This line and the next are both indented. Can those six words constitute a paragraph? They do.

At almost the opposite extreme is this paragraph about America:

It is the place of autumnal moons hung low and orange at the frosty edges of the pines; it is the place of frost and silence; of the clean dry shocks and the opulence of enormous pumpkins that yellow

on hard clotted earth; it is the place of the stir and feathery stumble of the hens upon their roost, the frosty, broken barking of the dogs, the great barn-shapes and solid shadows in the running sweet of the moon-whited countryside, the wailing whistle of the fast express. It is the place of flares and steamings on the tracks, and the swing and bob and tottering dance of lanterns in the yards; it is the place of dings and knellings and the sudden glare of night engines over sleeping faces in the night; it is the place of the terrific web and spread and smouldering, the distant glare of Philadelphia and the solid rumble of the sleepers; it is also the place where the Transcontinental Limited is stroking eighty miles an hour across the continent and the small dark towns whip by like bullets, and there is only the fanlike stroke of the secret, immense and lonely earth again.

Thomas Wolfe, *Of Time and the River*

That long body of words is actually only two sentences. Yet it is a paragraph. A writer using a stream-of-consciousness technique may go even farther and employ no punctuation marks whatever, thus eliminating sentence breaks as possible clues for paragraph discovery. An example of this kind of break with the traditional paragraph structure is Molly Bloom's soliloquy in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. It continues for several pages without so much as a break into traditional sentences, let alone paragraphs.

Is there a proper paragraph length? As can be seen from the previous examples, obviously not. A "good" paragraph should be short enough or long enough to do the job. It would be dangerous to set standards for the minimum or maximum number of words that could be put in a paragraph. Not only might dogmatic adherence to such boundaries affect the amount of information that the paragraph contained, but it might even cause the paragraph to be completely incomprehensible. Though some textbooks will say that the average paragraph has a range from 100 to 350 words, you can find in any contemporary national magazine many paragraphs that are 500 words long placed next to some ten- to twenty-word paragraphs.

It does not follow, however, that a topic which involves many details need necessarily require an extremely long paragraph. It can be broken up into shorter paragraphs for greater readability, providing there are natural points of division. On the other hand, occasionally a series of short paragraphs is not the result of a desire to make reading easy—it is a result of disorganization. These separate thoughts, when properly arranged and linked together by appropriate transitions, will make one long, more easily understood paragraph.

If external form and optimum length do not determine what a paragraph may be, then we must turn to other criteria. Whether it comprises one line or one page, the paragraph is a series of closely related ideas which constitute a unit. The ideas or words must represent a flow

of thought. Even though that flow may not be in a standard chronological or sequential order, it should have some organization. Each segment should relate to the one that precedes it and to the one that follows. The end product of a continuous flow will be unity, coherence, and self-containment that carries the reader along from beginning to end.

Topic Sentences

Think of the paragraph as a mini-composition. Any composition like an essay, a thesis, a textbook chapter, a magazine article—in other words, a nonfiction composition—will have one or more stated or implied topic sentences, or even a topic paragraph. Since it is a composition in miniature, the paragraph will also have a stated or implied topic sentence.

The topic sentence in the paragraph states what the paragraph is about. It may appear anywhere in the paragraph. The easiest kind of topic sentence to locate is, of course, one which appears first in the paragraph. The topic sentence in this position may not only warn the reader what to expect of the paragraph, but may be the foundation for the easiest kind of paragraph development.

In a typical classroom writing assignment, the instructor gives the class several possible topic sentences, and asks them to choose one and develop it. The student seldom needs further help in developing the subject if the topic sentences are obvious enough. Consider these suggestions for assignments:

The riot caused the college administration several problems.

One of the students in our class has a particularly interesting face.

A woman driver can be identified in three ways.

Each of the above cries out for supporting details, examples, illustrations, and explanations. They all perform one basic function of the opening topic sentence: they create anticipation in the reader. The statements which follow these sentences must in turn fulfill the anticipation created, supporting their introductory sentence. Examine the topic sentence in this paragraph, and judge whether it has been well documented:

There are three kinds of book owners. The first has all the standard sets and best-sellers—unread, untouched. (This deluded individual owns woodpulp and ink, not books.) The second has a great many books—a few of them read through, most of them dipped into, but all of them as clean and shiny as the day they were bought. (This person would probably like to make books his own, but is restrained by a false respect for their physical appearance.) The third has a few books or many—every one of them dog-eared and dilapidated, shaken and loosened by continual use, marked and scribbled in from front to back. (This man owns books.)

Mortimer Adler, How to Mark a Book

One danger inherent in the topic sentence may have occurred to you

already. Suppose you were faced with the problem of developing the following statement:

Prejudice can be dangerous.

Although it is possible to expand that assertion into a meaningful paragraph of examples which defend it, it is also possible that the statement is too broad. You may be confronted with the problem of first defining the words *prejudice* and *dangerous*. You will have to decide what kinds of prejudice to discuss, and how far to carry the idea of danger. Abstract terms may be better left to topic sentences or paragraphs which apply to larger units.

EXERCISE 1

Compose five opening topic sentences for potential paragraphs which you yourself would not hesitate to write.

Still another danger can be found in the exclusive reliance upon initial topic sentences. If all the paragraphs in an essay begin with topic sentences, the essay will likely be stilted and dull to read. Variety in sentence composition and paragraph development is an essential ingredient of effective writing.

Some topic sentences may appear at the ends of your paragraphs. They may serve as summaries or conclusions of what has gone before. They may even be the punch line up to which the rest of the paragraph has been leading, as the following paragraph illustrates:

A man's wife, true enough, may envy her husband certain of his more soothing prerogatives and sentimentalities. She may envy him his masculine liberty of movement and occupation, his impetuous complacency, his peasantlike delight in petty vices, his capacity for hiding the harsh face of reality behind the cloak of romanticism, his general innocence and childishness. But she never envies him his shoddy and preposterous soul.

H. L. Mencken, *A Mencken Chrestomathy*

EXERCISE 2

Compose five closing topic sentences for potential paragraphs which you would enjoy writing.

Sometimes the topic sentences appear somewhere in the body of the paragraph. Consider this example by Ashley Montagu:

And this is, of course, where women can realize their power for good in the world, and make their greatest gains. It is the function

of women to teach men how to be human. *Women must not permit themselves to be deviated from this function by those who tell them that their place is in the home in subservient relation to man. It is, indeed, in the home that the foundations of the kind of world in which we live are laid, and in this sense it will always remain true that the hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world. And it is in this sense that women must assume the job of making men who will know how to make a world fit for human beings to live in. The greatest single step forward in this direction will be made when women consciously assume this task—the task of teaching their children to be like themselves, loving and cooperative.*

The topic sentence has been set off in these examples so you can compare its placement. Actually a topic sentence can be located anywhere it fits best, providing all the sentences relate to it.

EXERCISE 3

Compose five topic sentences to be placed somewhere in the body of potential paragraphs—not at the beginning or closing. Be sure you suggest topics in which you yourself are interested.

The topic sentence, however, need not even be stated. It may be implied. Examine the following description from *Main Street*:

A man in cuffless shirt-sleeves with pink armgarters, wearing a linen collar but no tie, yawned his way from Dyer's Drug Store across to the hotel. He leaned against the wall, scratched a while, sighed, and in a bored way gossiped with a man tilted back in a chair. A lumber-wagon, its long green box filled with large spools of barbed-wire fencing, creaked down the block. A Ford, in reverse, sounded as though it were shaking to pieces, then recovered and rattled away. In the Greek candy-store was the whine of a peanut-roaster, and the oily smell of nuts.

If you were asked to write a topic sentence for Sinclair Lewis' paragraph, what would it be? Perhaps you would arrive at something such as:

These were the activities in Main Street.

Occasionally there is no one answer as to what the topic sentence of a paragraph is, or whether it is actually present in the paragraph. For example, there may be some argument as to what the topic sentence is in the above paragraph by Montagu. Some readers may even think it calls for writing an inferred topic sentence. But as long as the topic itself is clear, and every statement in the paragraph related to it, that which is the topic sentence is hardly worth an argument.

Remember that the topic sentence, whether it is implied or stated, is the backbone for the body of the paragraph.

EXERCISE 4

Read each of the following paragraphs carefully. Locate the topic sentence in each. If the paragraph does not appear to have one, write an implied topic sentence for it:

- I. Yes, there are people at the American Express Company. I kept writing letters about a mistake in my credit card bill. All I could get for an answer were more bills on which the computer had typed in capital letters: "Your account is seriously overdue." After months of this, someone told me that if you staple, bend, or mutilate the card it cannot be put through the machine, and a human being has to be sent for.
Jerome Beatty, Jr.
- II. The problem is, in contrast to most disconnected Presidents, Johnson is still fairly hale—only sixty years old. And his Presidency was not an even and natural ripening toward a graceful conclusion, but ended in a kind of distracted abortion. Now, it's as if he cannot quite bring himself to come back home, has not been able to really return. Instead, he has mustered in Austin a passable invocation, an extension of that lost life along Pennsylvania Avenue. He still dwells among all the ceremonies and accouterments of circumstance—of an unofficial but curiously similar consequence: a kind of President-emeritus. One is still required to go through Byzantine clearances and filtrations, ante-chambers and lesser ministers, in approaching him—procedures perhaps not altogether unreasonable to be surrounding a former President, but which, in this instance, seem to have been carried to the point of the arabesque. A school of Secret Service men still swims around his every move. Along with the 6,300-foot concrete runway and hangar left on his ranch, a helicopter and jet are poised at a nearby San Antonio air base for his summons.
Marshall Frady
- III. Their grievances had been voiced all through this year of campus turbulence. Vietnam, racism, adult hypocrisy. Now it was commencement time—the ritual of robes and mortarboards that traditionally marks a coming of age and an end to youthful rebellion. It was no surprise that campus protest was the topic of many of the adult dignitaries invited to address the graduating seniors—the nation's concern is such that over twenty states have already passed laws that curb campus activism, and a bill being considered by a House committee would have Congress first approve disciplinary rules before granting funds and then withhold the funds if activism is not dealt with firmly. The surprise was the students who were asked to speak in behalf of their classmates. These were not extremists, valedictorians, and elected student leaders. Through their scathing words and clenched fists, the Class of '69 made clear that the protest will go on.
Life
- IV. The time has come, we suspect, for someone to undertake a reworking of Puccini's *La Bohème* to bring it into line with these arresting new social trends. *La Bourgeoise* would make a nice sort of title, we think, and opening night at the Met ought to be an occasion for some splendor, as the glittering limousines of America's newest elite disgorge their resplendent passengers. The arriving audience might glimpse crowds of bankers and stockholders behind the barriers, huddling their thin overcoats about them for warmth, eagerly exchanging comments upon each new arrival. "There's Diamond Jim Watteau," says one. "He cornered the market in paint rollers in '73 and drove three-quarters of his rivals out of the market. That was the year he bought Wall Street and had it zoned residential." The magnificent contingent of artist-landlords sweeps into

the hall, the houselights dim, and the curtain rises to disclose an old and shabby apartment on New York's West Side.

The New Yorker

- V. Even so, I couldn't help being disgusted at the bad way things were run in our school. Our venerable pile was a red brick building without tower or pinnacle a fellow could climb, and no ghost at all; we had no team, so a fellow no matter how hard he worked, could never play for the school, and nobody had ever thought of giving us lines. Instead Murderer Molony either lifted you by the ears or bashed you with a cane.

Frank O'Connor

- VI. And this throws light on another argument brought forward to prove that individuality is vanishing from the world—the enormous increase of law and regulation, the growing power of the police. In my primitive African tribe, law enforcement was in the hands of village chiefs. There was very little theft. I could leave my bungalow wide open and unguarded for three weeks at a time and nothing was ever taken. We had crimes of passion and crimes of witchcraft, but no criminal class, no crooks as you know them in the big city, no cranks, no anarchists—so we did not require an elaborate structure of law.

Joyce Cary

Paragraph Development*

A rereading and close examination of paragraphs I through VI will reveal that each stated or implied topic sentence is developed by details, illustrations, or examples. Categorizing a paragraph as to whether it is developed by example or by illustration or detail is largely an arbitrary task. An illustration or example is often dependent upon detail, while a detail may provide an illustration or example. An illustration may be the very example used, or vice versa. True, sometimes examples are fairly general or lacking in specific detail. But ordinarily detail will appear somewhere to offer the reader more familiarity with and greater understanding of the topic. If you want to test the interdependence of these three aspects of paragraph development, choose one of the preceding six paragraphs, and try to classify the method of development into details, illustrations, or examples. See how many different judgments and opinions are involved in your decision. The decision in itself is unimportant. What is important is that you can learn how the particulars supporting the topic sentence relate to it and to each other to produce a unified paragraph.

EXERCISE 5

Examine paragraphs I through VI. State which one you feel contains the greatest number of details. Then explain why you believe it was necessary for the author to use so many particulars.

*Since both paragraphs and essays use similar methods of development, much of the material here is paralleled in Chapter 14, "The Personal Essay."

The amount of detail will depend primarily on the purpose of the paragraph. So will the way the paragraph is organized. The details must of course be organized in some kind of sequence or logical structure in order for the paragraph to be coherent—and it is the focus or emphasis of the paragraph that dictates which arrangement is chosen. You have to know where you are headed before you can begin. Some people who write a great deal, or to whom organization of thought comes easy, may find that the proper arrangement of details within the paragraph takes place without much forethought. But generally speaking, most of us must systematize our ideas before we write, if we want to achieve a sensible progression of thought. This creates a coherent, unified paragraph that is much easier to read and grasp than a disordered one.

Descriptive Paragraphs

Suppose you have been asked by your instructor to describe something or someone, or you want to describe a piece of furniture or a new friend in a personal letter. If you hope to capture your reader's interest, enable him to visualize the picture you are trying to draw, or describe the subject as effectively as possible, it will help to plan your paragraph. If a long description is involved, you may wish to jot down the descriptive particulars first, listing them in some logical order, before you begin writing. If only a brief description is involved, you may be able to jot down and organize the characteristics mentally. Look again at Thomas Wolfe's paragraph about America. Do you suppose that those details were simply thrown onto the page? Look again. Is there an order to them? What kind of order?

Here is still another example. It is a more personal and intimate description:

My aunt was a tall, hard-featured lady, but by no means ill-looking. There was an inflexibility in her face, in her voice, in her gait and carriage, amply sufficient to account for the effect she had made upon a gentle creature like my mother; but her features were rather handsome than otherwise, though unbending and austere. I particularly noticed that she had a very quick, bright eye. Her hair, which was gray, was arranged in two plain divisions, under what I believe would be called a jobcap; I mean cap, much more common then than now, with sidepieces fastening under the chin. Her dress was of a lavender color, and perfectly neat, but scantily made, as if she desired to be as little encumbered as possible. I remember that I thought it, in form, more like a riding habit with the superfluous skirt cut off, than anything else. She wore at her side a gentleman's gold watch, if I might judge from its size and make, with an appropriate chain and seals; she had some linen at her throat not unlike a short collar, and things at her wrists like shirt wristbands.

Charles Dickens

EXERCISE 6

Determine which is the topic sentence in the paragraph above. Then explain whether you believe there is an order about the details presented. What kind of order?

Details may be ordered from top to bottom, from left to right, from the first thing your eyes would notice to the last, from specific to general, and so on. Unless you intend to achieve a special effect, the organizational principle, once decided upon, must be adhered to. Otherwise the reader is in much the same position as an audience that is being told a joke with the parts all scrambled.

Suppose the purpose were to describe a geographical region. The sequence of detail here might be presented in an East-to-West or North-to-South order, or vast-to-small order, or water-to-land order, or central-point-to-outer-boundaries order. John Dos Passos introduces Africa with geographical statistics, borders, and shape, subsequently stating the sociological, political, and economic implications of that geography, and finally ending with further geographical facts that have wider implications, but a unifying effect:

Africa covers not less than 11,262,000 square miles, and is as big as the United States, western Europe, India, and China put together; its area is one-fifth that of the entire land surface of the globe. It rises out of the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Antarctic, a continental mass shaped like some monstrous liver or kidney. The coastline has few indentations. Africa is the most impregnable of continents, and hence the least developed. Not only is its periphery difficult to penetrate; so is the interior plateau. It is the most tropical of continents, and the one most afflicted by diseases that have profound economic as well as human consequences. For instance, two-thirds of all Tanganyika (which is half again as big as Texas) is uncultivable on account of the tsetse fly, an insect which exists nowhere else in the world except Africa. Much of Africa is desert, brittle grassland, and heavy rain forest; less than ten percent of the total land is arable.

EXERCISE 7

Read the following paragraph—another example of geographical description, but intermingled with another kind of explanation. What does the author's purpose seem to be here? And how does he order his details to accomplish it?

Crete lies on the periphery of a great curve of mountains through the Aegean Sea to Asia Minor. The sea in which these peaks are drowned did not, as one might think, act as a cultural barrier. Schilemann had demonstrated this fact when he found objects at Mycenae and Tiryns that must have come from distant parts. Later Evans found ivory from Africa and statuary from Egypt

on the island of Crete. Commerce and war are the prime movers of social intercourse, and in this regard the little world of antiquity was no different from the greater world of today. The islands of the Aegean were culturally and economically coextensive with their two motherlands. With their motherlands? Motherland in this case was not a continental entity. It will be quickly proved that the real matrix of the ancient Aegean culture, the creative source, was one of the islands in the complex—namely, Crete.

Chronological Paragraphs

Another kind of paragraph sequence is one that involves *time*. Frequently the chronologically arranged paragraph is the simplest to handle. An activity or an event can be described from the first moment it occurred to the last. Or an analysis may be discussed in terms of first to final steps. Words like *first*, *second*, *third*, and *last* can be used for purposes of clarity. Examine the chronology in the following paragraphs about settling down to write an essay:

This, you feel, is a mighty good start. The only trouble is that it's only thirty-two words. You still have four hundred and sixty-eight to go, and you've pretty well exhausted the subject. It comes to you that you do your best thinking in the morning, so you put away your typewriter and go to the movies. But the next morning you have to do your washing and some math problems, and in the afternoon you go to the game. The English instructor turns up too, and you wonder if you've taken the right side after all. Saturday night you have a date, and Sunday morning you have to go to church. (You can't let English assignments interfere with your religion.) What with one thing and another, it's ten o'clock Sunday night before you get out the typewriter again. You make a pot of coffee and start to fill out your views on college football. Put a little meat on the bones.

Paul Roberts

Much of the sense of procrastination in the above paragraph would have been lost if the postponements had been described in a haphazard order, or in order of significance rather than in their order of occurrence.

EXERCISE 8

Study the following paragraph. What is sequential about its order? Is this a logical organization? Would another kind of order have been more effective?

Our ship is hooting for all she's worth. An important last-minuter comes surging up. The rope hawsers are being wound clankily in. Seagulls—there are never very many in the Mediterranean—seagulls whirl like a few flakes of snow in the upper chill air. Clouds spin. And without knowing it we are evaporating away from the shore, from our mooring, between the great City of Trieste and another big black steamer that lies like a wall. . . . Slowly, slowly we turn round: and as the ship turns, our hearts turn. Palermo fades from our consciousness; the Naples boat, the disembarking crowds, the rattling carriages to the land, all fades from our heart. We see only the open gap of the harbour

entrance, and the level, pale-grey void of the sea beyond. There are wisps of gleamy light—out there.

D. H. Lawrence, *Sea and Sardinia*

Explanatory Paragraphs

An *explanatory* or “how to” paragraph must always be arranged in terms of the sequence of steps to be followed. The simplest version of this is merely a series of steps: first, do this; then, this; next, this; and so on. But it is possible to work in a more interesting fashion, without such obvious chronology. Using a hidden sequential pattern will keep the paragraph from seeming dull, and will still give the reader a sense of order because order is there, even though it is below the printed surface. Here is an example taken from a book of advice about running for President of the United States:

Pictures of you in family groups will show that you were not a “loner,” and the athletic theme may be developed by shots of you on the high-school baseball team. Any other team may be substituted, obviously, except chess or fencing. If your high-school graduation picture is available, complete with an uncanny prophecy of your man-of-destiny future, haul it out. Should the book disclose that you were known as “stinky” or “pinhead,” buy up all copies you can lay your hands on and burn them.

Charles Ellis and Frank Weir, I'd Rather be President

EXERCISE 9

Read the following “how not to” paragraph. What is the natural sequential order involved? What aspects of writing do you suppose the preceding paragraph contained? What might the next paragraph deal with?

The don'ts are easy. Don't ask them for “A vacation experience” or “My most embarrassing moment,” or “I am the Mississippi River.” Such topics will only elicit the driest kind of hokum, though to be fair I must say that they are an improvement on the older practices of expecting infant moralizing on “What the flag means to me.” Although as a child I enjoyed writing—history chiefly—I can remember the blankness of mind that overtook me when we had to do a *dissertation morale*. I still have a school text with some of those themes checked as having been done—for example: “The Faithful Dog.—A poor man has resolved to drown his dog. Thrown into the river, the dog tries to scramble up the bank, but his master lunges out to kill him with a stick. In so doing, he slips and falls. The dog saves him. Remorse of the owner.”

Jacques Barzun

EXERCISE 10

Write a “how to” paragraph on one of the following topics. Try not to make your sequence too obvious.

1. How to trim a surfboard.
2. How to change a baby.
3. How to plant a grass lawn.
4. How to repair a dripping faucet.

Comparison and Contrast Paragraphs

Since much of our thinking involves comparison, a paragraph based on comparison is a relatively simple one to write. We can describe someone or something by emphasizing who or what he or it is *like*, or unlike. The comparison and contrast which links a new subject to something the reader is familiar with may be the best way to create the picture you want in the reader's mind.

It is hard to write a paragraph of comparisons without using contrasts, and pointless, if not impossible, to write a paragraph of contrasts that contains no comparisons. The very nature of comparison usually involves contrast. And contrast generally involves at least an implicit comparison. To contrast day and night would mean that there were enough points of similarity (comparison) between the two for a discussion of differences to be relevant. The label "comparison *and* contrast," means just that: in a paragraph so labeled you will find a mixture of both these approaches. The use of parallelism will solve some of the problems involved in developing such a paragraph.

Look closely at the following paragraph. What other method of comparison and contrast could have been used? Which is most effective? Why?

I have interpolated the preceding in order to show that kitchen surgery had many advantages. Even the modest, intelligent, well meaning assistant can make himself a nuisance. Only one person can work at a time and while an assistant is doing something the operator is idle—that is his hands are, but his mind is thinking horrible thoughts. On the other hand, if one operates alone in a kitchen his instruments are just where he placed them. One kept the instruments in the dishpan, took them out when needed, and put them back in again when he had finished with their use. They were always to be found in an area of a foot and a half, the diameter of the dishpan. There was no nurse to grab them, rub off real or imaginary blood and then place them somewhere else.

Arthur E. Hertzler

When a discussion is organized so that one paragraph deals with all aspects of one of the sides involved in the comparison, the second paragraph need not be restricted to a discussion of the second side. There may be occasional references to information in the preceding paragraph if these seem necessary to refresh the reader's memory. Or some immediate effective comparison may be made throughout, as in the following analysis of categorized "types" of individuals:

Contrasted with such a type as this, the other-directed person learns to respond to signals from a far wider circle than is constituted by his parents. The family is no longer a closely knit unit to which he belongs but merely part of a wider social environment to which he early becomes attentive. In these respects the other-directed person resembles the tradition-directed person: both live in a group milieu and lack the inner-directed person's capacity to go it alone. The nature of this group milieu, however, differs radically in the two cases. The other-directed person is cosmopolitan. For him the border between the familiar and the strange—a border clearly marked in the societies depending on tradition-direction—has broken down. As the family continuously absorbs the strange and so reshapes itself, so the strange becomes familiar. While the inner-directed person could be "at home abroad" by virtue of his relative insensitivity to others, the other-directed person is, in a sense, at home everywhere and nowhere, capable of a rapid if sometimes superficial intimacy with and response to everyone.

*David Riesman, "Three Types of Social Character,"
The Lonely Crowd*

EXERCISE 11

Write one or two comparison and contrast paragraphs on one of the following topics:

1. The differences between the introvert and the extrovert.
2. The differences between a drive-in movie and a "standard" movie.
3. The differences between the nongraded class and the graded class.
4. The differences between the trout and the bass.
5. The differences between a woman driver and a man driver.
6. The differences between a hot dog stand and a gourmet restaurant.

Cause and Effect Paragraphs

Still another kind of paragraph development is based on a causal relationship (see Chapter 8, "Material Logic"). The relationship described can be from cause to effect or effect to cause. Both causes and effects may be single or multiple. Consider this paragraph:

This is why all Earth-based plans for space travel are so hopelessly uneconomic, involving gigantic boosters with tiny payloads. It is as if, in order to carry a dozen passengers across the Atlantic, we had to construct a ship weighing as much as the Queen Elizabeth but costing very much more. (The development costs for a large space vehicle are in the range of a billion dollars.) And, to make the whole thing completely fantastic, the vehicle can be used only once, for it will be destroyed in flight. Of the tens of thousands of tons that leave the Earth, only a small capsule will

return. The rest will consist of boosters dropped in the ocean or discarded in space.

Arthur C. Clark

In the above paragraph the causes are discussed after the effect. When talking about several causes which result in several effects, matching causes and effects should be discussed in conjunction. A discussion that moves back and forth between aspects of cause and effect can also be effective even if only one cause is discussed. Merely labeling something as a cause anticipates an effect. The mention of an effect implies a cause. Therefore, it is appropriate to combine the discussion of both, as long as it is kept clear which is which.

EXERCISE 12

Examine the following paragraph. What is the chief cause named here? What verbs describe the results of the chief cause? What noun-group describes the results? Is the paragraph coherent? What elements make it coherent?

Lenin is said to have declared that the best way to destroy the Capitalist System was to debauch the currency. By a continuing process of inflation governments can confiscate, but they confiscate *arbitrarily*; and, while the process impoverishes many, it actually enriches some. The sight of this arbitrary rearrangement of riches strikes not only at security, but at confidence in the equity of the existing distribution of wealth. Those to whom the system brings windfalls, beyond their deserts and even beyond their expectations or desires, become "profiteers," who are the object of the hatred of the bourgeoisie, whom the inflation has impoverished, not less than the proletariat. As the inflation proceeds and the real value of the currency fluctuates wildly from month to month, all permanent relations between debtors and creditors, which form the ultimate foundations of capitalism, become so utterly disordered as to be almost meaningless; and the process of wealth-getting degenerates into gamble and lottery.

John Maynard Keynes

EXERCISE 13

Write a cause and effect paragraph about one of the following effects.

1. Academic Success
2. Campus Demonstrations
3. Values of "Right" and "Wrong" in Children
4. Winning a Nomination

Transitional and Concluding Paragraphs

Occasionally, the threads of an essay or chapter, or even of a narrative, need to be tied together by a transitional paragraph. Such a paragraph may also remind the reader of the point under discussion. John Henry Newman uses a transitional paragraph in his essay on the definition of a university:

The principle on which I have been insisting is so obvious, and instances in point are so ready, that I should think it tiresome to proceed with the subject, except that one or two illustrations may serve to explain my own language about it, which may not have done justice to the doctrine which it has been intended to enforce.

John H. Newman

Notice that this particular transitional paragraph is also used as a kind of justification (or even apology) for the author's previous statement.

Finally, effective concluding paragraphs are just as varied as introductory or transitional paragraphs. Note the organization and tone of the following concluding paragraphs:

It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, peace, peace—but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentleman wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!

Patrick Henry

What methods of development make this an effective concluding paragraph for a speech?

But the slightest return of political ambition brings that degrading fear which is the curse of politics. I even ask myself if I have said too much in these pages.

Richard Neuberger

What methods of development make this an effective concluding paragraph for an essay about politics? What is the author trying to say in those two sentences? Would it have been more effective had it been longer? Why or why not?

Now small fowls flew screaming over the yet yawning gulf; a sullen white surf beat against its steep sides; then all collapsed, and the great shroud of the sea rolled on as it rolled five thousand years ago.

Herman Melville

What implications occur in the above concluding paragraph? What words or phrases make it particularly effective?

EXERCISE 14

Write a concluding paragraph for one of the following topics.

1. A Trip
2. A Box of Kleenex

3. A Problem of Pornography
4. How to Name a Baby
5. A Transportation Problem

In this chapter you may have drawn varying inferences about whether a great deal of planning is required before the writing of a paragraph. Just as you must use your own judgment about what techniques, transitions, vocabulary, placement, and structure to use in order to create the most effective paragraph possible, you must also use your own judgment as to your own experience and ability in paragraph writing. If you feel you simply do not know where to begin, you might be helped by a quick outline. If you feel you have great difficulty with organization, you might again consider making a few quick notes, and arranging them sequentially before you begin to write. However, if you prefer to plunge right in and let your thoughts flow as in everyday communication, you may do better to simply get something down on paper. After you have exhausted your store of thoughts on the subject, use the knowledge you have gained from reading and study, coupled with insight and good sense, to rework what you have written. You may find that a substitution of words, a reordering of sentences, a regrouping of the paragraph itself, and the deletion or addition of a contrast or an illustration will improve the paragraph.

12 CASTING THE SENTENCE

The art of literature, vocal or written, is to adjust the language so that it embodies what it indicates.

A. N. Whitehead

Defining the word *sentence* is notoriously difficult. According to a simple, fairly traditional definition, a sentence is a “group of words expressing a complete thought.” If we restrict ourselves to such a definition, however, we will have problems in classifying all of the following utterances:

Oh?

Arrived.

Very exciting!

Do your stuff.

A pretty kettle of fish!

A giant step for mankind.

You bet your sweet bippy.

What fools these mortals be.

Surely any of these would be quite clear and “complete” *in a helpful context.*

But for our purposes, we wish to use a definition that will account for the kind of writing you are asked to do in college; thus the following working definition does not encompass all writing (dialogue, for instance) or all speech patterns. In college writing, *a sentence is a group of words that makes sense without a helpful context and that is relatively complete and independent—the completeness and independence being shown by its standing alone or its capability of standing alone.*

EXERCISE 1

Study the following word groups and mark with an “S” those word groups that have a capability of standing alone. For the nonsentences mark “N”.

- _____ 1. To go or not to go.

- _____ 2. Stalking unexpectedly onto the bright street.
- _____ 3. Every night after he finished eating, he went down and bought a book.
- _____ 4. Flexing his muscles.
- _____ 5. The airplane wing tilting slightly.
- _____ 6. A good story told well.
- _____ 7. The gate, however, was left standing wide open.
- _____ 8. Developing a sentence sense is important for most of us.
- _____ 9. At the movie last week, I saw some pretty strange things.
- _____ 10. When he considered the cost of marriage both in terms of money and emotional commitments, when he studied the possible results, when he dreamed of a long, happy future, and when he decided to ask her, he found that she had already married.

EXERCISE 2

Examine the following definitions of a sentence. With what points can you agree or disagree? Try to compose a satisfactory definition yourself.

1. The sentence is a complete communication in words, containing a verb of independent rank, with its subject. (Janet R. Aiken, *A New Plan of English Grammar*)
2. [A sentence is] . . . a deliberately separated phase of the thought continuum; to the ear set off by a longer pause than obtains at any point within it; to the eye by an end punctuation mark. (Edith Rickert, *New Methods for the Study of Literature*)
3. A verbal expression of an idea the structure of which accords with requirements of formal unity in communication; typically, an associating of a person, thing, or quality, expressed in the *subject*, with an action, state, or condition expressed in the *predicate*. (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*)
4. One thought completely expressed in words. (Charles Harvey Raymond, *Essentials of English Composition*)
5. A sentence is a symbol for a state of affairs, and pictures its character. (Susanne K. Langer)

Types of Sentences

The English sentence is built around the clause—a group of words having a subject and a predicate; if the group can stand alone, we say it is independent; if the group cannot stand alone, we say it is dependent. And for the purposes of classification the sentence can be divided into four categories: simple, complex, compound, and compound-complex.

Simple Sentences

A simple sentence contains one independent word group. The simple sentence, which makes up about 30 percent of published writing, can be “simple” (*Cats run*) or “complicated” (*After the hearing and before the sentencing, the defendant, aware of his precarious position, stared*

at each juror, clasped and unclasped his hands and blinked his eyes with every heartbeat). Nevertheless, a simple sentence contains only one independent word group. The following are all simple sentences, each expressing and using one independent clause differently but effectively. The variety comes from the modifiers.

An old man with steel rimmed spectacles and very dusty clothes sat by the side of the road.

Ernest Hemingway

We stepped outside rather hurriedly and down the street to anonymous sanctuary among the buildings of San Francisco.

Richard Brautigan

The whole household, intent on the wretched, tortured woman downstairs, lived in a state of unnatural excitement.

W. Somerset Maugham

I wish you had commended the Negro sit-inners and demonstrators of Birmingham for their sublime courage, their willingness to suffer and their amazing discipline in the midst of great provocation.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Complex Sentences

About 50 percent of published sentences are complex (at least one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses). The complex sentence lends itself to a great variety of patterns of thought because it shows subordination, that quality of making one idea hang onto another in a sentence. Using the complex sentence is a rather easy way of showing which part of your thought you wish to give the most weight. For example, say you want to tell someone that you had a good time at the movie and that you had an even wilder time at the party afterwards. You can show the emphasis by a common device; start with a word group that cannot stand alone, then add the main sentence (*Although we enjoyed the movie, the party afterward was something to behold*). Here are some good examples of well-written complex sentences:

Nick looked at the burned-over stretch of hillside, where he had expected to find the scattered houses of the town and then walked down the railroad track to the bridge over the river.

Hemingway

It was nearly bed-time and when they awoke next morning land would be in sight.

Maugham

He dove forward onto the ground and pretended that he was dead, though it would not have made any difference if he had been dead and pretended to be alive.

Brautigan

If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail.

King

Compound Sentences

About 20 percent of published writing is made up of compound sentences. A compound sentence is a sentence comprised of at least two independent clauses (actually two or more simple sentences). The main advantage of the compound sentence is that it shows almost perfect balance between two aspects of your writing. The following examples show some of the variety that can be achieved:

It was a hot afternoon in Wyoming; the mountains were a long way away and you could see snow on their tops, but they made no shadow, and in the valley the grain-fields were yellow, the road was dusty with cars passing, and all the small wooden houses at the edge of town were baking in the sun.

Hemingway

The highland valley was green and fragrant, and the hills were gay with the heather.

Maugham

She had a glass of red wine in front of her and I had a martini in front of me.

Brautigan

Perhaps I was too optimistic; perhaps I expected too much.

King

Compound-Complex Sentences

The compound-complex sentence is made up of two or more independent word groups and at least one dependent word group. The actual percentage of this kind of sentence in publication is rather small, but once again we can use this kind of sentence to add variety to our writing and to show rather complex interrelationships inside the sentence. Here are a few examples of this type of sentence:

In shooting quail you must not get between them and their habitual cover, once the dogs have found them, or when they flush they will come pouring at you, some rising steep, some skimming by your ears, whirring into a size you have never seen them in the air as they pass, the only way being to turn and take them over your shoulder as they go, before they set their wings and angle down into the thicket.

Hemingway

Though in early youth I had written a number of short stories, for a long time, twelve or fifteen years at least, occupied with the

drama, I had ceased to do so; and when a journey to the South Seas unexpectedly provided me with themes that seemed to suit this medium, it was as a beginner of over forty that I wrote the story which is now called Rain.

Maugham

If I sought to answer all the criticisms that cross my desk, my secretaries would have little time for anything other than such correspondence in the course of the day, and I would have no time for constructive work.

King

EXERCISE 3

Classify the following sentences as:

- A simple
- B complex
- C compound
- D compound-complex

- _____ 1. After listening to the record carefully, Joe told Ralph, a struggling musician, to become an accountant.
- _____ 2. To err is human; to forgive is divine.
- _____ 3. God is good.
- _____ 4. Had we but world enough and time, this coyness, lady, were no crime.
- _____ 5. The fellow who lived across the street loved Jenny, but she was not interested in men.
- _____ 6. On the other side of the river, the trees were brown and dry, but to Jennings, a tall rawboned youth, it seemed to be spring.
- _____ 7. Because she was ill, Amy stayed home.
- _____ 8. Although he was the longest-lived of the Romantics, Wordsworth was not the greatest; Keats, who died before he was thirty, was a far greater poet.
- _____ 9. After the party, Frank and his girl friend, having had a good time, found some sandwiches and beer in their car and consumed them at once.
- _____ 10. Coming home from the art class, Tom lost his wallet.

The authors quoted in the examples are all famous, and all use the four types of sentences differently. They, like all of us, use various techniques to achieve interest and clarity in their writing. The advantage of your knowing the categories of sentences is not so you can name them but so you can use different combinations to achieve variety. We do not want the same kind of clothes every day; we do not eat the same food daily; and we get bored with the same conversation again and

again. Sentence patterns can become deadly boring as well; thus we should depend on a combination of the sentence types as one means of adding variety to our writing.

EXERCISE 4

Rewrite the following paragraph, combining the simple sentences into a variety of patterns. You may feel free to rearrange the details.

We walked into the village every day. We would buy a loaf of bread and a bottle of wine. Sometimes we also bought some good brick cheese. Farther up the dusty road was a stream. There we would lie in the grass and look for hours up at the hawks circling about us in the sky. No one ever came by except the old man. He came by twice every week on his way to the village to buy a gallon of wine. He became the standard for our lives. We sometimes thought he had changed. But we knew that we were the ones who had changed.

Some Common Grammatical Problems

In large part, this text assumes that you have already encountered English grammar. There are, however, a few problems that can be dealt with here, in passing, as a reminder of what you have probably learned already.

The Fragment and the Run-on Sentence

Among the most common errors found in college writing are the sentence fragment and the run-on sentence. The sentence fragment occurs whenever a word group which does not fulfill the definition of *sentence* offered on page 149 is punctuated as though it were a sentence. The following examples are common types of fragments:

A good story told well
That I have ever read

To correct the first, supply a predicate: "A good story told well is a marvelous thing." To correct the second, supply an independent clause: "*War and Peace* is the best novel that I have ever read."

The run-on sentence is an error in punctuating a compound sentence, the sort of sentence that can be divided into two or more complete sentences. Here are three examples:

John loved Sally but she loved Ralph.
John loved Sally, she loved Ralph.
John loved Sally, however, she loved Ralph.

To correct the first sentence, put a comma before the coordinating conjunction (*and, but, or, nor, for*): "John loved Sally, but she loved Ralph." To correct the second and third sentences, put a semicolon after *Sally*:

“John loved Sally; she loved Ralph.” “John loved Sally; however, she loved Ralph.” (These rules apply to formal writing; in fiction and other kinds of informal writing, they are often ignored.)

The Dangling Modifier

A modifying word group must clearly modify a word in the main part of the sentence. This error most typically occurs when the modifying word group is placed at the beginning of the sentence:

Having left his keys in the ignition, the car was stolen during the night.

Since the italicized word group seems to modify *car*, it sounds as though the car had left the keys in its own ignition. To correct the error, simply supply the appropriate noun or pronoun immediately after the modifying word group: “Having left his keys in the ignition, John found that his car was stolen during the night.”

The “Is When” or “Is Where” Construction

This error usually occurs whenever the words *when* or *where* immediately follow one of the “to be” verbs (*am, is, are, was, were, be, and been*). Consider these examples:

The best part of the movie was when Woody Allen made his speech.

The worst kind of sex crime is where a child is molested.

To correct this error, you can eliminate the “to be” verb: “The best part of the movie occurred when Woody Allen made his speech.” Or you can eliminate *when* or *where*: “The worst kind of sex crime is child molestation.”

Faulty Pronoun Reference

To be meaningful, a pronoun must usually have an *antecedent*, the word to which it refers. When there is no clear antecedent, the pronoun has no clear meaning.

*After George argued with Frank, we had to spend hours comforting him.
Tear page two out of the book and burn it.*

In the first example, the pronoun *him* could refer either to George or to Frank; in the second, *it* could refer either to page two or the book. To correct such an error, always reconstruct the sentence:

*We had to spend hours comforting George after he had argued with Frank.
After you have torn out page two, burn the book.*

Subject-Verb Disagreement

If the subject of a sentence is plural, then the verb must be plural; if the subject is singular, then the verb must be singular. Often this rule

is broken because the writer does not recognize the true subject. Consider this sentence:

In countries like ours the existence of big corporations and powerful labor unions sometimes threaten the public's welfare.

Since the true subject is *existence*, the verb should be *threatens*, not *threaten*.

When two or more subjects are joined by *and*, the verb should, of course, be plural. But when two or more subjects are joined by *or* or *nor*, the verb should agree with the closest subject. Consider these examples:

Her parents or Betty always offer to work.

Betty or her parents always offers to work.

Both sentences are in error. Since *Betty* is closer to the verb in the first sentence, the verb should be *offers*; since *parents* is closer in the second sentence, the verb should be *offer*.

Sentences introduced by the words *there* or *here* often result in agreement problems. Remember that *there* and *here* are never subjects; in such sentences, the true subject always *follows* the verb:

There is always a few disagreements between the two parties.

Here is two people that you all know.

Since the true subjects of both sentences—*disagreements* and *people*—are plural, the verb in both cases should be *are*, not *is*.

EXERCISE 5

Identify each word group as one of the following:

- A fragment
- B run-on sentence
- C correct sentence

- _____ 1. In the southern states and in the large cities of the North.
- _____ 2. He had been warned repeatedly, nevertheless, he continued to advocate force.
- _____ 3. The mayor should, however, have closely supervised the program.
- _____ 4. A man who died to save the lives of his comrades.
- _____ 5. Not even the President can do anything he pleases, he must obey the law like everyone else.
- _____ 6. Had he but known the consequences, he would never have taken the first drink.
- _____ 7. George loved to gamble and, since he was wealthy, he could safely indulge his vice.
- _____ 8. The usual situation in all such wars in the Middle East.
- _____ 9. A good story should be told well.
- _____ 10. Especially regarding the delicate matter now under consideration.

EXERCISE 6

Identify each sentence as having one of the following:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| A dangling modifier | D subject-verb disagreement |
| B "is when" or "is where" construction | E no grammatical error |
| C faulty pronoun reference | |

- _____ 1. After the series of wars the hope of both governments and of all peoples involved were that peace and prosperity would prevail.
- _____ 2. Grinning from ear to ear, Fred reached for her hand.
- _____ 3. The battle of Gettysburg was where the Civil War reached its turning point.
- _____ 4. When I don't like the first course of a meal, I usually don't eat it.
- _____ 5. To write well in college, factual knowledge alone is not enough.
- _____ 6. The climax of the negotiations was reached when the French ambassador smiled slyly.
- _____ 7. The best marriage is when both spouses know themselves and understand each other.
- _____ 8. George loved acting, but he didn't want to be one.
- _____ 9. Neither the blacks nor the mayor of New York were satisfied with the result.
- _____ 10. After winning the game, the goalposts were torn down.

Achieving Clarity and Unity

Both clarity and unity are products of logical thinking. A clear and unified sentence is one that contains no unrelated thoughts, imbalanced ideas, or poorly reasoned statements. A sentence may be free from the grammatical errors which lead to fuzziness, but it may be fuzzy nevertheless because it has been carelessly constructed. Only when all the parts of a sentence contribute to one impression or main idea does that sentence have unity—and, as a result, clarity.

Simplicity in phrasing often contributes to clarity. Notice the fuzziness of this sentence: "My own opinion on the matter of whether I gained or lost in my first semester tends to be more on the loss side of the argument." The sentence is too wordy; simplifying the statement will help: "I believe that in my first semester I lost more than I gained."

Until a sentence is quite clear, until its point is quite coherent, until there is no doubt as to its meaning, it is futile to try to attain cleverness, excitement, style or any of the other characteristics desirable in a writer. You should worry about making a sentence subtle, exciting, or unique only after you have made sure it is altogether logical, sensible, and comprehensible.

EXERCISE 7

Rewrite the following sentences so they are both clear and unified.

1. First he selected a lancet and sterilized it, and then he gave his patient a local anesthetic and lanced the infected part.
2. I was at a movie and our house burned down.
3. Commander Armstrong was the first man to set foot on the moon, and he has a pleasant Midwestern personality.
4. A course in business methods helps the young man to get a job in order that he may prove whether he is fitted for business and thus avoid postponing the test, as many do, until it is too late.
5. The room was large. There was very little furniture in it. It was a lonesome place. I decided not to stay.
6. Your letter came this morning and I was just getting ready to write you, and so you will get a very prompt reply.
7. The National Gallery of Art, which is in Washington, D.C., and which contains the Mellon, Kress, and Widener collections of paintings and sculpture, is one of the largest marble structures in the whole world.
8. Bob's wife and mother stood beside him at the accident.
9. Since several of my family have died of cancer and I didn't know whether or not it was hereditary, I decided to find out.
10. Naturally the other car was at fault because the driver was a student.

We have talked about variety of sentence types, but variety can be achieved in many ways. Suppose Robert Louis Stevenson, in an adventure story for children, had composed a paragraph like this:

I had not time to be of help. The wrestler dropped at last, and Alan leaped back to get his distance. He ran upon the others like a bull, and he roared, and he went along. They broke before him like water, and they turned, and they ran. One fell against another in their haste.

Would Stevenson have had the same continuing popularity with young readers? Or are his classics still read because he wrote like this:

But I had not time to be of help. The wrestler dropped at last; and Alan, leaping back to get his distance, ran upon the others like a bull, roaring as he went. They broke before him like water, turning and running, and falling one against another in their haste.

What makes the difference? The first example is clear enough; even the ideas are relatively unified. But the construction of the second illustration offers more suspense, simply because, though the words are the same, there is variety in their placement.

Variety applies to many aspects of sentence construction—to length, to openings, to looseness, to word order, even to perfectly understandable, well-expressed, declarative statements, and their punctuation. Think about the potential variety present in each of the following sentences:

The snow lay like a blanket. It covered the countryside.

The first attempts were failures in spite of their seriousness.

You will come to the end of your trip tomorrow, and then you can take a long rest.

The crowd enjoyed the play and demanded three encores.

We will go on with our campaign.

How would you go about reducing the two curt sentences in the first example to a well-synthesized, economical, and yet effective statement? Of course, it would be possible to reduce the first sentence to a modifying clause, and say, "The snow, *which lay like a blanket*, covered the countryside." But can you think of a way to reduce the entire first predicate to a single word? Simplifying the predicate can often create a most effective sentence, as you will find with the first example reduced to five words.

The more inexperienced the writer, the greater the prevalence of subject-verb beginnings in his writing, even though there are many other sentence openings. There are several possible ways to open the sentence in the second example; the most obvious would be simply to invert the two major parts of the sentence. Can you think of openers less obvious and even more effective?

A *loose sentence* is one in which words continue after the main idea has been conveyed. You should alternate sentences like this with an occasional *periodic sentence* in which the meaning is not conveyed until the end. Begin the third example with a subordinate phrase, as you change that loose group of words into a periodic sentence.

Variation of the conventional subject-verb sequence was discussed briefly above. However, the use of inversion or subordinate beginnings is not the only way in which to vary such an opening. Frequently the subject and verb can be separated by other words or phrases, set off with commas. Experiment with the fourth example.

Most of the sentences that we speak, as well as those that we read or write, are declarative sentences. But the insertion of an occasional question, exhortation (perhaps beginning with "let us"), command, or general exclamation would add some variety. These must be used sparingly, however, as a whole series of these in a paragraph would seem very strained. Using question marks, exclamation points, and the types of sequences mentioned above, revise the fifth example in several different ways.

Everything you have read up to this point has dealt with the mechanics of sentence construction, the way in which certain effects are achieved. The chapter has pointed out some of the goals of the writer that can be reached by properly developed sentences. But nothing has been said about the way you choose a direction for your sentences.

You decide what goes into a sentence and how the elements will be

arranged chiefly on the basis of the effect you want to create, which is mainly a matter of emphasis. Devices such as brevity, variety of sentence length, parallel structure, building toward a climax, use of the active voice, unusual word arrangement, repetition of vital words, and appropriate use of modifiers can be used to give your ideas the emphasis they need to communicate properly to your audience.

As you examine the following relatively weak statements, give some consideration to their possibilities for emphasis:

The way psychologists measure ability is by tests.

I became increasingly anxious; however, I stayed at the hospital.

The small town had a population of ten thousand, and a flood occurred, and it was practically wiped out.

I returned to my place. I picked up the two pistols. They had been fired earlier. I listened and watched carefully.

If one is guided by knowledge, one can also attain a "good life" by being inspired by love. (A distortion of Bertrand Russell)

Give me death or give me liberty. (A distortion of Patrick Henry)

The sailors were transported by carrier.

I don't dare believe her.

I do get the lucky breaks despite all the disillusionments.

Every night he watched the stormy skies. And the wind continued to blow.

Displeasing sounds or sound combinations can be a handicap in reading aloud, while sounds which appeal to the ear may enhance prose. Though the quality of word sounds is usually only apparent when the words are spoken, remember that a mood or description can be more effectively created through good prose rhythms. Repetition of sounds can create a certain rhythm. While the experienced writer may almost automatically pay attention to the rhythm as he constructs his sentences, you may need to develop an ear for rhythm before you will be comfortable in writing. Test your own sentences for rhythm by simply reading your material aloud. It is unwise to be so rhythm-conscious that you give your prose a singsong effect, but it is wise to be conscious enough of your natural variety of expression that you enjoy the vibration of your own writing.

EXERCISE 8

Examine the following examples of prose. How do you hear and respond to them? What factors contribute to the sound (good or bad) of each?

1. This seething mass of shiny sea shells began to wrestle and box.

2. He was propelled by the repeated and seemingly needlessly brutal remarks and jabs of the detectives.
3. He felt the shadow and hush of the haunted past.
4. A perfume escaped on the gale.
5. She was standing a little way back up the block talking to a fellow in a black overcoat and a black felt hat, and just the way they were standing—the fellow leaning back against the wall of the building there and she crowded close against him, looking up at him—was enough to let Walter know the kind of talk they were having.

Whether you are striving toward variety, emphasis, or some unique kind of creativity, you must not lose sight of clarity, unity, and naturalness of expression. The appealing combination of these will produce the satisfying reward of an effective, even memorable sentence.

EXERCISE 9

Keep the above goals in mind as you revise the following sentences:

1. He put on his hat, and then he picked up his coat, and then he left hurriedly.
2. The flowers were gathered by the charming, young farmgirl.
3. Fallacies as gross as these may easily be detected by all men who can see an inch before them.
4. We will ask what we can do for our country.
5. The night was dark.

EXERCISE 10

Imagine that you came across the following sentences in one of your papers. Revise those that need revision, and be prepared to explain your reasons:

1. The marksman aimed accurately.
2. Suddenly a loud shot rang out.
3. A close game was anticipated.
4. She handed me the prize.
5. Mary is Jack's sister.
6. I've just been on a safari.
7. Washington was a great general.
8. Bob warned us about the vicious dog.
9. Our newsboy has been very efficient, and I know other people who have had efficient newsboys.
10. I didn't see Bill; I didn't even know he was in town.
11. The man in the command module is just as much a hero.
12. I'm not surprised you don't like mystery stories.
13. Most accidents in mountain climbing occur to unescorted amateurs and even a person ignorant of mountain-climbing techniques is usually safe with an experienced climber.

14. Linda wore her blue dress and Sally wore her red one but Margaret's yellow dress kept boys from pointing out how patriotic they were.
15. The International Date Line begins at the North Pole and runs through the Arctic Ocean, the Pacific Ocean, and the Antarctic Ocean, and over the continent of Antarctica to the South Pole.

In summary, any sentence—one thought—can be shaped in several ways. The one you choose is determined by a number of factors: the emphasis you want it to have; what goes before and what comes after that particular sentence; internal rhythm both of the sentence and of the paragraph in which the sentence is fixed; the relationship of subordinate and main ideas; particular words that you must (or would like to) use that dictate other words which must be used in that framework to achieve maximum clarity.

The focus must always be on the next larger unit. Although you must be conscious of the internal rhythm of the sentence, you must subordinate it to the rhythm of the paragraph, or your paragraph—and your essay—will appear to consist of a number of beautifully turned epigrams that seem to have found themselves by accident in a group. Opening a sentence with a main idea may not mean that those particular words come first; it may serve your purpose better to start with a modifier that quickly gives the reader the frame of reference so that he can concentrate on the main idea, which appears immediately afterward. This pattern may make easier the transition to the idea in the next sentence.

13 CHOOSING THE WORD

All our words from loose using have lost their edge.

Hemingway

The smallest unit we will consider is in many ways the most important—the word. Our aim in choosing the right word is simple: *exactness*. We want our writing to be as clear, precise, simple, and interesting as possible. But setting this goal is much, much easier than finding ways to achieve it.* A few basic elements of word choice will help us avoid those air pockets that make our writing get off course; we must avoid vagueness, triteness, ambiguity, imprecision, and jargon; and strive for brevity, clarity, precision, and variety.

The reader expects a writer to mean exactly what is written. Each word must express your idea so that the reader will not have any legitimate cause to miss your meaning. Frequently the first word that occurs to you is not exactly right. A synonym—a word with the same or nearly the same meaning—may express your idea more accurately. To find the right word, you may have to consult a collegiate dictionary or *Roget's Thesaurus*. Occasionally an antonym—a word with opposite meaning—may really be the word that will get at the problem at hand. For example, instead of talking about singing choruses with various instrumental accompaniment you might want to talk about *a cappella* choruses in order to talk about the beauty of the voices alone.

PRECISION

Precision may come as a result of selecting the right prefix or suffix, using abstract and concrete words correctly, noting the shift in emphasis in active and passive voice, choosing correct idioms, avoiding ambiguity, or paying attention to homonyms.

A *prefix* is a number of letters placed *before* a word or word root to make another word of different function or meaning. Note, for exam-

*A number of aspects of word usage have already been discussed in Chapter 2, "Style"; Chapter 5, "Definition"; and Chapter 6, "Sense and Nonsense."

ple, the following changes made by adding a negative prefix: *American* becomes *un-American*; *alcoholic* becomes *nonalcoholic*; *determine* becomes *undetermined*; *possible* becomes *impossible*. (You must not misuse negative prefixes, however, and call someone who does not drink to excess a *nonalcoholic*. The person without a fixed purpose in life or a determined view is not *undetermined* but probably *indecisive*.)

Suffixes are added in much the same way, but at the *end* of the root: *fault* becomes *faultless*; *beauty* becomes *beautiful*; *happy* becomes *happily*. The point to note here is not that you don't know these uses of prefixes and suffixes, but that you need to recall, when you write, that careful attention to these kinds of details will help insure your writing against being misinterpreted.

Although specific and general, concrete and abstract words have been discussed in Chapter 6, "Sense and Nonsense," we note here that frequent use of *specific*, *concrete* nouns, verbs, and modifiers will give your composition a much better chance of precision and authenticity. A concrete word can often be the quickest and surest way of presenting an image that can be translated by the reader into something tangible, usually discernible by one of the senses. Compare the following passages, noting that the second uses concrete words, specific words, to produce a clear visual image, while the first one is too general to guarantee any precise picture at all.

We came to Hiroshima one day when the weather was really very peculiar. The fields were turning colors and people worked in them. Behind the fields were tree-covered mountains in one direction and a bay of water in the other direction.

We approached Hiroshima a little after daybreak on a winter day, driving in a Jeep below a leaden sky and in the face of a cold, wet wind. On either side of the road, black felt fields were turning green under winter wheat. Here and there peasants work, swinging spades or grubbing in mud and water with blue hands. Some in black split-toed shoes left tracks like cloven hoofs. To the north, looming close over the level land, mountains thrust heavy summits of pine darkly against the overcast. To the south and far away, the bay lay in dull brightness under fitful rain.

Alexander H. Leighton

The intention of using clear, concrete words is not to overwhelm the reader with your ability to write flowery prose but to indicate as clearly as possible the picture and feeling you have about the subject and thus the picture and feeling you wish your reader to share.

Traditionally, writers have been advised to avoid passive voice; an unqualified ban on the use of the passive voice stems from the feeling that that which is passive is weak. (If the subject performs the action of the verb, then the sentence is in active voice; if the subject does not perform the action of the verb, then the sentence is in passive voice.)

John bit the dog. (active)

The dog was bitten by John. (passive)

The active voice tends to give the impression of being shorter, stronger, and more direct. In actuality, however, the issue is not one of lost strength but rather of changed emphasis. If your car was missing this morning, you can state the case clearly and effectively in the passive voice: "My car was stolen last night." As Monroe Beardsley points out, the sentence "The police department will always remember my first visit to Boston" is not bolder or more direct than the statement "My first visit to Boston will always be remembered by the police department"; the focus has just shifted. He also points out that the second way of stating the situation has ominous overtones that would be hard to produce in another way. For the most part in your college writing, the active voice is probably the best choice, but precision can be achieved through either.

Exact and appropriate use of idiomatic language is necessary for clarity and precision. Idioms come from a particular language and form rather peculiar grammatical patterns if we look at them from a strictly logical point of view—who actually calls someone *on* a phone?—but when we use such constructions in our speech, rarely are we misunderstood by native speakers of the language. The problems come when we use highly idiomatic language in our writing. We can say then that an *idiom* is an expression that is characteristic of a language but whose meaning or grammatical structure is peculiar to itself. The nature of idioms places a demand on us as we write them down to make sure that the informality of an idiom from our speech does not hamper the precision of our writing. Consider the difference in precision in the following pairs:

She called from the phone at the corner.

She called on the phone at the corner.

He was able to work yesterday.

He was able of working yesterday.

Why don't we play off that trouble.

Why don't we play down that trouble.

His teeth were straight, like a movie star.

His teeth were straight, like a movie star's.

I comb my hairs.

I brush my tooth.

The word *ambiguity* is used here to describe what happens when an author is not specific or clear enough about what he has in mind, hence a lack of precision. Ambiguity may be the result of deficient phrasing, punctuation, or carelessness with such matters as idioms or abstractions mentioned above or of confusion when there is no indication which of two or more legitimate and appropriate meanings for a word or phrase was intended by the author. Consider these:

Running down the street, her hat stayed just beyond Jane's reach. (Who is running, Jane or the hat?)

The lost wallet, hopefully, will turn up at home.
(It sounds as though the wallet is hoping.)

He had peanut butter and egg sandwiches for lunch.
(We suspect that he had two kinds of sandwiches but can we be sure?)

John and Miles play tennis and golf well.
(Do both play both well?)

When I blow the whistle, she runs.
(Where does she run?)

Ambiguity can often be noticed by reading your paper aloud and by asking yourself whether or not each sentence, each word is doing exactly what you want in the way of communicating clearly with the reader.

The inattentive ear can be blamed for much of the trouble that comes from confusion of *homonyms*, words that sound or look alike but have different meanings. There is no excuse for the careless misuse of words like *too*, *two*, and *to*, or *their*, *they're*, and *there*. Usually these words are entirely unrelated in meaning. They come from different roots and often from different languages; sound is all they have in common. Checking a dictionary is the quickest way to clear up any uncertainties about which spelling goes with which definition.

Here is a short list of the words that seem to cause problems for beginning writers. If you feel that you cannot master the proper use of the distinctions noted here, at least become conscious of the fact that these words are spelled in different ways and have correspondingly different meanings:

accept, except	coarse, course	heel, heal
advice, advise	compliment,	hole, whole
affect, effect	complement	idol, idle
allowed, aloud	conscience,	instance, instants
all ready, already	conscious	isle, aisle
altar, alter	council, counsel,	knew, new
are, our	consul	know, no
bear, bare	dairy, diary	later, latter
beside, besides	decease, disease	lead, led
born, barn, borne	decent, descent, dissent	lie, lay
breach, breech	desert, dessert, des'ert	loose, lose, loss
break, brake	die, dye	mail, male
canvas, canvass	fair, fare	meet, meat
capital, capitol	forth, fourth	minor, miner
cereal, serial	hail, hale	moral, morale
chews, choose	hangar, hanger	our, hour
cite, site, sight	hear, here	pale, pail

pain, pane	principal, principle	stationary, stationery
pair, pear	quiet, quite, quit	tail, tale
passed, past	raise, rise	than, then
personal, personnel	right, rite, wright, write	their, they're, there
populace, populous	sail, sale	threw, through
pore, pour	set, sit	to, too, two
prey, pray	seen, scene	who's, whose
precede, proceed	shone, shown	whether, weather

EXERCISE 1

Make a list of fifteen words that, taken with their prefixes or suffixes, mean something different from what might be expected (for example, *unravel* is not the opposite of *ravel*, but the same thing).

EXERCISE 2

Indicate with a *c* or an *a* which of the following sentences are concrete or abstract; then substitute and add words to make the abstract expressions concrete:

- _____ 1. Life and art are both something of an adventure.
- _____ 2. There is something exciting in watching a small plant split a large rock.
- _____ 3. If you leave that kettle on the fire much longer, there will be no water left in it.
- _____ 4. A garden is a lovely place for a wedding.
- _____ 5. The situation in the Middle East is fraught with interest.
- _____ 6. George woke up just in time to hear the door slam.
- _____ 7. I want to be free.
- _____ 8. He talked with the driver for awhile, then walked on down the street.
- _____ 9. I was so mad I could have killed him.
- _____ 10. They loved each other very much.

EXERCISE 3

Rewrite the following sentences in the active voice. Is the new sentence an improvement?

- 1. His meaning was emphasized with a sour look.
- 2. Resistance was met with by us in many areas.
- 3. Fifty-seven cases of embezzlement were studied by the inspectors.
- 4. He no sooner sent out the checks than they were returned.
- 5. This program was brought to you by the makers of Swifties.
- 6. Whatever you do has probably been done before.

7. The ball was hit by the boy.
8. The chair was covered with junk.
9. The number of accidents occurring at this corner has lessened drastically since a traffic light was installed.
10. Omitting part of a quotation is called an ellipsis (or forgetfulness or slanted writing—depending on the context).

EXERCISE 4

Correct the violations of the English idiom in the following sentences or phrases:

1. The charts and tables talk for themselves.
2. That is the most unheard of thing I ever heard of.
3. John was embarrassed at the way things were turning out.
4. It wasn't long before the secret leaked.
5. If you're very hungry, we can get something to quiet the inside man.
6. He use to work at this bank.
7. Please refer back to page ten.
8. Even the best of us must eventually die off.

EXERCISE 5

Consult a dictionary to determine what prepositions are idiomatically used with the following words (and under what conditions): *agree*; *compare*; *consist*; *deal*; *differ*.

CLARITY

Related to precision is *clarity*, that quality of writing which makes the writing easy to understand. Your writing *could* be utterly precise and still not be clear. For example, you may know a great deal about laser beams and write about them with highly accurate words; but if you don't take care when you use technical terms, your writing will lack clarity for the average layman. Thus clarity can be achieved more readily if you pay attention to the use of technical terms, weigh the uses of esoteric words, gobbledygook, and if you strive for brevity and variety.

Technical Terms

Care should be exercised, as we said, when using technical terms. Although you might think that technical terms, having been created by scientists and technicians to cover very special objects, ideas, and situations, would offer no obstacles to clarity, this is not necessarily the case. Understandably enough, technical language may need not only a great deal of definition but of illustration before it becomes intelligible to the layman. Consider this paragraph by Moshe Lubin about "Fusion by Laser." Notice that the subject lends itself to word choice that would be

virtually unintelligible to most of us, but that the author avoids the pitfalls by writing directly and as simply as possible.

The rapid evolution of high-power pulsed lasers over the past decade has made available to workers in numerous fields a new tool whose potential usefulness has just begun to be explored. Prominent among the applications that have been proposed to date are a variety of schemes aimed at exploiting the fact that the focused light from such a laser is capable of heating a small amount of matter to extremely high temperatures: in some cases to more than 50 million degrees Kelvin! To the chemist, for example, such a capability means that chemical reactions can be initiated in less than a nanosecond (a billionth of a second) and can be studied under conditions previously considered unattainable.

If there is some overwhelming reason for using technical terms, be critical in your choice of them and in the number of definitions. It is better to overdefine than to be obscure or misunderstood—just as long as you remember to phrase your explanations in such a way as not to sound as though you're talking down to the reader or casting doubts on his ability to understand, or even read, the piece in question.

Esoteric Words

The vocabulary “jargon” of a profession or the “in-talk” of a group of people who have been involved in the same experiences often consists of *esoteric words*. These shorthand expressions are quick and efficient tools for those in the know, and they occasionally have a place in your writing. But before using a bit of jargon, weigh the risks of possibly antagonizing or confusing your reader, and try to find a good substitute that will be as precise as the jargon but clearer to the layman. If you must resort to jargon, be sure to include a definition (of course, once you've done that, you've lost the advantage of fluidity).

Gobbledygook

“Gobbledygook” and unnecessary verbiage are faults that seem to have become more noticeable in the last few decades. Gobbledygook is writing which is inflated, obscure, and unintelligible. It is used (although few admit it) to deceive, to make an idea or object seem more important than it is. The label is frequently applied to bureaucratic announcements which have been called “masterpieces of complexity”: *pessimism* becomes a *low confidence factor*; *initiate* and *finalize* were originally *start* and *finish*, but the pressures of authority “upgraded” the terms. To some extent gobbledygook may be the result of a need to produce many pages of writing when there is nothing much to say.

The following paragraphs, published in a professional journal, illustrate the symptoms of both esoteric words and gobbledygook.

If we start at one of the extremes of the continuum, we shall find a grouping around a point of great vitality and wide appeal. Keenly aware of the painstaking scholarship and of the high creative effort that over the centuries has accumulated the body of subject matter we call "English," a group of our ablest teachers conceive their role to be to transmit this product of human endeavor, this hard-won store of learning and of art, this rich portion of man's heritage of culture, to the oncoming generations, and to imbue them with some perception of its worth.

But whether we are trained statisticians or not, we can improve the results of our examination speeches and themes. First of all, we can, without great difficulty, develop better controlled problems. There are various degrees of control possible in examination speeches and themes, and, within reasonable limits, it would seem as though the greater the control the more meaningful the test results. Complete freedom of choice of topic and material puts a premium upon accidental inspiration and upon glibness rather than thoughtfulness. A single assigned topic is palpably unfair since it may strike the interest and experience of some and yet leave others untouched.

Avoiding the troubling wordiness and unclear phrasing of these hindrances to clear writing comes from using clear, concrete words, and comes from using simple common words when the fuzzier words come to mind.

BREVITY

A primary criticism of gobbledygook is that it is contrary to a standard of good writing—brevity. As you write, always keep in mind that no matter what your relationship with your audience, or how interesting your topic, most people can only forbear so long. Some, in their desire to "get through" a piece of work, may prefer terseness to smooth, readable prose. Nevertheless, almost all writing—even that of many professional authors—contains extra words, words that clutter rather than illustrate.

Besides avoiding trivial and useless ideas you can shorten your sentences and tighten their content by getting rid of unnecessary words. *Verbosity* (overwording), *tautology* (duplication of meaning), and *circumlocution* (describing in a roundabout way) are the most obvious violations of concise writing. If you can learn to write "I am going there because . . ." rather than "The reason I am going there is because . . ." you are beginning to conquer the mistake of saying the same thing twice. "He flew to Newport" takes less space and is more readable than "He flew to Newport by plane." Redundancy seldom achieves a useful pur-

pose: if the reader didn't get the message the first time, it is unlikely that he will the second.

To achieve brevity you need self-discipline and a firm grasp of your own intention. Say what you have to say as simply and directly and honestly as possible.

VARIETY AND SOUND

Variety influences the pace and the feel of your writing. Whereas the writer should avoid redundancy, he should develop his skill in using repetition for effect. Stressing a key word, syllable, or phrase by repeating it can make a paragraph smoother, more readable and intelligible; repetition also keeps the reader reminded of the subject. Yet repetition is a device that should be used sparingly, usually for purposes of clarification, cohesion, or emphasis.

Variety in word sound can be used to relieve the monotony of a sentence. Although it is not the purpose of all prose to please the ear, concordance of sound, or *euphony*, does have a stabilizing, satisfying, and often memorable effect. Sound can be an asset or a distraction; an example of the latter problem is *cacophony*, occurring when words with guttural consonants, sibilant *s*'s, or accidental alliteration or rhyme are combined to produce an unpleasant sound. Avoid such words, especially in combination, unless they are to serve a special purpose, because at the very least they may distract the reader from the thoughts he should be absorbing. When sound enhances sense, style is much more effective and appealing.

EXERCISE 6

Rewrite the paragraphs on page 170 avoiding the symptoms of both esoteric words and gobbledygook.

EXERCISE 7

While many words are not sufficiently exact or vivid, others come impractically close to the other extreme. Try to imagine that you are a stage director and tell what instructions you would give an actor so that he could adequately portray the situation called for in the following sentences. Then see if you can think of synonyms that would make the sentences more realistic:

1. He threw her a *meaningful* glance.
2. The administrator *stepped* down the hall to his office.
3. In the next scene, the villain *goes away*.
4. Knowing that so much depended on his answer, the witness *spoke*.

5. The memory of the incident filled Matilda with *feeling*.
6. The old man jabbered to himself for awhile, then *moved* on through the door.

EXERCISE 8

Rewrite the following paragraph. Make it read more clearly and euphoniously when read aloud. Avoid changing the meaning.

Those who are awed by their surroundings do not think of change, no matter how miserable their condition. When our mode of life is so precarious as to make it patent that we cannot control the circumstances of our existence, we tend to stick to the proven and the familiar. We counteract a deep feeling of insecurity by making of our existence a fixed routine. We hereby acquire the illusion that we have tamed the unpredictable. Fisherfolk, nomads and farmers who have to contend with the willful elements, the creative worker who depends on inspiration, the savage awed by his surroundings— they fear change. They face the world as they would an all-powerful jury. The abjectly poor, too, stand in awe of the world around them and are not hospitable to change. It is a dangerous life we live when hunger and cold are at our heels. There is thus a conservatism of the destitute as profound as the conservatism of the privileged, and the former is as much a factor in the perpetuation of a social order as the latter.

PART FIVE

***Types of
College Writing***

14 THE PERSONAL ESSAY

Essay: a loose sally of the mind, an irregular, undigested place, not a regular and orderly performance.

Samuel Johnson

As you will see, the essays, reports, and papers described in this book have a common framework. In general, your approach to writing any of them will be the same: choose a topic; narrow it down; do some reading or research if it is called for; arrange your material; write a first draft; revise as necessary; and type in final form. For this reason, most of the basic information on the development of a paper is presented in this chapter. With slight modifications, the procedures recommended here will be useful in completing other assignments. The subsequent chapters will indicate just what kinds of alterations or additions you will need to make in the other types of papers.

The personal essay is in some respects the easiest type of paper to write, and it is one of the first you encounter—usually sometime during grade school. While the unwary may think that the personal essay refers only to papers on “How I Spent My Summer Vacation,” it really means a group of thoughts on a particular topic, loosely arranged, and supported, for the most part, only by personal observation or opinion. While the word *I* may not appear in it, this kind of essay may contain assumptions and usually no serious attempt is made to convince the reader of the author’s point of view. Take it or leave it, just as you like. Some excellent examples of this type of writing can be found in books like E. B. White’s *The Second Tree from the Corner*, John Updike’s *Assorted Prose*, or James Baldwin’s *Notes of a Native Son*.

Preparing to Write: Purpose

The first problem to solve is, stated simply, “Why am I writing this?” Aside from such mundane considerations as the fact that the topic was assigned and the responsibility was given to you (and that you want to pass the course), what is the purpose behind the particular piece of writing you are preparing to do? For example, do you want to explain

a process? Are you going to recount an incident from your past to illustrate some insight into a general truth? Do you hope to inform your reader about some historical or current event? Do you want to make the reader feel uncomfortable about his attitude toward a particular issue or situation that you discuss? Perhaps you want to inspire him to do something or be something. What, exactly, is your aim in writing this paper? Until you have answered this basic question, you cannot proceed with any kind of development of the essay, because you don't really know what direction to take.

Limiting Your Subject

After you have clarified in your own mind the purpose of your essay, you must then concern yourself with limiting your topic to one of workable dimensions, within the framework of the assigned length. A paper on political parties would take several thousand words, while an examination of the positions, with regard to drugs, of the leading candidates for the 1972 Democratic nomination for President might be dealt with adequately in a seven- to ten-page paper. In limiting your subject, keep in mind these guides:

1. Do not choose a broad subject—but rather a very narrow slice of a larger idea—that is, choose something that will not provoke sweeping generalizations, but which will enable you to deal with specific incidents.
2. Restrict your controlling purpose to one dominant idea. Here are some examples of wide-to-narrow considerations of typical subjects:

GENERAL SUBJECT	REFINED TOPIC	SPECIFIC TOPIC
Chivalry	Is Chivalry Dead?	College Men of Today Are Not Chivalrous.
Communism	Communism in American Life	Some Communists Should Be Hired to Teach in State-Supported Universities.
Population	Is Abortion Immoral?	Let's Legalize Abortion in America.

Notice that to write on any of the general topics would necessitate either sweeping generalizations or great length. Your paper would probably come to nothing more than a loosely knit collection of aimless sentences. The refined topics would be an improvement in terms of narrowing the subject to a workable size, but they still represent a rather generalized view of a subject. Notice that the specific topics listed in these examples are narrowed to the limits that could more readily be converted into an essay. These specific topics are, in fact, thesis sentences

which would give the general direction of the entire piece of writing and which would represent the controlling purpose of the paper.

EXERCISE 1

For each of the general subjects listed below, develop both refined and specific topics:

Personal Rights	Religion	Women
Love	Privacy	Men
War	Riots	Mobility
Sex	Protests	Peace
Politics	Authority	Education
Art		

The Development of the Structure: Brainstorming

To state in a clear, concise sentence precisely what one hopes to accomplish in a theme is the object of a thesis sentence. (The process of deciding on a thesis statement was discussed fairly thoroughly in Chapter 9.) How does one actually devise a thesis statement? Is there a way to narrow a topic sufficiently in order for a central idea to become obvious? The answer to these questions depends on where you want to end up. If your paper is rather short—no more than 300 words—you might readily frame the thesis sentence in your mind. In such cases, it will be a natural outgrowth of your beliefs and attitudes. For example, if you choose to write on the problem of narcotics among youth, you might quickly decide that the direction you want to take is one that favors a relaxing of the laws; accordingly your thesis statement might be “The use of marijuana should be legalized in the United States.” If, however, your paper is longer and requires a concrete plan, you might very well consider “brainstorming” as a method of collecting excellent insights and developing ways of tackling the questions.

Let us suppose that you want to write about protests, peace marches, and demonstrations. You have some ideas of your own on this subject. Other people have shown strong feelings and opinions either for or against these activities; the opinions seem to be divided rather closely along age lines, and there are some things you have read, such as the statement that “Demonstrations are undermining our strength as a nation,” and “The right to demonstrate for or against something is the right of every citizen.” So your brainstorming begins by jotting down these ideas just as they come to you and from your own reading in the area. After some time your list might look like the following:

1. They often lead to riots.
2. They often bring quick results in terms of government action.

3. They attract an age group largely under thirty-five.
4. They attract some who seek "thrills" rather than some goal.
5. They are a right guaranteed by our constitution.
6. They are effective.
7. They are not new in our history.
8. They are one symptom of a serious generation gap in America.
9. Their use is a matter which evokes strong feelings.
10. They are used extensively by minority groups.
11. They dramatize a cause.
12. They are given extensive coverage in the mass media.
13. The Boston Tea Party was a demonstration of protest by Americans.
14. Their causes are mainly glandular rather than intellectual.
15. They often attract subversive elements.
16. They often lead to violence.
17. They are a necessary evil.
18. They are often the only means of dissent available.
19. They are a good place to meet interesting people.
20. They are not wholly ineffective.

The next step is obvious: select from this list those six or eight related items that will form the basic content of your paper, and with these items in mind construct your thesis statement.

EXERCISE 2

A. If necessary, rewrite the specific topics that you developed in Exercise 1 so that each is a suitable thesis sentence.

B. Recast the following sentences so that they are effective thesis statements.

1. The arms race continues, and the threat of war increases.
2. Things are going from bad to worse these days.
3. Much of the drug problem is caused by stupidity.
4. You should avoid cigarettes like the plague.
5. If we could get rid of big business, this country would get back on its feet.

C. Try brainstorming some of the following topics; then, develop a thesis statement for your successful effort:

The Drug Problem
Exploration of Space
Military Service

Women's Liberation
Homosexuality

Openings and Closings

Openings were discussed briefly in Chapter 10, but they are so important that they warrant further explanation. Consider this opening

paragraph from "Athletics: The Poison Ivy in Our Schools" by James B. Conant:

A realistic discussion of the place of athletics in our educational program is long overdue. There is in both our schools and colleges today a vicious overemphasis on competitive athletics. Such overemphasis is seriously destructive of our entire educational system.

In this opening the author accomplishes several things:

1. The reader was quickly brought to the import of the thesis.
2. The thesis statement was clearly presented. It is, "There is in both our schools and colleges today a vicious overemphasis on competitive athletics."
3. The material is fresh, original, and well conceived.

Contrast the following opening paragraph from "Why Students Revolt" by Bill Ward:

It was just a small demonstration of student disapproval, hardly violent enough to cause a ripple in the nation's press. The students were unhappy about the dates for Christmas vacation, so a few thousand of them (estimated from 2,000 to 5,000 by crowd counters) gathered in front of the campus chapel to protest. Radio and television brought along their cameras, hoping for the worst, and the local newspaper reporters were there. But the press got just two newsworthy facts: The chancellor of the university again said, No, the students could not have an extra two and a half days of vacation, and some of the students jeered the chancellor's talk.

This opening, although quite different from that shown in the first example, demonstrates an excellent method of beginning an essay—with the anecdote or story. Notice these salient points about this paragraph:

1. It holds the reader's attention.
2. It offers an example of the problem with which the author will deal.
3. It sets the tone for the entire piece and leads convincingly into the thesis statement.

Two short paragraphs later, the author is able to complete the introductory part of the essay and move into a short thesis statement which is a perfect outgrowth of the opening.

The opening paragraph of a 500- to 1,000-word essay needs to accomplish the kinds of things the two preceding examples do. As a writer, you will want to grasp the interest and attention of your reader; you need to set the stage for what is to follow by including a thesis statement, or at least alluding to the central idea; you need to have a clearly defined point that you can get to without mystifying or puzzling your reader;

you need to decide on an idea or statement which you can adequately cover in the course of the essay; and you need to lead into this thesis statement in some effective way.

Notice that the sample openings did not use any clichés; neither should yours. Observe that the titles stood on their merits and were not mentioned in the openings; neither should yours. Finally, be sensitive to the wording of the opening—note that neither sample opening makes claims about attempting to write “about” something; neither should yours. You should avoid the tendency to make a promise or a statement of intention such as this: “In this paper I intend to write *about* such and such. . . .” Rather, simply deal *with* the subject, from your own selected point of view, following the direction set forth by your thesis statement. For example, you might say, “It seems to me that the more we do for our children, the less they do for themselves.” Doesn’t this seem a great deal more provocative and interesting than to say, “In this paper I am going to write *about* the problem of raising children”?

The closing paragraph must accomplish two basic things:

1. It must in some way complete your position on the central idea or thesis.
2. It must complete the essay and avoid drifting off into new areas or irrelevant details.

Here is the closing paragraph of Dr. Conant’s essay:

Can we afford, in these days of peril, to jeopardize our education by confusing concern over physical fitness for all with the desire for the excitement of athletic entertainment? Can we afford the luxury of so much misdirected effort?

The closing paragraph of the second example accomplishes its purpose a little differently. Notice that this final part of the essay offers what may be taken as a warning for the future, as it restates the thesis idea that this generation will not be shoved aside, but will make its presence felt in this world, whether we like it or not:

So, “action” may be just a little jeering of a university president (most students feel bad about it and some write the president to apologize). More seriously, it may be violence as at Berkeley and at Buffalo. It will be manifested in many other ways this year and next. The point is, this college generation will not be shoved aside or await its seniority. They are not kids, as one columnist wrote recently, whose main problem is still acne. They come from a generation that sees the world much differently than do its predecessors. And, although not necessarily the offspring of Dr. Frankenstein, they are beginning to feel a compulsion to power, a need to rise up against elder authority—for their own preservation and the world’s.

EXERCISE 3

- A. Write an analysis of the opening and closing paragraphs of a recent essay in *Time* or some other national publication.
- B. Write the opening and closing paragraphs to a theme based on the thesis statement you developed in Exercise 2.

Middle Structure

With an opening clearly framed, and with some understanding of how to develop a concluding paragraph, we turn now to a consideration of the body or middle of the essay. Some authorities insist that the writer must develop the body of any piece of writing first, and then add the suitable openings and closings. Whether or not you follow this practice is an unimportant consideration here. Of major significance is the understanding of how to develop the body of an essay.

The body of the essay should provide a clear development of the central idea with proper attention to order, point of view, and tone. It is in this portion of the total piece of writing that the outline may become an indispensable aid to good logic and the proper coordination and subordination of ideas.

The development of the body of an essay may be achieved in several ways. A number of these have already been discussed in relation to paragraph development. Now you will see how they are used in creating the piece as a whole. Some of the more prominent techniques by which the dominant idea of an essay may be presented include :

Development by Example

In this form, the major thesis is supported through a series of specific examples which crescendo to a peak. The most significant and convincing example is presented last for maximum effect. Rarely does any essay depend entirely upon the use of examples. Rather, they are used with other forms of idea development.

Here is a paragraph which has been developed by example :

The storm of abuse in the popular press that greeted the appearance of Webster's Third New International Dictionary is a curious phenomenon. Never has a scholarly work of this stature been attacked with such unbridled fury and contempt. An article in the Atlantic viewed it as a "disappointment," a "shock," a "calamity," a "scandal," and a "disaster." The New York Times, in a special editorial, felt that the work would "accelerate the deterioration" of the language and sternly accused editors of betraying a public trust. The Journal of the American Bar Association saw the publication as "deplorable," "a flagrant example of lexicographic irresponsibility,"

"a serious blow to the cause of good English." Life called it "a non-word deluge," "monstrous," "abominable," and "a cause for dismay." They doubted that "Lincoln could have modelled his Gettysburg Address on it"—a concept of how things get written that throws very little light on Lincoln but a great deal on Life.

Bergen Evans, But, What's a Dictionary For?

Development by Comparison and Contrast

When you *compare*, you point out the similarities between two or more people, ideas, or things. When you *contrast*, you point out the differences. As a means of developing an essay, comparison and contrast are excellent techniques. When explaining something unfamiliar, comparison makes the unknown become clear. For example, you might compare the functioning of the eye with that of the camera. It is simply going from the known to the unknown—one of the most basic of teaching techniques.

The following paragraph is an example of development by contrast:

Sheep are true herd animals and individual identities are completely submerged in the herd. Sheep follow a leader in blind trust. The cow, on the contrary, preserves her individuality by continually striving to better her herd standing. Cows seem to trail their leader submissively but every adult cow in the herd is just waiting watchfully for a chance to rebel, while the leader is ready to maintain her position by dirty tricks and physical violence. It is a kind of game with them; the prize is authority, represented by the Number One herd position.

J. O. Harvey, All Cows Are Mean

It is also common to find elements of both comparison and contrast within the same essay. Notice the following example by Tyrone Guthrie in his essay entitled "Theater and Television":

In comparing drama in the theater to drama on television we must distinguish between current practice and what may be happening ten or twenty years hence. This I think is a far more significant distinction than any theoretical contrasts between the two media. Both are endeavoring to offer to audiences a "dramatic" experience, to interpret life in terms of an acted figment. The practical differences between the two are largely due to technical and administrative conditions of a strictly temporary nature. The theater, for instance, is set up to offer a large number of successive performances of the same play. Television drama is restricted to a rather monotonous "intimacy," because long shots are ineffective for storytelling.

This paragraph compares by saying theater and television drama try to offer their audiences a dramatic experience, while it contrasts the two

with regard to technical and administrative conditions. Notice how smoothly both elements are effected within this structure.

Development by Reasons and Evidence

If your purpose is to inform or persuade your reader, you should offer a thesis or position, and then support this with your evidence. To say, for example, that black athletes are superior to white, without offering some supporting data, is to ask your reader to blindly accept your statements—something he is unlikely to do.

In order to achieve the effect you desire, organize your argument clearly. You may build from a general statement, "Sex education is lacking in our schools today," and lead to a specific conclusion, "We must institute a program to educate our elementary and high school children on the subject of sexual development and human reproduction at the earliest possible time." Or you can start with specific evidence—statistics, testimonials, facts—and arrive at a general conclusion. Consider this paragraph by Desmond Morris:

It could be argued that evolution might have favoured the less drastic step of developing a more typical cat- or dog-like killer, a kind of cat-ape or dog-ape, by the simple process of enlarging the teeth and nails into savage fang-like and claw-like weapons. But this would have put the ancestral ground-ape into direct competition with the already highly specialized cat and dog killers. It would have meant competing with them on their own terms, and the outcome would no doubt have been disastrous for the primates in question. (For all we know, this may actually have been tried and failed so badly that the evidence has not been found.) Instead, an entirely new approach was made, using artificial weapons instead of natural ones, and it worked.

Although we have mentioned only three of the most frequently used and workable methods of developing an essay, there are certainly many other methods of putting a paper together. Some of these include:

Cause to Effect. Basically this technique proceeds by presenting a causal incident and building a series of effects stemming from and directly related to the case.

Effect to Cause. This type of development begins with an effect, such as the fear that many young children have of a nuclear war, and then gives several causes of that fear.

Process Analysis. This type of development seeks to explain how a thing works, how a situation developed, etc., with a step-by-step description of the procedures.

Classification. This type of structure develops its thrust by distinguishing between different types of people, objects or ideas, and building from

that structure by providing enough detailed examples, illustrations, and other data to clearly establish a difference.

Problem to Solution. This type of structure is similar to the reason and evidence type, except that it is treated as a definite two-step process. First, establish a problem with enough data so that it stands as a legitimate one; then present a solution which shows how the proposed solution will ameliorate the problem.

EXERCISE 4

A. Find examples for each of these middle structures: Development by Example, Development by Comparison and Contrast, and Development by Reasons and Evidence.

B. Using the most appropriate middle structure, complete a draft of the essay you began in Exercises 2 and 3.

The Final Steps

Someone has said that there "is no such thing as good writing; there is only good rewriting." Although Shakespeare may have "scarce effaced a line," most people cannot create a perfect final edition without first writing a rough draft of some sort. Revision is the final stage of your writing in which you check and recheck for clarity (expressions that vividly convey meaning and mood), brevity, and sufficient variety of word choice, order, sound, and sentence structure to hold your reader's interest. *Re-vision* means to *look again*, and this is exactly what you do, several times.

Everyone has his own pattern of revision. Basically, you are striving to perfect your work so that your creativity and personality and the potential of your composition as "good writing" will be obvious. Evaluate your first draft, forget simple diction and mechanics; is your idea worth presenting? When you have justified the value of your opinion, you should see that your paper proceeds as you have outlined, in an orderly series of steps with the central purpose made clear in the introduction and referred to again in the conclusion. If your skeletal organization is acceptable, then examine the internal structure of your paragraphs. If the order of your points is not effective, rearrange sections. If your sentences are too long to be effective, shuffle sentence structure.

As you write and revise, question every word; work for brevity; substitute specific, concrete, and appropriate nouns, verbs, and modifiers for useless one. Exchange vague words for precise synonyms and antonyms. Add illustrations and examples when necessary for clarity. Delete clichés and confusing gobbledygook. Strive to remove ambiguities, to enhance exactness and variety.

Proofreading is the last step in your revision. Once you are satisfied with the clarity, brevity, and variety of your sentences, you must perfect your grammar, spelling, and punctuation. If you find a word which might possibly be misspelled, go to the dictionary. If you think your punctuation may be faulty, consult a grammar handbook. You may notice that you have omitted articles, pronouns, or conjunctions important to the meaning and clarity of the sentence, because characteristically, in writing, thoughts race ahead of the pen. When read aloud, the sentence "I been studying hard for this test" sounds as ridiculous as it looks on a page. Often students, eager to turn in a paper, forgo the important step of proofreading. No matter how stimulating the content of a composition, obvious mistakes irritate the reader and tell him that you are a careless author.

EXERCISE 5

Using the essay you developed in previous exercises, rewrite, revise, and polish until it represents your best effort. After your instructor has graded and commented on your paper, go through it once more, making necessary corrections.

15 THE ARGUMENTATIVE TERM PAPER

The folly of mistaking a paradox for a discovery, a metaphor for a proof, a torrent of verbiage for a spring of capital truths, and oneself for an oracle, is inborn in us.

Paul Valéry

A writer's approach to controversy may be *advocatory* or *judicial*. Chapter 16 will show how an advocatory paper should be written. The judicial approach is somewhat more complicated and, to highly competitive personalities, it may seem downright unnatural. The writer who uses the judicial approach tries to withhold his final judgment on the controversy until all the arguments have been heard. As much as he can, he disregards his own biases and discounts the nonrational appeals of others. He unstacks the evidence, patiently analyzes and weighs it; he does not hide any weaknesses in the arguments, but points them out to his reader. He finally chooses the position that seems most rationally warranted. He tells his reader openly what the deciding factors were and what assumptions he had to make. Since he knows there are weaknesses in his position, he expresses only a modest degree of certainty. His arguments are designed to come as close as possible to the truth.

An Overview of the Argumentative Term Paper

As with any other paper, the first step is choosing a topic. Here you begin by selecting a controversy, one that has been widely discussed, one that you know something about, and one that you personally feel is significant. You can choose a controversy that is large and complex, but the major issues involved should be neither too technical nor too specialized to appeal to the general reader. In narrowing your topic, you select the issues that have been contested by intelligent, knowledgeable men. You read everything that you can find about the controversy until you have identified what seem to be the strongest possible arguments on each side of every primary issue; then, having analyzed and weighed those arguments carefully, you write a paper organized into three sections:

An introductory section in which you outline the general contro-

versy, show that it can be rationally argued, state the primary issues, judge their relative importance, and explain how you have organized the rest of your paper.

A *middle section* in which you present the primary issues one by one in the most efficient order, summarizing the best arguments on each side impartially, offering descriptive commentary when needed but making no judgments or evaluations. The reader should be given the chance to make an intelligent judgment for himself on the basis of your summaries.

A *final section* in which you state and defend your conclusions on the issues and your position on the larger controversy.

THE CONTROVERSY AND THE ISSUES

A great deal depends upon your choice of subject. The controversy you select should be one that interests you and one that is likely to interest a reader. Although the controversy may be valuative or metaphysical in a general sense, it must involve some important empirical issues. If there is agreement by all on the factual matters involved, little except opinion or the arrangement of the facts remains as a basis for argument—hardly a substantial enough discussion to warrant an entire paper.

Begin your search for a good subject by making a list of controversies with which you are fairly familiar. Regardless of your current opinions or biases, try to think of each as an open question:

1. Should the draft be abolished?
2. Has ESP been scientifically established?
3. Does pornography have socially harmful effects?
4. Should our churches be tax exempt?
5. Should we have national primaries for national offices?
6. Should marijuana be legalized?
7. Should stricter gun control laws be passed?
8. Should the voting age be lowered?
9. Does school integration promote racial harmony?
10. Who killed President Kennedy?
11. Are we overprotecting the rights of those accused of crime?
12. Is baseball losing its status as a major sport?
13. Should capital punishment be abolished?
14. Does protein deprivation in infancy retard mental growth?
15. Is God dead?

The next step is to cross from your list any unsuitable topics. The controversy about baseball (question 12) is too specialized to interest most readers; unless you feel that you can make it seem significant to those who are either neutral on the subject of baseball or who dislike it, eliminate this topic from your list. The controversy about protein deprivation

(question 14), though it may be a vital matter, would involve a discussion and evaluation of technical issues; unless you have the necessary technical background and think you can make the issues intelligible to a layman, cross the controversy off your list.

The "God is dead" controversy (question 15) is fascinating, but it seems too wholly metaphysical to be the subject of intelligent argument. But perhaps you can shift the question to more tangible ground. Some who maintain that God is dead may be speaking figuratively; perhaps they mean only that many have lost a meaningful faith in God. If so, their claim could be considered empirical, especially if the term "meaningful faith in God" were subjected to careful definition. You might stipulate, in a preliminary way, that those lacking a meaningful faith in God were (1) atheists, (2) those who feel the claim "God exists" is meaningless or unknowable, or (3) those whose faith is so abstract and trivial that it has no significant bearing on their attitudes or behavior. Given this interpretation, the question "Is God dead?" becomes "Is the proportional number of those who lack a meaningful faith in God increasing?" Although the question is still extremely general, it is now empirical. If you can find authors who have argued on the issue well—and if you find the empirical approach to the question interesting—you could write a good paper on such a controversy.

Many of the controversies that remain on the list have been overworked. Since interest in such controversies as legalizing marijuana and school integration (questions 6 and 9) is likely to be exhausted, you should cross these items from your list unless your personal concern with them is so intense that you think you can revive your readers' flagging curiosity.

Identifying the Issues

When you have eliminated the unsuitable controversies, choose your favorite from those remaining. Try to define a few issues, using if necessary some of the approaches described in Chapter 11. You need to locate at least a few of the issues involved so that you will have a focus for your research. To illustrate how you might construct a tentative list of issues, let us suppose that the capital punishment controversy is the one you have found most promising. (Capital punishment might seem too stale a topic for an actual paper, but for our purposes the fact that it is extremely familiar will be an asset.) You identify the issues by answering this question: "When capital punishment is argued, what sets of opposing beliefs are customarily introduced?" Write down every issue that comes to you; later you can screen and modify them:

Should capital punishment (CP) be abolished?

1. *CP is intrinsically bad (or barbaric, unjust, etc.).*
CP is intrinsically good (or civilized, just, etc.).

2. *CP is contrary to God's will.*
CP is in accordance with God's will.
3. *CP has a brutalizing effect upon society.*
CP does not have a brutalizing effect upon society.
4. *The Biblical "Thou shalt not kill" pertains to CP.*
The Biblical "Thou shalt not kill" does not pertain to CP.
5. *CP is more costly to the state than life imprisonment.*
CP is less costly to the state than life imprisonment.
6. *CP cannot be made reasonably free from the chance of error.*
CP can be made reasonably free from the chance of error.
7. *Even when wisely administered, CP probably eliminates some persons who in time could have been rehabilitated and safely paroled.*
When wisely administered, CP probably does not eliminate such persons.
8. *CP is the only reasonably certain way to protect society from anyone who has committed a capital crime.*
CP is not the only reasonably certain way to protect society from such people.
9. *Abolishing CP would increase the incidence of capital crime.*
Abolishing CP would decrease the incidence of capital crime.
Abolishing CP would have no effect at all on the incidence of capital crime.

The list is no more than tentative, a mere beginning. As you review the literature in current books and periodicals that deal with this topic, you will begin to qualify and restate many of the issues on your list. You will probably even add issues you did not know existed. But before you go further, you should prune the list you already have, eliminating the issues that are not primary.

Locating the Primary Issues

To be considered primary, and thus merit your attention, an issue must meet all of the following criteria:

The issue must not be valuative or metaphysical. As we have seen (Chapter 7), the truth or falsity of valuative and metaphysical statements cannot be argued directly; the issue has to be converted to related empirical or analytic statements before effective argument can occur. This criterion applies to the first two issues on the above list:

1. *CP is intrinsically bad (or barbaric, unjust, etc.)*
CP is intrinsically good (or civilized, just, etc.).
2. *CP is contrary to God's will.*
CP is in accordance with God's will.

The first involves valuative statements; the second metaphysical. Since there seems to be no way to shift either of these issues to arguable grounds, both should be disregarded for purposes of your paper. (If in fact these were basic issues in a paper you had to analyze, you would

most likely abandon the assignment as unprovable.) Here, however, you have several advantages: you are compiling the argument out of numerous sources, and can therefore structure it as seems necessary; also, you are living in an age when few valuative (and almost no metaphysical) statements go unchallenged.

Some relevant evidence is likely to be available on at least one side. It is difficult to see how issue 3 could be argued effectively on either side:

3. *CP has a brutalizing effect upon society.*

CP does not have a brutalizing effect upon society.

A writer might stipulate a precise and acceptable definition of "brutalizing effect"; he could surely find people in any large society who had been brutalized by *something*. But it would be hard indeed to show that the brutalization was the effect of capital punishment. The *post hoc* fallacy would seem unavoidable. You should cross such issues from your list, but leave room for their return. There is always the possibility that in your research you will find an ingenious writer who has somehow managed to support one of these claims. If you do, revive the issue.

The relevance of the issue to the major controversy should not depend upon a religious belief. Unless you are addressing an audience of known religious persuasion, you should avoid issues such as 4:

4. *The Biblical "Thou shalt not kill" pertains to CP.*

The Biblical "Thou shalt not kill" does not pertain to CP.

While the issue itself is not metaphysical, its relevance to the capital punishment controversy depends upon one's religious beliefs. A non-Christian might be persuaded that one interpretation of the Bible was more defensible than the other; but his opinion on this matter would have no bearing on his beliefs about capital punishment. For him, the Biblical "Thou shalt not kill," however interpreted, would not commit him to a position on any other matter. Since the relevance of such issues is thus limited, they should normally be avoided.

The five remaining issues on the list qualify as primary. Each is of a semantic type that can be argued directly; each offers a logical opposition; it is probable that each of them can be or has been argued well previously; and, finally, none seems to presume a particular religious creed. After you have begun to read further about the issues, however, you may find that some of them are closed, no longer contested by informed authors. You may discover, for example, that every author who deals with the issue agrees that, all things considered, in our society it is more costly to execute a man than to imprison him for life. If that is the case (and for purposes of illustration we will hereafter suppose that it is), then such an issue should not be *argued* in your paper. At some point in your paper, you may wish to *inform* your reader about the relative cost of

capital punishment, for the point does have relevance to the larger controversy.

FINDING AND EVALUATING THE SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS

One important aim of your preliminary reading should be to refine and complete your list of issues. After this has been done, and you have pared down the list, your main goal now is finding supporting arguments. Ideally, your search should not end until you have found the ablest rational defense ever made for each side of every primary issue. As a practical matter, you will have to settle for the best arguments that diligent, efficient research can uncover. Here is the pattern that effective research usually follows:

Prepare a working bibliography of published works dealing with the controversy. Develop your working bibliography by using the card catalog, periodical indexes, and appropriate reference books. In the long run, the most efficient procedure is to make bibliography cards, using a standard bibliographical form (for a model card, see page 240). Encyclopedia articles may supply you with bibliographical leads and provide brief overviews of the controversy, but do not include encyclopedias or other secondary sources in your bibliography. You need fully developed, partisan treatments of the controversy, not neutral summaries.

Skim the works contained in your bibliography. As you read an author's case, notice his position on the general controversy and identify the issues he chooses to argue. If he emphasizes an issue you regard as non-primary, consider his argument fairly. He may persuade you to reclassify the issue. Try to read every author intelligently, sympathetically—and rapidly.

Take notes on arguments relating to the primary issues. On file cards or separate sheets of paper, summarize each supporting argument. Don't bother analyzing each argument thoroughly—that would eat up too much of your time. But you should take notes that are complete enough to remind you of the strength of the argument. Include your initial judgments or doubts, if any, in parentheses. The example on the following page shows how one of your cards might look. Your notes should be complete enough so that when you have skimmed through every source in your bibliography you will be able to decide which arguments are the strongest.

Select the arguments that, when taken together, make the strongest case for each side of the controversy. You may have to compromise here. If you select the strongest arguments on each side of every primary issue and then sort the arguments into two sets, each set will constitute a *case*, one favoring capital punishment, one opposing it. But the cases will not

Sample Note Card

Issue: 9

Author's position: Abolishing CP would have no effect at all on the incidence of crime.

Supporting arguments:

1. He thinks that people committing murder "in the heat of passion" are too overwrought to consider the consequences of their acts; hence, neither CP nor any other punishment deters them. He suggests the importance of this factor by pointing out that over 80% of capital crimes are "crimes of passion"; he cites a Ford Foundation study (1964) as the source of this statistic. (pp. 109-122) (Reservations: Doesn't this argument assume that any degree of passion accompanying a murder is sufficient to overwhelm the murderer's reason entirely? The author may be guilty of a black and white fallacy here.)

2. He claims that those who favor CP have never demonstrated its alleged deterrent effect. He seems to regard this failure as highly significant, repeating the claim several times, always with emphasis. (pp. 107, 110, 117, 150) (Reservation: Isn't this argument guilty of appeal to ignorance? Even if it is true that no one has demonstrated the deterrent effect, it does not follow that CP has no deterrent effect.)

Cantor, pp. 107-161.

be as strong as they should be unless each is composed of *harmonious* arguments. The arguments must be logically compatible, or they will be mutually defeating. Consider these two arguments, for example:

The condemned man's chances of escaping are frequently better than the lifer's. Several years of imprisonment usually elapse before the condemned is finally executed, and during those years several hearings or retrials inevitably occur, each of which involves moving the man in and out of prison. His chances of escape during such

transfers are relatively good, and a condemned man has little to lose by trying. The lifer, on the average, has less opportunity. He does not appeal so often, and his appeals are less likely to be granted. As a result, he is not moved about as much as the condemned prisoner, even though he spends more time in prison. And the lifer is not as ready to risk his life trying to escape. Capital punishment does not, therefore, insure the protection of society with absolute certainty. If we sentenced capital criminals to life imprisonment without chance of parole, we would protect society just as well, perhaps a bit better.

Capital punishment too often takes the lives of salvageable people. Since many capital crimes result from extraordinary circumstances and not from moral depravity or mental disorder, some capital criminals could be rehabilitated and eventually paroled. If their lives were spared, many men—capable and often very talented—could someday be freed to make valuable contributions to society.

Taken separately, each of these arguments raises a possible objection to capital punishment; if they are offered together, whatever force they have is lessened. The first has strength only on the condition that the possibility of parole is removed; the second has weight only if that possibility is retained. A case that tried to use both, therefore, would be structurally weak.

If the problem of logical compatibility does not arise, you can judge the arguments issue by issue, trying to select the strongest argument on each side. Choose those having the fewest logical defects; consider precision and clarity, formal validity, and the adequacy of evidence. When arguments seem to be of equal strength, you may have to reexamine the original sources; in most cases, however, your note cards should provide a sufficient basis for your choice.

Go back to the original sources and make a detailed summary and analysis of the strongest arguments; in the light of your findings, reconsider your position on the larger controversy. Now that you have relatively few arguments to deal with, subject each of them to a more rigorous analysis. Check their formal validity, noting any suppressed premises (see Chapter 7). Note the semantic type of each important premise and identify the author's valuative and metaphysical assumptions, if any (see Chapter 6). Consider such factors as generality (Chapter 5), slanted and figurative language (Chapter 3), inadequate or persuasive definitions (Chapter 5). Determine which premises are supported with evidence and which are not. Judge the adequacy of the evidence offered; identify and note the effect of any material fallacies (Chapter 8). In short, bring to bear every logical and semantic tool at your disposal. Do not be satisfied until your understanding is complete; then write a detailed summary and criticism of each argument.

By this time your own opinions on both the issue and the larger

controversy will have jelled fairly well. Try to rough out a draft of your final conclusions. You should have a good idea of how you are going to end your paper before you begin to write it in earnest.

WRITING THE PAPER

You should try to write a paper that will impress a good reader as clear, fair, and intelligent. A good reader will often differ with you, of course. He may not like some of your assumptions; he may think you have taken the wrong stand on some of the issues; he may disagree with you about the larger controversy. But a good reader should be willing to concede that you have made yourself clear, that you have treated the arguments fairly, and that your opinions, mistaken or not, are intelligent. Write a paper that will force a good reader to take you seriously.

Writing the Introduction

Begin by explaining how you think the controversy should be approached. Say what issues should be dismissed as unarguable or unimportant, and briefly explain why. List the issues you consider primary, tell your reader how those issues relate to the larger controversy if that is not obvious, and indicate which primary issues you regard as most important. Try not to get involved in long apologies or historical accounts, especially if you are dealing with a well-known controversy. In from two to four pages (500 to 1,000 words), your introduction should set forth what you believe to be the best approach to the controversy. Here is how a paper on capital punishment might begin:*

Among those having a taste for futile but endless arguments, capital punishment remains a favorite subject. When the controversy arises, what typically happens is that one side claims capital punishment is "barbaric," while the other side maintains it is "the only really *just* punishment" for certain heinous crimes. If the adversaries refuse to recognize that their disagreement is purely emotive, the verbal struggle can go on indefinitely, without an inch of progress by either side. Should they tire of valuative issues and shift the debate to metaphysical grounds, the results are seldom better. One man declares capital punishment to be contrary to God's will and solemnly quotes from the Decalogue; his opponent counters with a different opinion about God's will and makes scriptural references of his own. Unless God Himself becomes a party to the debate, it is difficult to see how the issue could ever be settled.

The only hope for more satisfactory results lies, I think, in shifting the controversy to more tangible grounds. The question is whether or not capital punishment ought to be abolished. If we ask what the probable effects of the abolishment would be, we shall find ourselves addressing issues that can be argued more effectively. Valuative principles will still be relevant, to be sure, but those that remain will be of the type that few will question. Suppose, hypothetically, someone claimed that one probable effect of abolishment would be a tenfold

*As in other illustrations, the data about capital punishment and the authors cited are entirely fictitious.

increase in the incidence of kidnapping. Everyone who believed the claim would surely offer it as a weighty reason for retaining capital punishment. No one would think to question the valuative issue—namely, that kidnapping is bad. Since the valuative assumption would have no practical importance, any ensuing argument would surely be aimed at the empirical premise—the claim that abolishment would increase kidnapping tenfold. In such an argument, we could hope for progress; the issue might be settled eventually with reasonable satisfaction.

When capital punishment is analyzed in this way, I find that the controversy reduces itself to five issues. I list them here in what I consider to be the order of their importance, beginning with the least significant:

1. If capital punishment were abolished and life imprisonment substituted, would the change result in greater expense to the state?
2. If capital punishment were retained, how significant would be the chances of executing an innocent man?
3. If capital punishment were abolished, could we find a way to protect society effectively from those who have committed grievous crimes?
4. If capital punishment were abolished, could we expect to rehabilitate and in time safely release some persons who would otherwise have been executed?
5. If capital punishment were abolished, what would be the effect, if any, upon the incidence of crime?

When you do not plan to treat every primary issue fully, tell your reader what issues you plan to cut and why. Be brief, but say enough to convince your reader that your cuts are reasonable and will not seriously weaken your paper.

I will deal with the first two questions summarily, for my research has shown that neither is seriously contested by informed writers. Among authorities the received opinion is that, given elaborate legal safeguards, the chances of executing an innocent man are slight, probably fewer than one in a thousand (7:24–27). But the safeguards required—insuring the accused an adequate defense, subjecting capital trials to careful review, providing for appeal and retrial—are expensive indeed. On the average, it costs the state twice as much to execute a man as to imprison him for life (7:27). By eliminating some or all of the safeguards, the cost could be substantially reduced; but if this were done, the chances of executing an innocent man would be greatly increased. So much for the first two issues: capital punishment can be made reasonably free from the chance of error, but the costs of doing so are high and make capital punishment more expensive than life imprisonment.

End this section with a brief explanation of how you plan to handle the rest of your paper.

The three issues remaining on my list cannot be settled so easily. Each is an open question, ably debated among informed men. In the next section, I have presented the issues in turn, summarizing the most powerful arguments that I have found on each side. I have tried to present these arguments impartially, withholding any critical comment. In the final section of my paper, I have analyzed some of these arguments and have offered the reader my own conclusions.

Writing the Middle Section

Organize the middle section issue by issue, just as you indicated. If you can do so without awkward repetition, handle the issues in the

order of their importance, saving the one you consider most crucial until the last. Here is how your treatment of the first issue might begin:

One objection to capital punishment is that it wastes the lives of people who could have made valuable contributions to society. Dr. Harold McBride, professor of criminology at Yale, believes that if those guilty of capital crimes were allowed to live, some of them could be successfully rehabilitated and, after serving a sentence long enough to discourage others, be safely paroled (10:33-56). While admitting that many capital criminals are beyond rehabilitation, Dr. McBride maintains that at least a third of them, given time and expert treatment, could be salvaged. He points out that nearly all capital crimes are murders and that most murders are crimes of passion, not the acts of professional or pathological criminals. He cites a dozen cases in which criminals who probably could have been rehabilitated were executed. Each of them was a man having useful talents or skills. The cases are documented and presented without visible bias.

Typical is the case of Wilber Black, a middle-aged dentist who, before he murdered a deputy sheriff in cold blood, had led an exemplary and productive life. The deputy had seduced both Black's wife and daughter. When she learned that her mother shared her lover's bed, the daughter committed suicide, leaving a note which told all. Black did nothing for nearly three months. His wife left him. He lost thirty pounds. He could not work. Finally, on the 20th of April—his daughter's birthday—Black bought a shotgun, walked into the sheriff's office, and blasted the deputy in full view of seven witnesses. He reloaded and tried to turn the shotgun upon himself but was subdued before he could do so. Black was tried, convicted, and after five years and four appeals, he was hanged.

Dr. McBride argues that criminals like Black are essentially normal. Their crimes are not the result of moral depravity or mental disorder but of extraordinary circumstance. An extremely unlikely series of events drove Black to murder; had he not been identified or caught, had he continued to live a free man, he would have been no more likely to commit another crime than any other middle-aged dentist. McBride admits that he cannot prove this claim; he feels its plausibility is, however, self-evident. If men such as Black were not executed but sentenced to life, they could be treated and observed over long periods of time; in many cases their normalcy could be established beyond reasonable doubt. When they had served a sentence long enough to discourage other men from following their examples, they could be paroled and, under close supervision, become productive members of society once again. The skills and talents of men such as Black need not be wasted.

Dr. McBride does not believe the waste can be prevented by reserving capital punishment for "incurable" criminals only. There is no way to predict the effects of treatment in advance; often seemingly hopeless cases become completely rehabilitated. (For this claim, Dr. McBride offers no supporting evidence.) The only sensible course, he concludes, is to abolish capital punishment altogether. If that were done, every criminal could be treated, and those who recovered completely could be paroled. If the treatment and release were handled by competent professionals, Dr. McBride is satisfied that the risk to society would be negligible. Those opposed to McBride's position stress the uncertainties of rehabilitation. Willard Lessing, former warden of Leavenworth, argues that . . .

As this fragment suggests, the middle section will easily be the longest part of your paper. You can count on using three or four pages

(750 or 1,000 words) to summarize the arguments on each side of one issue. Since you will usually have at least two or three issues, you can expect your middle section to run from eight to fifteen pages (2,000 to 4,000 words) in length. You can see now how important it is to limit the number of issues to be discussed: in a paper of reasonable length, you can seldom handle more than five issues adequately. Even with only three or four issues, you will have to make your summaries of the opposing arguments rather concise.

Handle documentation in one of the ways discussed in Appendix C. The first time you mention an author's name, put a reference entry at the end of that sentence (or at the bottom of the page, if you are using the traditional system). You can usually summarize the rest of that author's case without further documentation—except for footnoting direct quotes, of course. Do not depend on your footnotes to make clear whose argument you are summarizing. Make use of tags such as "Dr. McBride admits," "In his opinion," and "McBride claims," to remind your reader that the argument you are stating is not your own. Remember, however, that your writing will tend to look choppy if you use such tags on every sentence. There is no need to cite authorities for such common knowledge as the fact that capital punishment is execution of the individual by the state, but the overanxious amateur may carry it that far.

Be sure to make clear transitions between issues and arguments. Probably you should begin your treatment of each issue with a raised or underlined heading: *The Question of Rehabilitation and Parole*, *The Chances of Executing the Innocent*, *The Question of Deterring Crime*. Try to limit the number of headings, though, or your paper will look like an outline. The opposing arguments on each issue should be separated without benefit of headings; simply begin the new author's argument with a transitional sentence such as: "Those opposed to McBride's position stress the uncertainties of rehabilitation. Willard Lessing . . ." Good transitional sentences usually have an informative as well as structural function. If its function is *only* transitional, the sentence is likely to seem empty: "Having finished with McBride, I will now summarize an opposing argument. Willard Lessing . . ."

But your most serious problem in the middle section will not be with transitions or footnotes. Your crucial problems will be semantic and ethical. Your summaries of the opposing arguments must be accurate and fair. You must capsulize the arguments, and to do so, you may have to alter their structures somewhat. But your summaries must not affect the strength or weakness of the arguments. You should be aloof, sober, and impartial. You may make *descriptive* comments, of course, pointing out such things as an author's offering no evidence for one of his claims. But save your critical comments and your judgments for the concluding section of your paper. The summaries in your middle section should be

objective and complete enough to enable your reader to judge the arguments himself. You must, therefore, give each argument fair treatment; build no straw men, poison no wells, stack no evidence.

Writing the Concluding Section

Start the last section of your paper with an analysis of each of the issues. Say something about the strengths and weaknesses of the opposing arguments, giving most attention to the most important issues. Then make your own position clear. Note the following example:

Professor McBride maintains that some capital criminals are salvageable—or would be were they not executed. This part of McBride's case is plausible: had a man like Wilber Black been spared, he could very probably have been rehabilitated and in time safely paroled. Since Black possessed socially valuable skills, McBride is quite justified in claiming that his execution involved a waste of those skills. But McBride's argument would not seem to apply to cases less hopeful than Black's, to men whose crimes resulted not from extraordinary circumstances but from habitual and deeply ingrained inclination. Despite the lack of evidence, I am willing to grant McBride's claim that sometimes seemingly hopeless cases recover; but it would seem to me that the rare case is less relevant here than the probabilities. When the *chances* of rehabilitation are slight, the *chances* that execution will be wasteful are also slight. McBride's argument shows that, in cases like Black's, capital punishment is very likely wasteful; but McBride's argument does not show that capital punishment is likely to be wasteful in every case—or even in most cases. The waste of valuable talents and skills could be prevented readily enough simply by sparing men like Black. To meet McBride's legitimate criticism, capital punishment would have to be applied more selectively perhaps. But it would not have to be abolished.

Willard Lessing, moreover, makes a very telling point against McBride's position . . .

When you have expressed your opinion on each of the issues, you should end your paper by stating and defending your position on the larger controversy. The substance of your final argument will be obvious when your opinions on the issues all point in the same direction. In that case, your argument on the larger controversy would probably require no more than a single concluding paragraph. But when your opinions on the issues are mixed—as they will often be in serious controversies—then your final argument will be longer and more complex. For the sake of clarity, you may have to review your conclusions on the issues before offering your final argument.

. . . and I find, therefore, that my findings on the issues are mixed: some favor capital punishment; some do not. This much, I think, can be said in favor of capital punishment: first, that given legal safeguards, the chances of executing an innocent man are slight, probably less than one in a thousand; second, that if capital punishment is imposed only upon those whose careers have exhibited a habitual inclination toward serious crime, there is little chance of executing those who could ever have been safely paroled. On the other hand, my conclusions on

three of the issues incline me to oppose capital punishment: first, if capital punishment is made reasonably free from chance of error, it becomes much more expensive than alternative punishments. Second, capital punishment is no more certain to protect society from the convicted criminal than life imprisonment. Third, if capital punishment were abolished, it is virtually certain that the crime rate would be unaffected.

Those who try to think rationally about difficult matters must be willing to hold mixed views. But in many cases, their conclusions are not so uncertain or divided that they cannot take even a modest stand. If in your paper you had arrived at opinions like that stated above, you would probably feel justified in taking a stand against capital punishment. You might end your paper with an argument something like this:

My opinions on the issues are mixed; but the issues are not equally important. On balance, I tend to favor the abolishment of capital punishment. If my beliefs about the issues are true, then abolishment would have these effects: if the possibility of parole is withheld or very strictly limited until rehabilitation becomes a more certain process, society would be protected just as adequately without capital punishment. The rate of crime would be unaffected. The chances of executing an innocent man, admittedly slight, would be eliminated entirely. These practical benefits of abolishment are modest, that is true. I take more personal satisfaction in knowing that those who favor capital punishment have no practical arguments at all. They must claim that executions seem morally right somehow, or that somehow they know God Himself approves of the sterner course. I am more impressed by the flimsiness of their position than with the strength of my own.

16 THE ADVOCATORY ESSAY

*There never was in the world two opinions alike, no more than
two hairs or two grains; the most universal quality is diversity.*

Montaigne

For many, the argumentative term paper discussed in the last chapter is too judicial and objective to be satisfying. For them, the advocacy essay should provide a more direct and natural approach to controversy. Moreover, the advocacy essay is considerably easier to write. In the advocacy essay you have to defend only one side of a controversy, offering the strongest arguments available to convince your reader that your position is the best one.

However, the advocacy essay should not degenerate into an attempt to win over your reader by fair means or foul. Your approach should be sober and rational, no question-begging, no hasty generalizations, no loaded diction. Although the advocacy paper is deliberately one-sided, it should not be unscholarly.

CHOOSING A TOPIC

Any topic suitable for the argumentative term paper is also suitable for the advocacy essay, and the procedure for finding a topic is identical with the one described in Chapter 15. Remember almost *any* topic—anything from dieting to geophysics—becomes controversial once you have got beyond the preliminaries. Begin by making a list of subjects you find engaging and significant. Do some preliminary research; then reduce your list to the controversy most likely to result in a good paper.

Limiting your subject should not present much difficulty. By choosing the advocacy approach, you have already cut your subject in half, since as an advocate you are not obliged to present the opposing side of the case. If, in addition, you limit yourself largely to empirical issues,* you will find that you can treat most controversies in fewer than ten pages.

*See "Argumentative Term Paper," pp. 186-199.

You need not choose a controversy wherein the opposing sides are evenly matched. You may feel, for example, that those who favor strong gun control legislation offer many powerful arguments, while those opposed to such legislation have little cogent rebuttal. If you were writing a paper such as the one described in the last chapter, that imbalance might present a problem. With the advocatory approach, however, you needn't worry about balance, since your main concern will be to marshal the best arguments you can find on one side of the controversy.

WRITING THE PAPER

Your purpose is to convince your reader, by rational means, that your position is the one likely to be true. The first thing you must do, then, is to make your position clear. You must develop a thesis, refine it during the course of your research, and state it in its most defensible form.* The arguments that you collect in your research should all clearly support your thesis. Irrelevant arguments, however powerful in their own right, will not impress a good reader.

Writing the Introduction

Begin with a paragraph that explains the importance of your controversy. As with any scholarly writing, however, you should omit your *personal* reasons for believing the controversy is important. If you are writing about the problem of homosexuality, describe the significance of homosexuality as a social phenomenon. Do not explain that your interest in the subject stems from the fact that your cousin Ralph is a member of the Gay Liberation Front.

In the second paragraph of your introduction, state your thesis briefly. Save your elaborations and extensive qualification for the conclusion of your paper when your reader will be ready for them. If any stipulative definitions† are really necessary, include them here; but keep them simple.

Your introduction should be brief, no more than 250 to 300 words. Do not include any historical summary of your controversy unless that summary is necessary to make the rest of your paper understandable. Explain why your controversy is important, state your position, and then, in the next section, present your case.

Writing the Middle Section

Organize the middle section argument by argument. Since most of these arguments will be the products of your research, be sure to document them in the manner prescribed by your instructor. If he has made

*For detailed instructions in developing a thesis, see Chapter 9, "The Hypothesis and the Thesis."

†See Chapter 5, p. 52.

no prescription, use one of the methods described in Appendix C. Do not rely on your footnotes to show whose arguments you are stating. Make use of tags such as "Professor Schultz believes . . ." and "Mr. Albert contends. . . ." If you include any original arguments, label them as such, using such phrases as "I would add . . ." or "In my opinion. . . ." If your instructor feels that the use of the first person is too informal, then say "This writer would add . . ." or "In the opinion of this writer. . . ."

Occasionally you will find it convenient to refer to—or even to summarize—opposing arguments. In such instances be sure to avoid any misrepresentation. State opposing arguments fairly. If you cannot, you had better not mention them at all.

You should arrange the arguments in your middle section so that together they present the strongest possible case. Sometimes the nature of the arguments will determine the order of their arrangement. If the conclusion of argument A is to be used as a premise in argument B, then obviously argument A should be presented first. If there is no such logical interrelationship, then present your arguments in the most effective *rhetorical* order. Usually this means starting with the second strongest argument and ending with your strongest. Your weaker arguments should go in between where they will receive less emphasis.

For your paper to have balance, the middle section should be four or five times as long as either your introduction or your conclusion. If your introduction is a page long, then a reader would probably expect a four or five page middle section. Given that much room in which to work, you should be able to develop a fairly substantial case on most subjects.

Writing the Conclusion

If your middle section is well done, your conclusion will almost write itself. After a transitional sentence or two, restate the thesis with which you began the paper. This time state your thesis fully, with all your refinements and qualifications. Then, if you can do so without seeming unduly repetitious, restate the *conclusions* of the arguments in your middle section, presenting as effectively as you can, how those conclusions demonstrate the truth of your thesis.

At the end of a paper of this sort, many writers feel free to depart from detached, scholarly prose and to close with a kind of Patrick Henry flourish: "I know not what course others may take, but as for me. . . ." That is tempting, but the chances are it will fall flat. It is better to end with a calm statement than to reach too far for a resounding curtain line.*

*For a sample advocacy essay, see Appendix D, p. 265.

17 THE SUMMARY

"The horror of that moment," the King went on, "I shall never, never forget."

"You will, though," the Queen said, "if you don't make a memorandum of it."

Lewis Carroll

You will often need to capture the essence of the material you read in some type of abbreviated paraphrase, whether it is called an abstract, a synopsis, a summary, or a précis. You have had practice taking notes in class; writing the summary is much the same as note-taking, except that the focus is not the spoken word but the printed page.

The purpose of the summary is usually to preserve information, so that you can find it without rereading an entire chapter, article, or book. With more formally presented published material the purpose may be to present a capsule view of some information so that other people can judge whether they should consult the original. In both instances, however, the summary will be an accurate but brief reproduction of the most important ideas and facts of the original in a form that is fair to the author's meaning. To give the substance of some longer piece of writing entirely in your own words means that before you can write an adequate summary, you must have understood the original well enough to make a truthful paraphrase.

Here is a fairly orthodox approach to summarizing what you read:

1. Read a fairly large section of the material before you write anything down; this helps you get an idea of the author's purpose and how he organizes his material.
2. Make statements of the main points, but more briefly and in your own language; you may end up with only a sentence or two for each paragraph.
3. Compare the finished summary with the original and make any necessary revision so that your final product is an accurate, clear, and concise statement of the author's ideas.

Here is a paragraph by Bertrand Russell which we will use to demonstrate the process of summarization:

The mind which has become accustomed to the freedom and impartiality of philosophic contemplation will preserve something of the same freedom and impartiality in the world of action and emotion. It will view its purposes and desires as parts of the whole, with the absence of insistence that results from seeing them as infinitesimal fragments in a world of which all the rest is unaffected by any one man's deeds. The impartiality which, in contemplation, is the unalloyed desire for truth, is the very same quality of mind which, in action, is justice, and in emotion is that universal love which can be given to all and not only to those who are judged useful or admirable. Thus contemplation enlarges not only the objects of our thoughts, but also the objects of our actions and our affections: it makes us citizens of the universe, not only of one walled city at war with all the rest. In this citizenship of the universe consists man's true freedom, and his liberation from the thrall of narrow hopes and fears.

Russell's paragraph could be summarized as follows:

Russell argues that certain qualities of mind (freedom, impartiality, justice, and love) which one develops through philosophic contemplation carry over into one's nonphilosophic activities.

EXERCISE 1

Select two encyclopedia entries on subjects which interest you, and summarize them. Try to reduce the number of words by at least half.

Ordinarily there is almost an inverse relationship between the length of the essay and the length of the summary. It depends, however, upon how much information in terms of facts and examples you need to retain. It also depends on your purpose. Not everyone will see the same substance in a given passage. The historian will summarize a historical novel differently from the way a book reviewer, for instance, would deal with it.

EXERCISE 2

Summarize each of the following paragraphs or sections from the two points of view indicated at the end of each selection:

- A. The good, the true, and the beautiful (or, as abstracts, probably goodness, truth and beauty) have been thought of by many writers, beginning with Plato and the ancient Greeks, as identical and equal to each other. They are spoken of as separate without diminishing their universality—they have been treated as parallel in application but with each providing a different aspect. Aristotle (and, to generalize, the Greeks) held that part of the nature of this goodness-truth-beauty abstract lay in orderliness. To them the finite,

the bounded existence, the closed pattern with change brought about from the inside, through sacrifice, was the highest ideal. The happy medium, Aristotle's "golden mean," was the way to prevent destruction, to keep chaos from overtaking the cosmos. Extremes held something of the limitlessness of chaos and therefore invited it. The emphasis was on internal precision, conservative workings within the framework. The concept of beauty reflected this idea, defining the beautiful object as one which is measurable in terms of itself. Symmetry, beauty, justice, order, these were definable in terms of each other.

(A politician or lawyer)

(An artist)

- B. The human species, according to the best theory I can form of it, is composed of two distinct races, *the men who borrow*, and *the men who lend*. To these two original diversities may be reduced all those impertinent classifications of Gothic and Celtic tribes, white men, black men, red men. All the dwellers upon earth, "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites," flock hither, and do naturally fall in with one or the other of these primary distinctions. The infinite superiority of the former, which I choose to designate as the *great race*, is discernible in their figure, port, and a certain instinctive sovereignty. The latter are born degraded. "He shall serve his brethren." There is something in the air of one of this cast, lean and suspicious; contrasting with the open, trusting, generous manners of the other.

(A borrower)

(A lender)

- C. War in the eleventh century A.D. was rarely child's play. The nobles and kings of the same society fought against each other, and their subjects were obliged to assist them. Even more frequently there was war between different races and creeds. In the Spain of that era the Moors and the Catholic Spaniards were in constant struggle. The assumption of both sides was that the only good members of the opposition party were those who were dead or converted, and the converted ones were not to be trusted. Conquerors of that day and age were inclined to be rather harsh to those who were unfortunate enough to come under their power. According to the *Poema del Cid*, which was composed about 1139, Don Rodrigo Diaz, a Spanish warrior better known as the Cid, was an exception to this rule. His treatment of the people he conquered and captured was humane to an extent evidently unknown in those days.

The first victory in which this trait of Cid appears begins the *Poema del Cid*. When Cid invaded the Moorish city of Castejon, he was satisfied with possession of the city as a base of operations and granted freedom to the men and women left alive after the battle. The surprise with which the people of Castejon received this gesture indicates that such an action was far from ordinary.

(An army historian)

(A pacifist)

- D. Worry, as a state of mind, can be construed to be a form of conscious thought. Implicit in this state is a preoccupation or concern of varying degrees of depth, depending both upon the nature of the thing worried about and the person doing the worrying. The American consciousness has a predilection separating thought and worry, setting each aside as a separate entity, neither to be confused with the other as being in any way related.

But it is quite likely that much American "thought" is little else but "worry." Worry, divested of its ornamental robes, appears to be by nature a not-too-constructive type of thinking. Rather it is a negative, expectant,

anticipatory, and generally unrewarded activity, mainly because its basis generally rests on the outcomes of a given proposition or situation over which the worrier has very little if any control. Perhaps it is unfair to assume so, but worry seems to be a superficial mental activity. Obviously it requires little or no intellectual stimulation, is a completely emotional state, and is therefore irrational. It is of little use or benefit to anyone, save to those who live an irrational existence (even though they may not view themselves in this way).

(Author of a positive-thinking article)

(Psychology student)

An occasional variation on the regular summary is the plot summary that must precede any review or discussion of a work of fiction. Here the task is less to relate facts, figures, or examples than to lay the groundwork for a later interpretation or judgment about the artistic merits or literary trends shown in the piece being examined.

EXERCISE 3

Write a summary of a magazine story, a one-act play, or some other work of fiction.

18 THE ANALYSIS

There is more ado to interpret interpretations than to interpret the things, and more books upon books than upon all other subjects; we do nothing but comment upon one another.

Montaigne

The analysis is somewhat akin to other types of reports except that its focus is not on your thesis but on one presented by someone else. It is deliberately and expressly concerned with what someone else has said—with the published work of a scholar or journalist, a novelist or poet. This may involve research to substantiate your claims and some presentation of your own reasoning, but essentially it is a matter of summarizing the author's claims, examining the adequacy of his arguments and support, evaluating his evidence, and deciding whether the piece under consideration warrants the reader's respect and attention.

Before you begin your analysis, be a good reader. Try to understand the author's point of view; lend him an intelligent and a sympathetic ear. There is much to admire in most authors, and when a mention of strengths seem pertinent, be sure to include it. The purpose of an analysis is *not*, however, to celebrate an author's merits, but rather to consider the strengths and weaknesses of his work, with special attention to lapses in logic or inaccuracies of fact. Depending on the subject being examined, even matters of style, tone, and emphasis may need to be discussed.

A good critic often appears to have more brass than modesty. He disputes with authorities, points out that the Emperor is wearing no clothes, and frequently drives others to ask "If you know so much, why don't you write (or paint or direct) it yourself?" But as long as criticism is based on logic, as long as it is impersonal—focused not upon the author personally but upon the truth and validity of his case—it may be a service, both to the author and to his audience.

For the most part, the discussion which follows will assume that the subject you are analyzing is some form of argumentation, that makes some claims to presenting empirical statements. Such an analysis might

legitimately deal exclusively with the logical structure of the piece rather than the organization of material or any other literary elements.

The Preliminaries

In college most critical papers are brief, no more than five or ten typewritten pages. Since an in-depth analysis requires space, you cannot hope to deal with more than one or two aspects of a book in so few pages. If a book is the subject of your analysis, try to find a fairly brief (ten to thirty pages) subunit, usually a chapter or part of a chapter, which has general significance, which typifies the author's thinking, and which appears to be a fertile area for analysis and criticism. What you need to find, in other words, is a *case*: a short, self-contained argumentative unit.

Structural Analysis

After you find a suitable case, the next job is structural analysis. While it is seldom necessary or practicable to reduce the whole case to a series of syllogisms, the analysis must be rigorous enough to discover the important logical relationships within the author's discourse. What are his premises? his conclusion? Which premises are supported? which assumed? What are his key propositions, those upon which an important part of his work hinges? Are his key propositions stated, or are they merely implied?

The purpose of structural analysis is to narrow the critical focus still further. Like the termite inspector who sees the unsoundness of a house in terms of infested wood, the critic checks a work for a proposition or a set of propositions that are of structural importance or of doubtful truth. There is usually little point in chipping away at peripheral claims—or, to put it more bluntly, nit-picking. Criticism has a point only if it helps detect weaknesses in claims on which the rational acceptability of the author's case depends.

In order to demonstrate the analytic process, let's discuss its application to Edmund Wilson's book, *A Piece of My Mind*. Before doing so, however, it might be wise to make explicit the framework in which this collection of essays is being examined. There are those who would protest that Wilson's essays (like many personal essays) are not so much arguments as attempts to effectively restate truisms. If this is the case, the methods he uses (being literary) should not be subjected to examination by the rules of logic. Such an objection to analysis could be valid. Since a discussion can be metaphoric or figurative rather than literal, there are obvious instances in which an analysis is more like shadowboxing than a real contest. Between Wilson's statements as absolute truth claims and Wilson's statements as analogy or metaphor there lies an intermediate field of interpretation. In this area analysis can be used. If the work is considered as an instance of hypothesizing in print, the analysis will not be condemnatory in nature. It can be similar to constructive criticism that may help convert hypothesis into respectable argument.

A Piece of My Mind is a collection of essays, each of which is essentially a separate and complete case in itself. The absence of thematic unity among the essays makes the first step fairly simple: select any of these essays as the main focus of the criticism. Wilson, as his table of contents suggests, has addressed himself to several broad and difficult topics:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| I. Religion | VI. The Jews |
| II. The United States | VII. Education |
| III. War | VIII. Science |
| IV. Europe | IX. Sex |
| V. Russia | X. The Author at Sixty |

Wilson's treatment of these subjects is far less general than his chapter headings suggest. His first chapter, for example, is for the most part an attempt to define the word *religion*; the defining characteristics of religion, he thinks, are metaphysical:

Religion is the cult of a god, or gods, conceived in supernatural terms. The "religion of Humanity" and the "religion of art" are not religious at all, and it confuses the whole question of religion seriously to use such phrases. (P. 3.)

It becomes apparent that Wilson's beliefs are emphatically anti-metaphysical. "The word *God*," he says, "is not archaic, and it ought to be dropped by those who do not need it for moral support." (P. 6.) Wilson's cast of mind is decidedly empirical, and that fact should be taken into consideration when interpreting what he says in later chapters. But his religious views themselves would probably make a poor subject for analysis. The problems that would arise here would simply be too broad and too difficult to handle in a short paper.

The chapter on sex has some promising material. Wilson's statements about sex are unusual and fascinating; the approach he takes to the topic seems to typify his thinking, and his claims, if true, are significant indeed. His chapter begins as follows:

The purpose of sexual intercourse, and hence of what we call love, is to secure the survival of the human race and, if possible, to improve its breed.

This would seem obvious enough, yet I have found, on several occasions, when I have emphasized this truism in conversation, that I have provoked the most vehement protests. . . . The sentimentalities, romanticisms, idealisms that make up so much of modern literature have concealed from educated people the pattern and the purpose of the mating of human beings, which is basically identical with those of the mating of the other animals. (P. 197.)

Wilson describes the behavior of the Australian lyre-bird, whose strutting and preening during its mating season are closely analogous, he claims, to the amorous stratagems of human courtship:

Now, a man in his mating time behaves very much like the lyre-bird, and he does so to achieve the same end: to produce baby human beings, as the lyre-bird to produce little lyre-birds. (P. 198.)

In Wilson's opinion, there is only one significant difference between the sexual behavior of men and animals: "... the much greater frequency with which, in the case of humanity, this cycle becomes frustrated or complicated." (P. 198.) Modern literature, he claims, is concerned to an alarming degree with people who are in one way or another sexually frustrated:

Modern literature has become so addicted to presenting situations of this kind that one cannot always be sure whether its writers are fully aware that the anguish of their lovers arises not merely from estrangements, from not being able to enjoy or to renew the ecstasy of love-making . . . but from the basic biological bafflement of the failure to produce children. And of course there is the complication that one does not want just any children. There is the principle of sexual selection. One wants children by a mate one admires. One wants to produce better children. (P. 199.)

Wilson maintains that this essential purpose of sex is frequently lost sight of in modern life. Particularly in our youthful days, "... we may not be aware that what we are aiming at [in sexual intercourse] is offspring more viable than we are." (P. 203.) Thus, while we may be unconscious of the fact, our fundamental purpose in mating is to preserve and improve the human species. When this instinctive drive is frustrated, the result is often a sexual neurosis of some kind: Victorian guilt, "the accepted adultery of the French," "the glorification of intercourse for its own sake," homosexuality, or narcissism. (Pp. 199-200.) But Wilson is optimistic. He believes that mankind will become more fully conscious of its desire for genetic self-improvement and will eventually set about achieving its ends as efficiently as possible—probably "... through the systematic practice of what used to be called 'eugenics.'" (P. 205.) He concludes his essay with this prediction:

It seems to me, therefore, inevitable that the future will see a great movement for the betterment of the race by breeding. Think what we have done with dogs. Think what we have done with horses. Think what, since Neanderthal man or beginning whenever you like—by methods of deliberate discipline and selection that has been half-conscious—we have already done with the human race. Do not say that you turn in distaste from a selection so calculated and conscious, which does not depend on "the heart." In how many marriages and liaisons in the society we actually inhabit does no calculation enter or the heart play a cardinal role? (P. 207.)

Although this synopsis of necessity leaves out many minor points, it suggests the basic structure and substance of Wilson's case. The gist of one of his main arguments can be encapsulated syllogistically:

All the persistent and instinctive purposes of mankind are very likely to be pursued more consciously and efficiently in the future; Genetic self-improvement is the persistent and instinctive purpose of sexual intercourse;

Genetic self-improvement is very likely to be pursued more consciously and more efficiently in the future.

The minor premise is not only the basis of Wilson's prediction; it is the key proposition supporting his arguments about modern literature and sexual maladjustment. If the basic purpose of sex is frustrated, we become sexually maladjusted; and since modern man is plagued with sexual problems, modern literature is populated "to what may seem an appalling degree" with characters whose sex drives are frustrated. The acceptability of Wilson's case depends crucially on the truth of a single proposition. Wilson himself seems completely aware of this fact; the proposition is a part of his first sentence: "The purpose of sexual intercourse . . . is . . . to improve its [mankind's] breed."

Stating the Author's Key Claim in Propositional Form

Before you attempt to judge the truth of an author's key claim, translate it into propositional form. Standard form, for all its ponderous ugliness, is logically explicit. It forces you to ask most of the right questions: What is the author's literal meaning? Is his claim universal, particular, or singular? What is his degree of certainty?

With regard to Wilson's claim, this last question can be answered most easily: in his second paragraph, Wilson refers to the claim as a "truism"; it seems to him "obvious enough" that the purpose of sex is to try to improve the breed. The degree of his certainty seems absolute.

It is equally apparent that his claim is a generalization; the *purpose* he refers to is the purpose of all—or at least of most—of mankind. (Let us give Wilson the benefit of the doubt and settle for most.) But the question of Wilson's literal meaning is a more difficult one. He is using the word *purpose* in a particular sense. He does not mean a *conscious* desire or intention to bring about a future effect or set of effects. When we say, for example, that "Our purpose is to win this war," we mean that we *consciously* intend to cause a certain future effect, namely, military victory. But Wilson clearly states that human beings may be quite unconscious of the purpose of sex; when we are young, our intense eroticism often makes sex seem an end itself; and even in later life, "the sentimentalities, romanticisms, [and] idealisms" that surround the subject are very apt to keep us unconscious of the true purpose of sex. According to the essay, the purpose (whether conscious or not) that Wilson refers to is deep and pervasive, for it has already caused us to rise from Neanderthal and will cause in the future "a great movement for the betterment of the race by breeding." Consider then, this propositional equivalent of Wilson's key claim:

Consciously or unconsciously, most people strongly and persistently intend that their sexual activities cause genetic improvements in the same human species. (P. 208.)

Judging the Truth of an Author's Claim

We arrive finally at the question of truth. Is there or is there not sufficient evidence to warrant the author's claim? Making such a judgment will often require considerable research, but, to begin with, judging the truth of a claim is often a matter of asking the right questions. The first and most essential question that should be asked is: *What would actual evidence look like?* If this question can be answered, determining the truth or falsity of a proposition is at least possible. If it cannot be answered, this knowledge will remain forever out of reach.

Since Wilson's claim is a generalization, actual evidence would have to be in the form of positive and negative instances. A positive instance would begin "Consciously or unconsciously, Clyde Waldo strongly and persistently intends. . . ." A negative instance would, by contrast, go like this: "Consciously or unconsciously, Harry Flum *does not* strongly and persistently intend. . . ."

But the question of what *actual* evidence would look like or how it would be gathered is not so easily answered. After all, you cannot observe the intentions of people directly, and could not, therefore, expect to gather evidence of this sort. Instead, you would have to *ask* a man about his intentions, gathering *actual* evidence by interview or questionnaire the way polltakers do. In that case, in order to be accurate, both positive and negative instances would have to begin "Clyde Waldo *reports* that consciously or unconsciously he. . . ."

But that would still not do. You cannot expect a man to state his *unconscious* intentions; that would be like asking him to report his unfelt headaches. And yet evidence to support or refute Wilson's claim *must* include *unconscious* intentions. Wilson admits himself that only a few people are *aware* of their deepseated sexual intentions; it is their unawareness, in fact, that causes so much trouble these days. Somehow evidence must be found which includes unconscious intentions, or else Wilson's claim must be judged unsupportable.

What *actual* evidence could be gathered about the unconscious intentions of men? Not much, obviously. Psychiatrists might be of some help, but even they would probably admit that their knowledge of men's unconscious intentions is quite sketchy and unreliable. Their knowledge of unconscious mental processes is often sufficient to enable them to help disturbed patients; but it would seem extremely doubtful that psychiatric knowledge is sufficient or reliable enough to be used to support Wilson's claim. Any sample that could be supplied by psychiatrists, moreover, would very likely be unrepresentative; their patients, for the most part, are fairly affluent and fairly well educated. We could not be at all sure that their unconscious intentions accurately represent the intentions of mankind as a whole.

No research is necessary in order for us to judge the truth of Wilson's claim. In fact, since it seems impossible to construct a satisfying description of what actual evidence would look like, there is no way to undertake effective research. The inevitable conclusion is that Wilson's key claim, the claim upon which his whole case rests, is rationally unsupported. It may be true, of course, but there is little rational basis for believing it to be so. Most assuredly Wilson is wrong to consider the claim an obvious truism.

Summary: A General Scheme for Logical Criticism

The analysis of Wilson's chapter has provided sufficient material for an effective critical paper. Although the nature of analysis varies considerably according to the specific and special problems encountered, the steps of effective logical criticism usually occur in the following pattern:

- Step I: Select from the author's work a relatively self-contained argumentative subunit. If possible, the subunit should be of general interest, should typify the author's thinking, and should be no more than (say) thirty or forty pages long.
- Step II: Analyze the logical structure of the author's case. The aim here is to isolate the author's key propositions, the claims upon which the acceptability of his entire case depends.
- Step III: Translate the author's key claims into standard logical form. Be sure to consider the context in which the claims occur, and to resolve all doubts in the author's favor.
- Step IV: Judge the truth of the author's key propositions. First, determine precisely what actual evidence would look like, and then, if necessary, determine through research whether the available evidence is sufficient and reliable enough to support the author's claim.
- Step V: If the author in attempting to support his key claims has committed any logical fallacies, display by clear analysis the exact nature of those fallacies.

EXERCISE 1

Pick a short essay or article from a popular magazine, locate a case, convert it into a syllogism, and determine what would be—in that context—relevant evidence.

EXERCISE 2

Following the steps outlined in this chapter, use your analysis in Exercise 1 to write a short, critical paper.

19 THE ESSAY TEST

*"I have answered three questions, and that is enough,"
Said his father. "Don't give yourself airs!
Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?
Be off or I'll kick you down-stairs!"*

Lewis Carroll

As a college student, you must be able to express yourself in writing, no matter what the occasion or the subject. Many instructors force the student to use this ability on essay-type examinations. This kind of exam demands that the student not only know the facts but also be able to formulate a central idea from those facts, put them in logical order, and write a coherent essay about them.

One study done on the grading of essay examinations at the college level revealed some interesting data. Each instructor was given identical copies of an examination answer. Each was told to read the answer and assign it a grade. Although all had the same content, some answers were outlined and arranged in logical order, while others were purposely mixed up and out of order. The handwriting was poor on some papers, while on others it was quite good—some papers had spelling and syntax errors while others were grammatically correct. The grading of these identically answered examinations was revealing. The scores ranged from a low of 44 percent to a high of 93 percent. Clearly, content is not enough. If you want to get good grades on your essay test, you must organize logically, write legibly, and pay attention to grammar and spelling.

PRINCIPLES OF WRITING ESSAY EXAMINATION ANSWERS

To insure the best results when you take an essay examination, practice the following:

1. Read the question carefully to be sure you understand what is expected before you begin to write.
2. Use an overview or outline to delineate the scope of your intended answer and to assure a logical structure.

3. Observe time limits and point values for particular questions and allot your planning and writing time accordingly.
4. Make your answer as precise and concise as possible by avoiding redundancy and flowery phrasing.

Now let us consider each of these principles in greater detail.

Be Sure You Understand the Question

Often failure on an examination can be traced directly to a lack of understanding of what is required for an answer. You may put beautiful phrases on paper, but unless the words relate to the questions asked, the instructor is bound to consider that the answer shows you to be inadequately prepared. At the outset of an examination, read each question, word by word, noting the nature of the response required. Essay questions often hinge upon certain key verbs, the meaning of which are offered below:

- COMPARE:** This means that you are to show how two or more things, people, or ideas are alike by describing what they have in common.
- CONTRAST:** When you contrast things, ideas or people, you show their differences or dissimilarities, and reveal how these differences are significant.
- ANALYZE:** This means to separate into its elements or parts any idea or thing. You may simply want to examine the individual parts, or you may want to show how the parts relate to each other and to the whole. For example, if you were to analyze the economic theory of Karl Marx, you would first describe its major components and then, based on these components, make observations about the total theory.
- DISCUSS:** If your instructor uses this word in a question, he is giving you considerable latitude depending, of course, upon how the remainder of the question is worded. Essentially a discussion of something or someone implies a sifting or examining, especially by presenting both favorable and unfavorable aspects of the issue or personality. A discussion of the presidential election of 1972 would include those aspects you approved of as well as those considered to be negative. It should also provide sufficient detail to clarify the essential characteristics of the election.
- EVALUATE:** When this word is used, the instructor probably wants to find out what opinions you have formed on the subject—and why. No opinion is wrong; however, if you offer an opinion based on unreasonable or shoddy grounds, the instructor may question your grasp of the subject. When you evaluate something or someone in a particular context, tell how valid or

invalid the concept is, and give reasons which are logical and well conceived to buttress your opinion.

EXERCISE 1

Other key words you will need to watch for and understand as they are used in test questions include *describe*, *define*, *examine*, *review*, *defend*, and *criticize*. Develop working definitions of these terms in the context of essay tests.

Use an Outline or Overview

If your instructor asks you to describe the conditions in the South at the end of the Civil War, you will be more apt to write a complete and successful answer if you establish an outline within which to work. Actually an essay answer is the same as a small theme or essay. It can be approached by the same stages. The first of these to be considered is the thesis or statement. In the question about conditions in the South, it would seem reasonable to classify the facts into categories, all pointing toward and supporting the thesis. An outline designed to set forth the scope of your answer to this particular question might appear like this:

THESIS: The ravages of five years of Civil War were in evidence throughout all aspects of the Southerner's life.

- I. Economically
 - A. Jobs
 - B. Material Goods
- II. Physically
 - A. People
 - B. Property
- III. Spiritually

As you develop your answer from this outline, you will probably recall additional points and ideas. These can be added to your initial outline by key words or phrases, and then fitted appropriately into the essay itself. To simplify this revision, skip a line between each point so there will be room for any additional ideas.

If you don't feel you have enough time to construct an outline, you can ensure some continuity in your answer by using marginal notes to remind yourself of the points you must cover. Notice how a question might be answered using this marginal note technique:

Conditions in the South were extremely poor; all aspects of the Southern life were in a pitiable condition. . . .

ECONOMICALLY: Many of the people were jobless. Stores and shops where tradesmen had provided consumer goods—furniture, cloth-

ing, farm equipment, etc., were burned. Field upon field was uncultivated and in weeds; even if there were crops, few horses were available to till the soil, or oxen to pull a plow. . . .

PHYSICALLY : The people as a group were showing pronounced effects of substandard diets and lack of medical care. Many were victims of TB and other respiratory ailments; some suffered the effects of war wounds, and still countless others showed the effects of. . . .

SPIRITUALLY : Perhaps the greatest noticeable effect of the war on the South was in the deterioration of the spirit of the people. Gone was the ready smile of the young; buried was the hospitality of the people for strangers as well as for each other and in their places were blank stares of resignation and. . . .

Whether you use the outline, which is preferred, or, because of time limitations, you employ the marginal note technique, some form of preliminary organization is essential. It is one of the best ways of making sure that your writing will have a single focus and that all the important points will be covered.

EXERCISE 2

Organizing Answers

Using your notes from one of your classes, construct several essay questions. Develop a thesis statement and outline for each of the questions.

Observe Time Limits

The usual reaction to an essay: begin with the first question, write as much as you can, and then go on to the second question, following this pattern until you finish the exam or until time is up. A better way is to begin by reading all of the questions; notice which ones are going to require lengthy, detailed responses; check the point values allotted to each question. You can thus pace yourself and not get caught with one item unfinished at the end of the exam.

Avoid Space-Filling Ploys

Too often a student writing an essay exam will substitute quantity for quality, feeling that a large amount of writing, by its sheer size, will have an impressive effect. Nothing could be more incorrect. No instructor enjoys wading through line after line on an essay answer, even when the handwriting is excellent, just to locate the kernel of an idea expressed by a well-meaning student. In addition, padding your answer wastes time that might better be spent answering another question. If the organizational precautions of outlining and thinking through your answer are observed, the likelihood of overstating your answer is greatly

reduced. Keep in mind the nature of the writing you are doing; succinct, precise kinds of information are sought, and thus you must avoid using superfluous words.

EXERCISE 3

Avoiding Redundancy

The partial answer quoted below is in response to this question: "What are the essential differences between traditional and new grammar?" Edit the fragment, eliminating unnecessary words and phrases:

There are two basic kinds of grammar in use at this time. One very common kind or type is known as traditional or the more conventional grammar form. This traditional form of grammar is in the main characterized by the fact that it is what is referred to as prescriptive in its function or design. By prescriptive, we mean that this traditional form seeks to describe the functions of everyday speaking and writing as they should be if they are going to be correct.

EXERCISE 4

For practice, analyze one of your recent essay tests, using this chapter as a guide.

EXERCISE 5

Read the sample argumentative term paper on pages 268–299, and answer this question as though it had been given to you as an essay examination: "Evaluate the conclusions reached by the author of 'Should the Present Indian Reservation System Be Abolished?'"

APPENDIX A

A Brief History of the English Language

APPENDIX A: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Life as we know it in human society could not function without language; all that we know of ourselves as human beings, all that we know about our heritage, and nearly all that we teach our children is made possible by language. In some distant time, in some remote place, language began, but when or where or by whom or how it began is unknown. Yet the beginnings of language continue to be of interest because language is a uniquely human form of behavior. Many anthropologists speculate that human speech developed in one place, although no concrete evidence has been found to substantiate that claim. The simple fact is that the beginnings of language are buried in unknowable prehistory.

The beginning of our own language, English, is also very obscure, although we do know something of its beginnings some 5,000 years ago among a group of people known as the Indo-Europeans.

Indo-European

It was not until the nineteenth century that scholars began to investigate successfully the relationships between various languages and linguistic groups. Their studies revealed certain common characteristics of sound and structure which indicated that all European languages developed in prehistoric times from a particular language. Known as Indo-European, this early language was developed without a system of writing, and thus our knowledge of it is largely conjectural. The Indo-Europeans who spoke this language did not comprise a particular race nor did they necessarily occupy a well-defined geographical area. Some were small farmers having a few domesticated animals, while others were nomads. Whatever their life-style, the Indo-Europeans were spread over an extremely large area. The actual location of the Indo-European homeland is not clear, although the appearance of derivative words from the Indo-European language has been offered as proof that the original homeland was in eastern Europe.

Sometime around 2000 B.C., small groups of Indo-Europeans began moving in various directions, finally settling from the Scandinavian Peninsula to India. With this geographical separation came the development of the Indo-European family of languages. As these people conquered, mingled, and intermarried with the native inhabitants, their language began to assume new characteristics, resulting in the development of over 130 different related languages. The Indo-European family of languages includes Indo-Iranian, Hellenic, Italic, Germanic, Tokharian, Albanian, Celtic, and Balto-Slavonic.

Languages are classified as members of the Indo-European family on the basis of a common grammatical system called *inflection*, which

describes modifications in the form of words, by means of endings and vowel changes, to indicate such grammatical functions as case, number, tense, person, mood, and the like.

The following is a comparison of the words *I am* in the Germanic language families:

<i>English</i> I am	<i>Gothic</i> im	<i>Old English</i> am or beo	<i>German</i> ich bin
	<i>Dutch</i> ik ben	<i>Swedish</i> jag	<i>Danish</i> jeg

In addition to the common systems of inflection, certain words—known as *cognates*—are common to so many Indo-European languages that it hardly seems coincidental. For instance, the names of the first ten numerals are similar in all the known Indo-European languages. Monosyllables which pertain to sex and excretion are shared by most of these languages. In fact, it is in cognates such as these that we find our only clue to the Indo-Europeans, since they had not developed a system of writing, nor were they particularly adept at creating an artistic record of their culture in the form of sculptures or monuments.

Germanic Tribes

It is thought that even before the separation of Indo-European peoples, different branches of the language were being formed. The Germanic branch, to which English belongs, developed several characteristics which set it apart from other Indo-European branches. These differences included distinctive sounds, inflections, the accentual system, and the resulting word stock. The group which spoke this language (it was still not recorded in any written form) gradually divided into subgroups such as the Goths, Vandals, and Lombards. Collectively known as the Germanic tribes, these subgroups aggressively spread out over an immense area. Prior to these migrations, the Germanic tongue divided into three main branches: North, East, and West. From the North Germanic we get the Scandinavian languages; East Germanic developed into Gothic, a language which has not survived but which is important in linguistic research because it lasted long enough to be recorded in written form, preserving examples of the Germanic language in its earliest recorded form. The West Germanic branch developed into High German, Low German, Dutch, Flemish, Frisian, and English.

Settling of Britain

The West Germanic influence on Britain began as early as the middle of the fifth century when Germanic sea raiders were boldly engaging in isolated attacks upon small coastal villages of the island. It was not long before Britain, which had been a part of the Roman Empire

since Julius Caesar crossed the English Channel in 55 B.C., was abandoned by the Romans who were more immediately concerned with the Germanic tribes threatening their empire on the Continent. This abrupt withdrawal of a ruling force left the pre-Roman inhabitants of England (known as Britons) to fend for themselves. While they had retained their Celtic language during the centuries of Roman occupation and rule, the Britons were not held in esteem by their northerly Celtic neighbors, the Scots. However, it was to be Germanic tribes, and not other Celts, who would fill the vacuum left by the withdrawal of the Romans.

According to a popular story, the Britons, fearing the wrath of the other Celts whom they had at one time forced to move northward, invited warriors from different Germanic tribes to help protect them against the northern Celtic tribes. Whether an actual request was made or not is not important; the result was an expansion of the Germanic people which would continue for 150 years and would finally take over most of England.

The gradual subjugation of the Britons at the hands of the Germanic tribesmen, historically termed the Anglo-Saxon invasion, was reputedly initiated in 449, a year suggested by the Venerable Bede over 200 years later. The conquering Anglo, Saxon, and Jute tribes from central and northern Europe all spoke West Germanic dialects enough alike that they could understand one another. Soon their different dialects, protected by geographic isolation from the continued influence of the languages spoken on the Continent, began to fuse into what was to become the English language. (This was a language spoken by a mixture of people who were gradually losing their filial attachment to their Continental homeland and who were beginning to think of themselves as Englishmen.) Since all spoken languages are perpetually changing, a fixed date for the beginning of the historical development of the English language is arbitrary at best. However, 449 is a convenient chronological reference point for the first of the three major periods into which the development of the English language is usually divided—Old English, Middle English, and Modern English. Although the gradual development of a language makes it hard to fix its specific turning points, English has been so significantly influenced by particular historical events that it is customary to use the dates of these events as milestones: we limit the Old English period from 449 to 1100; Middle English from 1100 to 1500; and Modern English from 1500 to the present.

Old English Period (449–1100)

The warrior in pre-Christian England was most immediately concerned with fighting and daily survival. In such an environment his only amusement was when a victory in combat was celebrated with a hearty feast. At such festive gatherings a minstrel would often entertain by singing about legendary heroes and the great deeds they had per-

formed. Because no Anglo-Saxon written language existed, these traveling minstrels transmitted the "literature" of the times. Since the ideals of a warrior were courage, loyalty, and strength exhibited on the battlefield, the technique of the minstrel tended to be a narrative of heroic deeds, which became what we now call the "heroic epic." One of the few surviving heroic epics in Old English is *Beowulf*. In addition to its literary function, the language rapidly became a sophisticated means of communication with a well-developed word stock. Although the English language was to remain surprisingly unaffected by the Celtic dialects of the native Britons, the language developed swiftly under the stress of other factors.

In 597 Pope Gregory the Great sent missionaries to begin the systematic conversion of the conquering tribesmen. After the conversion of King Ethelbert of Kent, the most powerful of a number of kings at the time, Christianity spread rapidly. Once Christianity had been firmly established, the expanding number of monasteries introduced the practice of extended writing in Latin. (The Anglo-Saxons did not develop a written language of their own until the late eighth century.) It is from this point in time that we begin to accumulate a recorded history of the English language, and the Anglo-Saxon society from which English developed.

The Anglo-Saxon warrior was not overwhelmed by the Christian priest, but by the end of the seventh century Christianity was generally adopted; and Latin, the language of the Church, was accepted as a second language by the "educated" converts to Christianity. Not only was Latin considered a necessary attribute of an educated man, but also it was to become particularly accepted in the learned professions of law and medicine. However, the great majority of the population remained outside the elite academic circles where Latin was used and continued to speak what we label "Old English." Thus popular English continued to develop, often borrowing words and phrases from Latin, while developing its own individual grammatical traits, as for example, the great dependence upon word order for syntactical meaning.

The Old English literature of this period was usually transcribed under the auspices of the monastery and was therefore recorded in Latin, even when the author's original work was in English. Consequently Old English literature was particularly susceptible to the clerical influence of the *scrivener*, usually a monk.

The original impetus given learning, and in particular writing, after the adoption of Christianity was beginning to weaken by the late eighth century. England, at this time, was still far from a united country, and Scandinavian raiders, especially the Danes, were becoming more aggressive with each succeeding victory over the Anglo-Saxon inhabitants. Initially plundering and destroying, the Viking raiders began to establish permanent settlements by about 850. The pagan beliefs of the

Viking settlers prompted them to destroy the books which came into their possession in an effort to protect themselves from the books' evil influences. This continuing expansion of the Scandinavians was not stopped until a West Saxon king, Alfred the Great, organized an army and in 877 successfully repelled the Scandinavians' repeated onslaughts, forcing them to remain in the north. The Anglo-Saxons continued to live in the south of England. For the moment, southern England was unified under Alfred, who soon became aware of the stagnant intellectual atmosphere and who took important steps to improve this situation. Not only did Alfred choose particular works to be translated into the English language, but he chose works from a comparatively wide variety of fields. Thus written English was given an opportunity to develop in areas traditionally dominated by Latin. The following is an example of this early written English:

When I then this all remembered, then wondered I exceedingly
Ðā ic þā ðis eall gemunde, ðā wundrade ic swiðe swiðe
 of the good wise men who formerly were throughout England, and
þāra gōdena wiotona þe gīu wæron giond Angelcynn, ond
 the books all completely learned had, that they of them then
þā bēc ealla be fullan geliornod hæfdon, þæt hīe hiora þā
 no part did not wish into their own language to turn.
nænne dæl noldon on hiora āgen geðiode wendan.
 But I then soon again myself answered and said. "They not
Ac ic þā sona eft mē selfum andwyrde ond cwæð. "Hīe ne
 thought that ever men should so reckless become, and
wēndon þætte æfre menn sceolden swā rēccelēase weorðan, ond
 the learning so fall away: for the desire (i.e., intentionally)
sīo lār swā oðfeallan: for þære wilnunga
 they it neglected, and wished that here the more wisdom in (the)
hīe hit forlēton, ond woldon ðæt hēr þȳ māra wīsdom on
 land should be the we more languages knew."
londe wære þȳ wē mā geðioda cūðon."
King Alfred, Preface to Pastoral Care

Ironically, the temporary defeat of the Scandinavians by Alfred marks the point at which the Scandinavian influence upon the developing English language became extremely important. The Scandinavians, like the Anglo-Saxon "Englishmen," were descendants of Germanic-speaking peoples. Although the Scandinavians spoke North Germanic dialects, and the Anglo-Saxons used West Germanic dialects, their basic vocabularies had enough in common to permit some communication. Thus after the Scandinavians' defeat by Alfred and their gradual conversion to Christianity, no major obstacles remained to prevent the assimilation of the Scandinavians into English society. With this amalgamation occurring during a period when most of the written prose was in English, the

Scandinavian influence can be easily traced through the many Scandinavian words actually substituted for English words in popular prose of the day. The following is a paragraph from *Beowulf*:

Hwæt, wē Gár-Déna	in géar-dágum,
þéod-cýninga	þrým gefrúnon,
hū ðā æþelíngas	ellen frémædon.
Oft Scýld Scéþing	scéaþena þrēatum
mónegum mægþum	méodo-setla oftéah,
égsode éorlas,	syððan ærest wéarð
féa-sceaft fúnden;	hē þas frófre gebád,
wéox under wólcnnum	wéorð-myndum þáh,
óð þæt him æghwylc	ýmbsíttendra
ofer hrónráde	hýran scólde,
gómban gýldan;	þæt was góð cýning!

* * * * *

Swā begnórnódon	Géata léode
hláfordes hryre,	héorð-genéatas;
cwædon þæt hē wære	wýruld-cýninga
mánna mildust	ond món-ðwárust,
léodum líðost	ond lóf-geórnost.

*Lo, we have listened to many a lay
Of the Spear-Danes' fame, their splendor of old,
Their mighty princes, and martial deeds!
Many a mead-hall scyld, son of Scaef,
Snatched from the forces of savage foes,
From a friendless foundling, feeble and wretched,
He grew to a terror as time brought change.
He throve under heaven in power and pride
Till alien peoples beyond the ocean
Paid toll and tribute, A good king he!
So the folk of the Geats, the friends of his hearth,
Bemoaned the fall of their mighty Lord;
Said he was kindest of worldly kings,
Mildest, most gentle, most eager for fame.*

To those who have not studied Old English, this example may not seem impressive. However, by the ninth century, English had grown into a language so well developed structurally, that it could resist the onslaughts of Norman French.

Middle English Period (1100–1500)

After the death of Alfred, the Scandinavian raids were renewed, resulting in brief reigns of Danish kings from about 1014. While the original Scandinavian settlers had been assimilated to the extent that they considered themselves Englishmen, the turmoil was to continue until 1066.

Edward the Confessor reigned as king of England for almost a quarter of a century before the Norman Conquest in 1066. Although he was the rightful heir to the English throne, Edward had grown up in Normandy and had remained predisposed toward France in both his private and public life. However, the relatively long reign of Edward did not result in any appreciable French influence, since he possessed only nominal power within his kingdom. The actual rulers were a number of competing earls who ruled their particular estates in any manner they chose. When Edward died in 1066, Harold of Wessex, the most powerful earl at the time, was elected king. However, his right to the throne was soon challenged by William, Duke of Normandy, who, as a second cousin of Edward, claimed that the childless king had promised to make him his heir. Regardless of who was the lawful heir, William crossed the channel in 1066 and defeated Harold at the Battle of Hastings. Swiftly and efficiently William gained control of all England, unifying a kingdom which had experienced centuries of political chaos.

The Norman Conquest was followed by the imposition of French as the official language. For over a century, nearly all literature in England was written either in French or Latin. Since French was also spoken in the universities and churches, an Englishman of culture was of necessity bilingual. Even after the French tide turned, that language was used in courts, diplomatic services, and businesses the world over.

The conquering Normans, strangely enough, had not long been native inhabitants of France. Coincidentally, they were actually descendants of Scandinavian bands who had been repelled by Alfred the Great two centuries earlier and who for one reason or another began taking over a northern portion of France. While the Normans readily took over political control of the conquered territory, they nevertheless adopted the French language of the conquered people. By the time William had earned his new title of William the Conqueror, King of Eng-

Examination of the origins of the 1,000 most
frequently used words in Modern English

Old English	61.7%
French	30.9
Latin	2.9
Scandinavian	1.7
Mixed	1.3
Uncertain	1.3
Low German and Dutch	0.3

(French borrowings among essential words are half as numerous as native words, and more than four times as numerous as all other words together.)

land, Norman French had been introduced as the official language of England. It was to remain the preferred language, at least among the nobility, for over 200 years.

While the feudal system and the introduction of the French language did not hinder the development of English, the emergence of a predominant dialect was delayed. By 1390 the use of English had supplanted the use of French in most schools, and the Normans had come to think of themselves as Englishmen. But the English they spoke varied widely. Northern, East Midland, West Midland, and Southern dialects each showed distinctive characteristics of pronunciation, vocabulary, and inflection. As London grew into a town of particular importance, its dialect grew in popularity, representing as it did a compromise between the previous dialectal variations. The general rise of the importance of towns from 1250 to 1400 due to the advance of industry and commerce weakened the agrarian feudal system ruled by the noblemen. The formation in the cities of guilds representing different groups of workers revealed a growing middle class, which was to participate in the Hundred Years War, setting England against France and breaking whatever ties remained between the Normans, English, and the French. Thus the Normans, like the Scandinavians before them, were ultimately assimilated into the English culture.

By the fifteenth century the English language had begun to differ from Old English in a number of ways, the most important of which were the loss of some inflections, the loss of grammatical gender, and the development of a standard word order. Middle English had a much larger basic vocabulary. The new words were the result of the French influence and increased commerce with countries in Europe, as well as continued and extensive borrowings from Latin.

During this period, conflicts between borrowed words and the Old English words they duplicated were generally resolved in one of two ways. The Old English word might be dropped or survive only in dialects. Or, if both words survived, they were considered to have different denotations and connotations. The Old English *dema*, *deman*, and *dom* were replaced by French forms (judge, to judge, judgment) in most instances. However, we still say "They *deemed* it necessary to hold the elections," and "He went to meet his *doom*."

Since there were no English dictionaries, grammars, or the like until after the Middle English period ended, we must decipher a mass of conflicting manuscripts to determine just what stage of development a particular piece of literature from that period represents. This problem is aggravated by the fact that the transcriber often neglected details in performing the tedious task of copying manuscripts by hand. However, under the auspices of the medieval church, enough literature was recorded to allow a far more detailed study of the developing Middle English language than is possible of the Old English period.

Although reading Middle English manuscripts does require practice, most of us can make some sense from a paragraph such as the following from Chaucer:

*Wit hym ther was his sone, a yong Squier,
A louyere and lusty bacheler,
With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in presse.
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse;
Of his stature he was of euene lengthe
And wonderly delyuere and of greet strengthe;
And he hadde been sometyme in chynachie
In Flandres, in Artoys, and Pycardie,
And born hym weel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
Embrouded was he, as it were a meede
Al ful of fresshe flowres, whyte and reede;
Syngynge he was or floytynge al the day;
He was as fressh as is the monthe of May.
Short was his gowne with sleues long and wyde;
Wel koude he sitte on hors and faire ryde;
He koude songes make and wel endite.
Iuste and eek daunce and weel purtreye and write.
So hoot he loued that by nyghtertale
He sleep namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale
Curteis he was, lowely and seruyable,
And carf bi for his fader at the table.*

Modern English Period (1500–Present)

The year 1500 is usually designated as the end of the Middle English period. Although the period that follows is the Modern English period, it is easier to deal with it in several divisions. The period from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth or mid-eighteenth century is often referred to as the Early Modern English period of the English Renaissance. Another possible division would cover the age of authoritarianism to the beginning of the nineteenth century, at which time English had settled into much the same form and vocabulary that we now use.

The sixteenth century in England was an era of great events in politics, religion, and literature, all important factors in contributing to the developing English language. During that century gradual trends toward industrialization and urbanization were paralleled by a revived capacity of the populace to voice critical opinions, new ideas, and irreverent conclusions concerning both institutions and individuals.

Throughout the Old and Middle English periods the English language had developed without the concerned guidance of teachers or textbooks. While the London dialect had become the most prestigious, due to its status among the populace of the thriving commercial city, spelling

was extremely varied, and no organized attempt had been made to standardize grammar. Before the sixteenth century, all the developments in the English language were introduced "naturally" as gradual results of popular usage. One important change leading to the Modern English period was the change of all the long vowels to sounds very similar to the vowel sound of today. At about this same time English became subject to the zealous supervision of self-styled authorities who, to this day, attempt to protect their sophisticated language from corruption by the "man in the street."^{*}

A particularly significant instrument in the conscious direction of the English language was the printing press, introduced in London around 1477. The rise of a growing middle class, together with the greatly reduced cost of books and their greater availability, accelerated education and provided a form for the establishment of rules and conventions. The prestige and influence of the London dialect was further enhanced by the city's new position as a center of printing. A fairly uniform system of spelling emerged gradually, although it is criticized as erratic and confusing to this day. There was a growing demand that teachers prepare their students to use "proper" English. And teachers tried to meet this demand with diverse and often misguided efforts. Generally, schoolmasters treated English as a finished product, unaware of the constant change inherent in any spoken language, often substituting their arbitrary rhetorical constructions and grammatical rules for popular usage. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the schoolmaster attitude had assumed the guise of unquestioned authority, and any popular change in the language was regarded as an attempt to introduce impure elements into a perfect mixture.

From about 1750 on, we can observe a large growth in the English language, comparable to the vast geographical expansion of the British colonial empire. During this era of expansion, dictionaries were introduced, although it was not until 1755, when Samuel Johnson finished his two-volume dictionary, that an authoritative lexicon was available. Hailed as one of the most important linguistic events of the eighteenth century, it attempted to fix English spelling and establish standards of usage. While Johnson was not insensitive to the pressure of popular usage, he was temperamentally inclined to adopt the prestigious linguistic practices of the upper classes. Like other men of his time, he believed in a "universal grammar" which would allow the language to be reduced to a clearly defined system of rules. This conclusion supported the popular academic view that all substantial changes in the language were corruptions of its true structure—a view still expressed in the present-day attitude of many Englishmen toward American English.

In the eighteenth century the belief that the English language was

^{*}For a discussion of a closely related subject, see Chapter 4, "Dictionaries."

a finished product made it a commodity which could be exported to the colonies intact. Exceptions were condoned only when English words did not adequately communicate a description or action peculiar to a foreign land. At such times foreign words were assimilated into the vocabulary as if they were English.

The colonies contributing most to the English language were the ones which were ultimately to become the United States. The original colonials were not the gruff outcasts suggested in many elementary history books. The settlers tended to come from the middle or upper classes and were likely to have had some education. Many of these people spoke seventeenth-century Standard British English—that is, the dialect of London—and it is from this dialect that American English began to develop, remaining fundamentally close to Standard British English. The English belief that American speech is a corruption of English still persists even though American idioms have had a profound effect upon the Standard British English. In fact, some Englishmen today minimize any alleged American influence as the abuse of “pure” English by youngsters awed by America. It seems fair to suggest that the languages of Britain and America are growing progressively more alike because of waging wars, commercial endeavors, and increasingly sophisticated communication systems.

As a consequence of its unique history, the English language has the largest vocabulary in the world. This is also a result of the language’s ability to assimilate foreign words, coin new words, and change the meaning of old words whose original meanings are not relevant to the speakers of today. Thousands of foreign words borrowed from her colonies, thousands of new technical words required to describe the elements of the Industrial Revolution and to describe the space developments, and many foreign expressions adopted because of their descriptive advantages and air of prestige have contributed to the enormous vocabulary of the English language.

APPENDIX B

The Library

APPENDIX B: THE LIBRARY

This appendix was compiled with great hesitancy. One author's opinion was that the whole topic is grim, that students will not like learning this material no matter how it is presented. Like memorizing the bones of the foot before advancing to the fascinations of surgery, it's a necessary first step and there's no need to sugarcoat it. Another opinion held that an introduction showing the vast panorama of libraries through the ages—from papyrus in Egypt and stone tablets in Alexandria to computerized information retrieval centers—would be so impressive that those who read it would automatically become enthusiastic library users.

It is not necessary to assume that libraries are dull, that the mechanics have been intentionally designed by librarians as impossible stumbling blocks for the would-be user. Admittedly, even if you have accepted the basic premise that a library is the best place to go for the information you want, you may occasionally be irritated or baffled by library ritual. An encounter with a library can be something like looking in a thesaurus for a synonym that is on the tip of your tongue and being unable to find it because you can't figure out which heading the compiler hid it under. In a library, the books you need may be hidden in open or closed stacks, or special collections, or behind a mysterious numbering system.

Yet this treasure hunt is worth winning. The information you find here is intended to help you get over hurdles, and to make you feel at ease while doing library research. Since it isn't feasible to describe all the possible variations on library practices, the discussion will be limited to those that are common to most libraries.

Of course this means that you will have to enter the library at your college at least long enough to see how what is said here applies to that particular library. You will have to "discover" your library. There are several ways to do this: you can read this appendix, then put it aside until the deadline for a term paper forces you to turn to it again; or you can go to the library, browse, get acquainted, poke around, be a nuisance. Few of you will use this second approach, probably because you're sure you'll feel strange in a library. But if you find yourself being turned on by the college bookstore or the local paperback dispensary, give the library a try—you'll find that it isn't much different.

CONTENTS OF THE COLLEGE LIBRARY

Most college libraries house the following materials (as well as material in subcategories under each heading) :

1. books
2. periodicals

3. newspapers
4. government publications
5. pamphlets
6. clippings
7. audio-visual materials (A-V)

Books

The books you'll depend on for most of your library research are called *reference books*, since you refer to or consult only certain portions rather than reading them from cover to cover. It's safe to say that you can't think of a subject that isn't discussed thoroughly and authoritatively in at least one reference book in your library. Chances are, you'll have your choice of several volumes, both general and specific, to help you find the information you need.

General reference books include *almanacs* and *yearbooks* (annual publications of miscellaneous facts and figures), *atlases* (charts, maps, and plates of geographical areas), *bibliographies* (collections of book titles and other related material), *biographical dictionaries* (alphabetical compilations of articles about noteworthy people), *directories* (names and addresses of persons, organizations, or institutions), *encyclopedias* (authoritative articles on a wide variety of subjects), and *gazetteers* (compendiums of geographical information). A useful directory to all of these is Constance M. Winchell's *Guide to Reference Books*.

Specific or subject reference books are similar to general reference books in organization and the kinds of information they contain. The chief difference is in their focus on a single area, such as history, psychology, art, or drama and so on. Because of their restricted aims, you may find them more helpful than a general reference whenever you have a fairly clear idea of the limits of your projects or wish to probe deeply into a subject. In addition to special versions of all categories listed under general references, specific reference books include *abstracts* (collected summaries of books and periodicals in a specialized field or profession), *limited histories*, and *indexes* (author and/or subject listings).

A unique reference book is a *concordance*, an alphabetical index of key words or topics with their location in the original work for which the concordance was prepared. Concordances have been written for the Bible and for such noted authors as Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Emerson, among others. Use these reference books to track down quotations, characters, and incidents.

Periodicals

Periodicals, or magazines, provide lively and timely coverage of specialized topics. They are of two sorts: *general* and *professional*. Some general periodicals are the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Sports Illustrated*, and the *New Yorker*. The *Yale Law Review*, the *American Journal of Psychol-*

ogy, and the *American Political Science Review* are among the professional periodicals. Although each category has indexes to guide you to articles on whatever topics interest you, the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* is undoubtedly the most useful.

Newspapers

A college library subscribes to local newspapers and to ranking newspapers of national significance, such as *The New York Times* and the *Christian Science Monitor*. The storage problem that this cumbersome material once presented no longer exists, thanks to microfilm and microcards. One roll of microfilm 2" × 4" × 1" high contains one-fourth of a year's paging of an average newspaper. Microfilm also makes it easier to scan a newspaper for information. Far from being buried in miles of print, important news items can be unearthed if you consult *The New York Times Index* or *Ayer's Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals*. A quick way of establishing the dates on which items appeared is to check *Facts on File*, a world newsbrief digest published annually.

Government Publications

Federal bureaus and agencies produce documents in such huge quantities that the United States government has been called the world's largest publisher. Size and subject matter are as varied as the activities of the agencies themselves: they may range from a simple, two-page leaflet on making children's wooden toys to an elaborately illustrated hardbound text about insects of the United States. Although several indexes provide information about these publications, the most up-to-date is the United States Government *Publications Monthly Catalogue*. Depending on form and subject, these materials are housed with similar publications in the library.

Pamphlets

Students sometimes overlook pamphlets as resource material, yet these brief publications, dealing with a single subject, often contain unique information. You'll find them arranged alphabetically in a special filing cabinet, with locator cards filed in the regular card catalog, or shelved with books in the general collection. To learn what's been published in this category, consult the *Vertical File Service Catalogue*, an annotated subject-author-title list covering a wide variety of pamphlets, brochures, and similar printed matter.

Clippings

Clippings are brief articles snipped from brochures, newspapers, or magazines. They are useful source material on rather limited subjects or on local opinions and events. Many libraries mount clippings on card-

board and file them by subject, indexing them in a catalog or booklet where the clippings are stored.

Audio-Visual Materials

Records, tapes, filmstrips, photographs, art reproductions, charts, maps, globes, models, and mockups are among the audio-visual resources that college libraries supply to students. Some schools will allow you to check out this material, while others require you to use it in special sections of the library. Find out whether your library lists A-V materials in the general card catalog under subject headings or in special files for each category.

FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND IN THE LIBRARY

Although libraries differ in minor procedures, most practice standardized arrangements and filing. Information and illustrations are provided on the following:

- A. Locating a book in the library
 - 1. An explanation of classification systems
 - 2. Use of the card catalog
 - 3. Illustrations of the three kinds of catalog cards
 - 4. How cards are filed in a library
- B. Using periodical indexes
 - 1. General information
 - 2. Illustration of the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature*

To classify its books, your library uses one of the two indexing systems: the Library of Congress System or the Dewey Decimal System. If you have at least a nodding acquaintance with the one on which your college library bases its call numbers, you'll be able to find material more easily.

The Library of Congress System

The Library of Congress Classification System is based on letters that identify general areas, followed by Arabic numbers designating books within the main classes:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| A. General Works | M. Music |
| B. Philosophy-Religion | N. Fine Arts |
| C. History | P. Languages and Literature |
| D. World History | Q. Science |
| E. U.S. History | R. Medicine |
| F. Local History | S. Agriculture |
| G. Geography-Anthropology | T. Technology |
| H. Social Sciences | U. Military Science |
| J. Political Science | V. Naval Science |
| K. Law | Z. Library Science, Bibliography |
| L. Education | |

Because the letters I, O, W, X, and Y haven't been assigned, there's room for expansion into new subject areas.

The Dewey Decimal System

Although the Dewey Decimal Classification System is constructed numerically rather than alphabetically, its subject categories resemble those of the Library of Congress System.

- 000-099 General Works (periodicals, bibliographies, encyclopedias)
- 100-199 Philosophy, Psychology, Ethics
- 200-299 Religion and Mythology
- 300-399 Sociology (economics, civics, law, education, vocations)
- 400-499 Philology (language, grammar, dictionaries)
- 500-599 Science (mathematics, physics, chemistry, astronomy, biology, zoology, botany)
- 600-699 Useful Arts (medicine, engineering, radio, aviation, agriculture, home economics)
- 700-799 The Arts (painting, architecture, sculpture, photography, music, recreation)
- 800-899 Literature (novels, criticism, plays, poetry)
- 900-999 History, Geography, Travel, Biography

Each of the main classes is further divided into ten subdivisions. The first subdivision includes general works on the subject, while the remaining nine divisions are for more specific works. For example, 800 = literature in general, 801 = philosophy and theory of literature, 802 = handbooks and outlines of literature, 803 = dictionaries and encyclopedias of literature, 804 = essays, and so on up to 809, which covers history and criticism of literature.

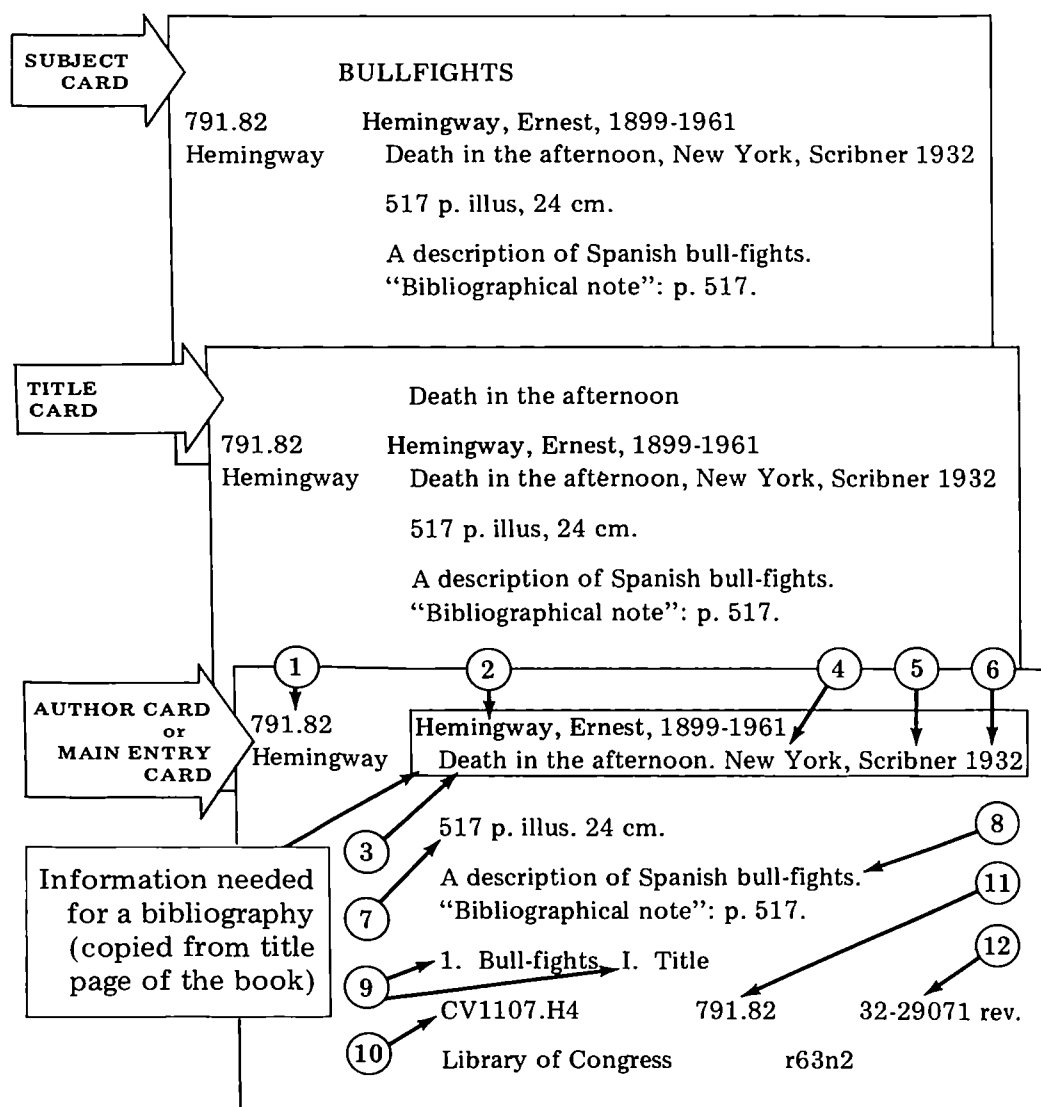
The Card Catalog

The index to all of the books and bound periodicals in your college library is the card catalog. Most schools have a divided catalog consisting of (1) an author and title file, and (2) a subject file. Others use a catalog divided into (1) a name file, including both authors and subjects, and (2) a topical subject file. Each of the two files is alphabetized separately by the top line (or entry) of its cards and, for this reason, the combination is called a dictionary catalog. With only a few exceptions, which will quickly become apparent to you, you can look up books and periodicals just as you would words in the dictionary. If your school doesn't use a divided catalog, it will list all of its books alphabetically in one general catalog which indicates whether a book is in the general library or elsewhere on campus.

Each book is listed in the catalog by at least three cards:

1. author (main entry card)
2. title
3. subject

THE CATALOG CARDS OF ONE BOOK



- | | |
|---|--|
| (1) Call number | (8) Notes describing contents of the book |
| (2) Author's name | (9) Catalog cards in addition to main entry card |
| (3) Title of book | (10) Library of Congress number |
| (4) Place of publication | (11) Dewey classification |
| (5) Publisher | (12) Library of Congress card number |
| (6) Copyright or publication date | |
| (7) Paging, illustration, and height in centimeters | |

Occasionally a card will direct you *from* a subject (the one you looked up) *to* a subject (the one the library uses for cataloging). This is called a cross-reference card. The example below tells you that Mark Twain is a pseudonym and that you must look under the author's real name, Samuel Clemens:

Twain, Mark pseud.

see

Clemens, Samuel, 1835–1910

The next example tells you that *American Civil War* is not a subject heading used by this library. You must look under *U.S.—History—Civil War* to find books on that subject.

American Civil War

see

U.S.—HISTORY—CIVIL WAR

Sometimes you'll encounter "see also" entries for subject headings. This means that further entries are filed under the related subject heading listed on the card.

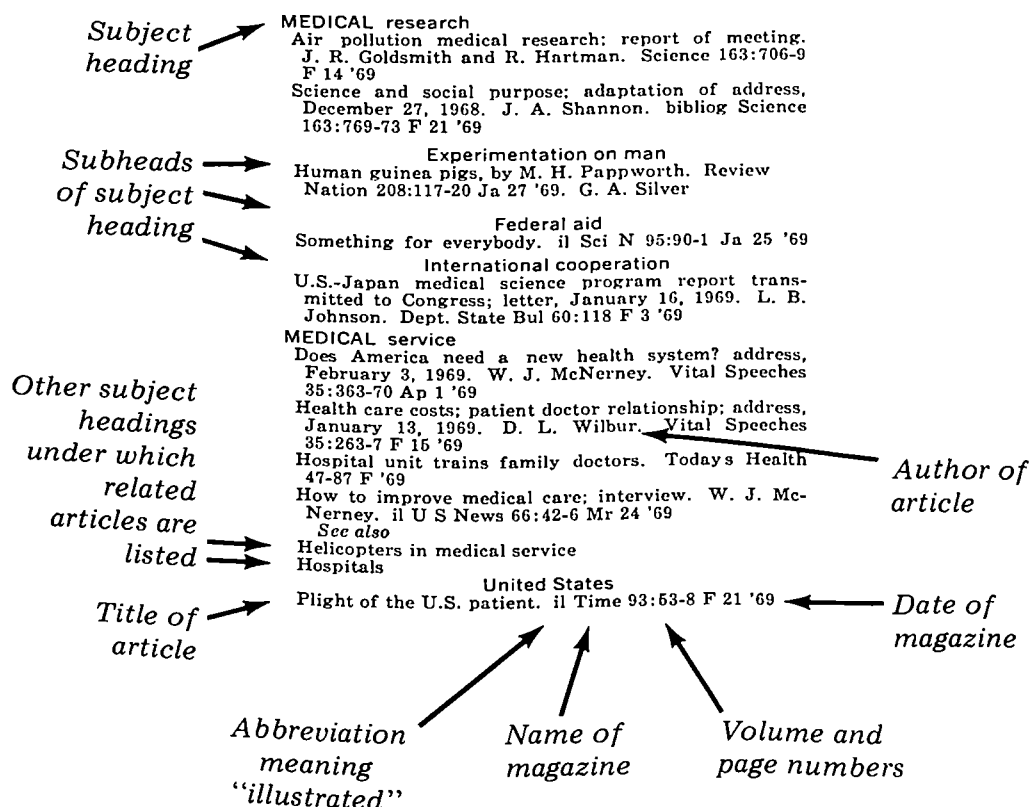
The Periodicals Indexes

Second in usefulness only to the card catalog are periodicals indexes, such as the *Readers' Guide*. Because of its versatility, this general index should be sufficient for most projects, but if you plan more scholarly research, you may prefer to explore specialized indexes. These are housed in the same area as the *Readers' Guide*. After you've selected appropriate indexes, look under subject headings for articles that interest you. You may have to search under several headings before finding the right ones, since your concept of how a subject should be listed may not coincide with that of the compiler's.

When you locate suitable articles, jot down the title of the periodical, the volume number, the pages on which the article appears, and the date of the issue carrying the article. Later, if you decide to include the article in a term paper bibliography, the information you have noted will be useful. To find out whether your library has a copy of the period-

ical, look in the periodicals catalog. It contains a card for every periodical in the library, telling you where it may be found and how far back the library's collection goes.

This excerpt, taken from the *Readers' Guide*, is an example of the entries in an index:



Without going into exhaustive detail, we have attempted to cover most of what you need to know in order to function comfortably and efficiently in your college library. Your librarians, often by way of bulletins, can tell you things we don't know: special materials included in your library's collection, where they are housed, unique physical features and services of the library. Besides all this, you will learn a good deal more on your own, at first, through trial and error; later, through trial and triumph. While you don't know everything by the time you leave college, you should have a good idea of how and where to find it. And that, above all, is the purpose of learning how to use a library.

APPENDIX C

Manuscript Form

APPENDIX C: MANUSCRIPT FORM

Much of what we say here is a matter of convention—just what we promised that this book would deemphasize. However, certain conventions are not only unavoidable but also desirable because they clarify and simplify material. Those we follow in preparing and documenting a manuscript belong in this category.

STYLE MANUALS

Below is a list of the better style manuals used by students as well as by professional writers. For solutions to problems not covered in this Appendix, refer to one of these:

1. Campbell, William G., *Form and Style in Thesis Writing*, 3rd ed., rev. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969. Updating of this manual reflects the trend toward liberalized style and format in preparing research papers. Although it presents newer documentation formats, it also includes thorough instruction in traditional forms. It contains chapters on rhetoric as well as tables and figures.
2. *A Manual of Style*, 12th ed. rev. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969. Since 1906 authors, editors, typographers and printers have used this handbook. It contains rules for capitalization, punctuation, and documentation, with numerous examples.
3. Parker, William R., *The MLA Style Sheet*. New York: The Modern Language Association, 1951. (Reprinted 1968 with some revisions.) This is generally used for papers in the area of English and literature. It is the product of concerted effort by style and manuscript authorities throughout the United States.

Because they go into considerable detail in the specifics of form and style, manuals are a valuable supplement to English textbooks.

MANUSCRIPT FORM

Thorough research, logical organization, and astute phrasing lose much of their effectiveness if your manuscript form is faulty. In a research paper correct form depends on your using proper materials and page layout, including format for quotations, footnoting, and bibliography. The following checklist will serve as a guide:

1. Use good quality 8½" × 11" white bond typing paper.
2. Type, double spaced (except for footnotes, which should be single spaced), on one side of the page.

3. Be sure that the typewriter keys are clean and the ribbon well inked.
4. Provide margins of at least fifteen spaces from the right and left edges of the page.
5. Leave approximately 2" at the top of the first page, 1½" at the top of the following pages, and 1" at the bottom of all pages.
6. The first page should be unnumbered. Number all successive pages with arabic numerals in the upper right-hand corner.
7. Proofread carefully but, instead of erasing errors, use correction tape or correction fluid to obliterate mistakes. Then type over that portion.

Quotations

Quotations inform, affirm, and expand. Because they play an important role in any research paper, you'll need to familiarize yourself with the conventions governing their form. Although a truly exhaustive discussion of them could run to several pages, a brief list covers the most basic practices:

Short, Direct Quotations. If these are of no more than three typewritten lines, enclose them in quotation marks and run them into the text. For example: As Pascal once said, "Man is but a reed, the weakest thing in nature, but he is a reed that thinks."

Quotes within Quotes. Use single quotation marks to indicate material that you are quoting within another quotation. For example: In his *Confessions* Jean-Jacques Rousseau says: "Then let each of them in turn reveal, with the same frankness, the secrets of his heart at the foot of the Throne, and say, if he dare, 'I was better than that man!'"

Lengthier Quotations. These may be either double or single spaced, but should be typed as reduced matter, without quotation marks—that is, as a separate paragraph whose margins are slightly wider than those in the rest of the paper. For example:

Voltaire is the pen name by which Francois Arouet is always known. He was the most typical man of letters of the eighteenth century, summing up in his person the opinions and attitudes of the age of reason. He was born in Paris and was educated in a Jesuit college, where he acquired the reputation of cleverness and wit, but also of impertinence.

Omissions. When you omit some of the words used in the original material, indicate their absence with the ellipsis sign of three spaced periods (. . .) for material up to one paragraph in length and occurring in the middle of a sentence. Use an ellipsis with period or other terminal punctuation mark from the original to indicate that the end of a sentence is omitted (. . . .) or (. . . ?) or (. . . !) Do not include (). Based on the

quotation from Pascal, the following example combines both possibilities: Man is . . . a reed, the weakest thing in nature,”

Interpolations. Whenever you add words to a quotation, enclose them in brackets [], which you’ll probably have to draw in. Do not substitute ()s. Use brackets to enclose your own comments about the quotation, to note errors in the original source thus: [sic] or to enclose nouns or pronouns whose antecedents occurred in earlier sentences that you didn’t pick up: “[Voltaire] was the most typical man of letters of the eighteenth century. . . .” Whenever you omit or insert words, be alert to the danger of changing the author’s meaning.

Documentation

Documentation, consisting of footnotes and bibliography, identifies the sources of information in a formal paper. We document for these reasons:

1. As a matter of honesty, to give credit to the correct source.
2. To enable readers to judge the worth of sources as evidence.
3. To permit readers to obtain further information from the sources.
4. To allow them to check your interpretation of another’s ideas.

Documentation ordinarily includes the following kinds of information when available:

For Books

1. Name of author as given on the title page or copyright page (when no name or only initials appear but the author is known, add this in brackets).
2. Title of book.
3. Name of editor, compiler, or translator.
4. Facts of publication such as edition number (if it isn’t the first).
5. Total number of volumes, series title (if any), place of publication, name of publisher, date of publication, volume number (if necessary), and page number.

For Articles

1. Name of author.
2. Title of periodical or work in which article appeared.
3. Name of editor, compiler, or translator, if any.
4. Volume number, if used.
5. Full date of publication.
6. Page number.

Footnotes

In general, the conventions governing footnotes as part of manuscript form are fairly standard. (Variations in their documentation are discussed on pp. 249–252.)

Location and Spacing

Notes for one page ordinarily appear at the bottom of that page, although at least one format places them at the back of the entire paper. Check with your instructor to determine his preference. Separate the first footnote from the last line of the text by a typed line extending part way across the page or by a three-line space between the two. Single space footnoting, but double space between separate footnotes.

Numbering

Place an arabic numeral, typed slightly above the line, after the material you wish to footnote. Use the same number to identify the footnote, but type it slightly above the line at the beginning of the footnote. The usual practice is to number footnotes sequentially throughout the manuscript, but some instructors prefer that their students begin a new series of numbers on each page. This presents less of a problem in renumbering if, at the last minute, you add or subtract material.

Footnotes belong to two categories:

1. Informative, or explanatory
2. Documentary
 - a. new style
 - b. old style

Informative footnotes serve the following functions:

1. Cross-referencing to another portion of your paper.
2. Accounting for ideas that aren't your own.
3. Elaborating on a point without disturbing the paper's basic organization.

Use informative footnotes for sidelights rather than for essential points. To direct attention to informative footnotes, type an asterisk (*) or an arabic numeral slightly above the appropriate line in the text.¹ Number them in sequence with documentary footnotes.

New Style Footnotes

These notes, which originated in scientific writing, are not actually footnotes, since they don't appear at the bottom of the page. Instead, they occur in the text itself. Known as the *references-cited format*, this style is based on numbers in an alphabetized bibliography or reference list in which each entry is numbered. The citation taking the place of a footnote in the text is merely a combination of (1) an identification of the source by number, and (2) a page number in that source where the information was found. Thus a quotation from C. S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters* would be referred to in this way:

¹The presence of too many informative footnotes in a research paper indicates that the material has not been carefully organized.

He can be made to take a positive pleasure in the perception that the two sides of his life are inconsistent. (4:32)

In this citation the number 4 indicates the fourth book listed in the bibliography, and the second number, 32, refers to the page number in that fourth book.

We have used this sort of documentation in the argumentative term paper (Appendix D). If your instructor prefers another form, use the following illustrations as a guide. These are for first citations:

a. *Single author:*

¹Beryl Grey, *Through the Bamboo Curtain* (New York: Reynal & Company, Inc., 1966), p. 39.

Paperback edition:

²Frederick R. Karl, *A Reader's Guide to the Contemporary English Novel* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, Noonday Press, 1964) p. 25.

b. *Two authors:*

³Norman L. Farberow and E. S. Schneidman, *Cry for Help* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1961), p. 214.

c. *More than three authors:*

⁴Jane B. Raph *et al.*, (or Jane B. Raph and others,) *Bright Under-achievers* (New York Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1967), p. 96.

d. *Editor of a book* (when no author's name appears on title page) :

⁵William R. Clark, ed., *Discussions of Charles Dickens* (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1961), p. 161.

e. *Both author and editor:*

⁶Walter Kolary, *Communism and Colonialism: Essays*, ed. George Cretton (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1964), p. 309.

Article or chapter by one author in a work edited by another:

⁷Hilaire Belloc, "The Battle of Blenheim," in *The Children's Cargo*, ed. Lady Cynthia Asquith (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, Ltd., n.d.), p. 137.

f. *More than one editor:*

⁸Emily H. Mudd *et al.*, eds. *Marriage Counseling: A Casebook* (New York: Association Press, 1958), p. 86.

g. *Pseudonymous author—real name supplied:*

⁹Frederick Baron Corvo (Frederick Rolfe), *Hadrian the Seventh* (London: Chatto & Windus, Ltd., 1904), p. 20.

h. *Organization or institution as author:*

¹⁰Economic Commission of Europe, *Review of the Agricultural Situation in Europe at the End of 1964*, 2 vols. (London United Nations, 1965), 2:874–87.

i. *Reference to one volume of multivolume work:*

¹¹Bernard D. Grebanier and others, eds., *English Literature and Its Backgrounds*, vol. 2 (London: Dryden Press, 1949), p. 703. (If the volume has a title, it is given after the volume number and is under-scored.)

j. *Book in series:*

¹²Lao Tsu, *Tao Teh Ching*, trans. John C. H. Wa and ed. Paul K. T. Sih, Asian Institute Translations, No. 1 (New York: St. John's University Press, 1961), p. 15. (If the book had been a volume in a series, under some rulings it would have carried a roman numeral.)

k. *Particular edition of a book indicated:*

¹³William S. Clark, ed., *Chief Patterns of World Drama*, Contemporary ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1946), p. 322.

l. *Reference to quotations in a secondary source:*

¹⁴William C. Smith, *Concerning Handel*, as cited by Paul Henry Lang, *George Frideric Handel* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1966), p. 458.

m. *Newspaper article:*

¹⁵Thomas A. Johnson, "This Was Real Revolution," *New York Times*, July 28, 1968, Sec. 4, p. 8. (The section was given since the pagination is separate for each section.) If there is no author or article title, the entry will read: *San Francisco Examiner*, 28 February, 1970.

n. *Article in a journal—author given:*

¹⁶Henriette D. Avram, "Marc is a Four-letter Word," *Library Journal*, July 1968, pp. 2601–2605. (Had the volume number been given, the abbreviation for pages would have been omitted; for example, XVIII (July 1968), 2601–2605 or 58:2601–2605 (July 1968).)

o. *Article in a periodical—no author given:*

¹⁷"Riots: This One Was Planned," *Time*, August 2, 1968, p. 12.

p. *Pamphlet by known author:*

¹⁸Dr. Leon Davidson, *Flying Saucers: An Analysis of the Air Force Project Blue Book Special Report No. 14*. 3rd ed. (Ramsey-Wallace Corp., 1967), p. 77.

q. *Magazine included as a newspaper supplement:*

¹⁹Benjamin Plumb, "Riverside Viewpoint; House in Rockland County Overlooking the Hudson," *The New York Times Magazine*, October 29, 1967, pp. 84–5.

r. *Encyclopedia:*

²⁰Delancey Ferguson, "The Master Builder," *Encyclopedia Americana* XVIII, 418.

s. *Dictionary:*

²¹*Funk & Wagnall's New Standard Dictionary of the English Language*, 3rd ed., s.v. "pragmatic."

t. *Bible reference, King James Version:*

²²Hebrews 11:1. (Standard abbreviations for longer book titles.)

u. *Bible reference, other than King James Version:*

²³II Timothy, Revised Standard Version, 2:3.

v. *Radio or television program:*

²⁴"Aftermath," KFMB television, August 6, 1968. "The Problems of the Arab Refugee." (If this is a network show, the name of the network would be used, rather than the local station. Add the name of the narrator, if important, at the end of the entry.)

w. *Interview or lecture:*

²⁵Interview with Mayor Sam Yorty, mayor's office, Los Angeles, California, August 6, 1968.

x. *Personal letter*:

²⁶Jane Smith, personal letter, August 20, 1969.

y. *Legal citation*:

²⁷Bridges California, 314 U.S. 252 (1941).

z. *Government documents*:

²⁸U.S., Congress, Senate, *Journal*, Nth Cong., 1st sess., 7 December 1941. Pp. 10–12.

²⁹U.S., Constitution, Art. 2, sec. 3. (These are only two of the many possible citations in this area.)

aa. *Film*:

³⁰Film (underlined), name of producer, name of director, year.

Most authorities agree that when an author's name and the book title are given as part of the text, it isn't necessary to repeat them in the footnote. The footnote would then consist of the facts of publication, the volume number when applicable, and the page number.

Abbreviation in Footnotes

Use abbreviations whenever possible in order to avoid unduly long citations. Two of the most common abbreviations—and the most often confused—are *ibid.* and *op. cit.* They're used only when the work referred to has already been listed in complete form. *Ibid.* is an abbreviation for *ibidem*, which is Latin for *in the same place*. Used correctly, it refers to work that has been cited completely *in the immediately preceding footnote*. The citation consists of the word itself and the page number where the quotation appeared: ¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 82.

Op. cit., a shortened form of *opere citato*, means *in the work cited*. Like *ibid.*, it is now being used less frequently because of its occasional vagueness. *Op. cit.* is intended to refer to a passage in a work previously cited "close at hand." But if two books by the same author are mentioned in the same page of writing, it's difficult to relate *op. cit.* to either one. Two versions of this form appear below:

¹¹Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

or

¹⁴Lewis, *Screwtape*, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

One drawback to this usage is that it often makes the reader hunt for the original citation, especially if you use several works by the same author. In most cases, the author's last name, one short form of the title, and the page number will provide clearer information.

Several other abbreviations frequently used in footnoting are listed below. Check the term paper instructions for your class to see whether the instructor restricts their use. Even if you can't use them, you'll need to know what they mean before you can interpret documentation in older books.

ABBREVIATION OR REFERENCE WORD	MEANING
<i>anon.</i>	<i>anonymous</i>
<i>c</i>	<i>copyright</i>
<i>ca.</i>	<i>circa</i> , Latin for <i>about</i> ; used with dates ("born ca. 1910" means born about 1910)
<i>cf.</i>	<i>confer</i> (compare the footnoted matter with the citation that follows)
<i>et al.</i>	<i>et alii</i> , Latin for <i>and others</i>
<i>e.g.</i>	<i>exempli gratia</i> , Latin for <i>for example</i>
<i>f., or ff.</i>	<i>and following</i> (refers to page or pages, as in p. 23 f.)
<i>fn.</i>	<i>footnote</i>
<i>i.e.</i>	<i>id est</i> , Latin for <i>that is</i> (often used before a statement for clarification)
<i>loc. cit.</i>	<i>loco citato</i> , Latin for <i>in the place cited</i> (meaning that this comes from a passage referred to in a recent note)
<i>n.d.</i>	<i>no date</i> (used in a citation when the publication bears no date)
<i>p., pp.</i>	<i>page or pages</i>
<i>passim</i>	Latin for <i>here and there throughout the work</i> (p. 16–44 <i>passim</i> means the item is found throughout this section)
<i>pseud.</i>	<i>pseudonym</i>
<i>q.v.</i>	<i>quod vide</i> , Latin for <i>which see</i> (used to refer reader to some other place in the book or article for further information)
<i>sec.</i>	<i>section</i>
[<i>sic</i>]	Latin for <i>thus</i> (placed in brackets after an error made by the original source—the brackets are to indicate your awareness of the error)
<i>trans., tr.</i>	<i>translator, or translated by</i>
<i>viz.</i>	<i>videlicet</i> , Latin for <i>namely</i>
<i>vol., vols.</i>	<i>volume or volumes</i> (as in 24 vols.)

Bibliography

The final detail that needs to be placed in a research paper is a complete list of all books, magazines, periodicals, and other resources actually used in writing the paper. Books and materials you consulted and found unsuitable don't belong in your bibliography, but any source from which you benefited, whether or not you quoted from that material, belongs in your bibliography. The simplest way to compile a bibliography is to take the information directly from the note cards that you carefully prepared early in your research.

Arrange entries alphabetically by author's last name, last name first. If the book has more than one author, you may list all names in inverted order, or list only the first in this form, as:

Jones, James B., and Winston, Robert E.

or

Jones, James B., and Robert E. Winston

Whichever form you decide on, be consistent in all entries of this kind.

When you use more than one entry for the same author, preface the listing of the second work with a half-inch-long line, followed by a period:

Steinbeck, John. *The Pastures of Heaven.*

———. *The Red Pony.*

The first line of a bibliographic entry begins at the left-hand margin. If the entry carries over to another line, indent the subsequent lines 3 to 5 spaces. Single space each entry, leaving two spaces between entries.

If you use the *new style*, or *references-cited*, format in your term paper, your bibliographic citations will be quite simple, since you'll list them in alphabetical and numerical order. Include all sources—books, periodicals, pamphlets, films, and other materials—in the general alphabetical listing of references. The traditional bibliography is similar to the new style, except that the entries aren't numbered. A bibliography follows the sample paper on page 260. Study this or the ones in the reference works cited on page 238 so that you can prepare your own.

In any case, whatever system of documentation you decide on, adhere to it throughout your paper and observe its form to the last period and parenthesis. Control the urge to alter or combine formats. Here's one instance where you'll be rewarded for being conventional rather than creative.

APPENDIX D

Sample Papers

The student papers contained in this appendix have not been extensively edited or revised. Each paper is the work of a college freshman; each retains, warts and all, the thought and rhetoric of its student author. Because the papers are not without flaws, they may for that reason be more helpful models than would the polished work of professional writers. Before writing a paper of your own, you should evaluate the appropriate model paper with a critical eye in order to profit from both its strengths and weaknesses.

Robert Browning and Felix Mendelssohn--Some Observations

Although this paper may seem to wander far afield, its central theme is the belief that a full and joyous life can be a contribution to one's creativity--suffering and morbidity are not necessary to art. I had become interested, through reading the poems of e.e. cummings and his six nonlectures, in the effect a happy, relatively conflict-free life, and especially the model of well-suited parents, has on the work of a creative artist. The pattern for an artist's life, involving much pain and stress, is so common that many have conjectured such experiences and a neurotic temperament as being requisite for maturity and significant production. Cummings, however, was a poet who (while perhaps not the major poet of our times) combined an enjoyment of living, an abiding respect for his parents--many of the things considered by psychologists to be signs of good mental health--with the creation of a respectable amount of good poetry. And certainly psychoanalytic treatment contains the premise that freeing the individual from neurotic conflict will enable him to devote more energy to worthwhile endeavors.

The Victorian era, long blamed as a cesspool full of those repressions and subsequent neuroses which Freud tried to overcome, offers two examples of apparently happy and productive individuals--Felix Mendelssohn and Robert Browning. Different in many ways (Browning was an ardent suitor, Mendelssohn found marriage a less urgent matter; Browning was quite healthy, Mendelssohn much the opposite) their lives present some striking parallels.

The families of both artists were of tremendous importance in their lives. Mendelssohn, of course, came from a wealthy, highly educated German-Jewish family. His grandfather was an intimate of Lessing, and the author of "Phaeton, or the Immortality of the Soul" which was translated into every European language. His mother was a musician and an accomplished linguist; his father, the person to whom he felt closest, was a sensitive man of good artistic instincts.

The major figure in Browning's early life was his mother--a woman of German-Scotch descent who had some musical gifts. Although his family was not as wealthy as Mendelssohn's, they supported Browning and financed the publication of his works until he was thirty-three years old. The pious middle-class values amid which Browning was reared had much in common with the values esteemed by the old-fashioned Jewish Mendelssohns, though the latter family held a higher social position.

Both men faced some difficulties and disappointments in their lives. Browning's poetry was not much appreciated until his later years. While she lived, Elizabeth Barrett Browning much overshadowed her husband. Mendelssohn, however, while receiving acclaim for his early music was denied many of the rewards due him simply because he was Jewish. And Mendelssohn, almost preposterously famous at his death, was before long pronounced outmoded, overrated, and virtually negligible.

These misfortunes did not appear to alter the cheerfulness or the courage of these men. They continued to accomplish much in their chosen area of art while keeping up a heavy schedule of social and family obligations. Both loved life--Browning's "Up at the Villa" represents a point of view held also by Mendelssohn.

It has been said of Mendelssohn that his letters give the impression of an exceptionally happy human being, centered in, and satisfied with himself; never wavering in his aims; never doubting his special vocation; never torn by inner conflict. Could this description not serve as well to characterize that Browning who was so certain of the truth of his own inner voice that he refused to submit his poetry for suggestions and didn't mind having his work financed by his parents and his wife?

Their interests were universal. Browning was spoken of as a precocious schoolboy whose reading was omnivorous.

Mendelssohn's friends included statesmen and philosophers. Not only were these artists proficient in their own fields, but they were also acquainted with arts other than their own. Mendelssohn occupied himself with watercolor painting and writing (once having written as many as thirty-five letters in one day). His opinion of musical resources in Italy was low, but his appreciation of the art and scenery was keen.

If in no other way, the reader might know from Browning's many poems on art and music that these subjects fascinated him. And he was thought of, by those residents of Florence who came to visit his wife, as a man generally knowledgeable in all areas appropriate to polite society. From 1873-1878 Browning was able to give rein to love of music, from the indulgence of which he derived, as he always declared, some of the most beneficial influences of his life. It would be scarcely an exaggeration to say that he attended every important concert of the season, whether isolated or given in a course.

Despite the fact that Mendelssohn lived only half as long as Browning, a comparison between the two might well be made if Mendelssohn's life can be viewed as occurring at almost twice the speed of Browning's. (Browning was born May 7, 1813, and died December 12, 1889; Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy was born February 3, 1809, and died November 4,

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1847.) Mendelssohn began writing creditable works at about age eleven, having received extensive musical training since age seven. The discipline of his early training is apparent in his works. As one critic says, "Mendelssohn's maturity was arrived at before its time so his later creations show relatively little advance over those he composed at age sixteen."

The distinction made between the English romantic and Victorian authors is an artificial division which did not extend to musicians. The belief in Empire and other precepts which the Victorian poets espoused were not too different from the ideals of their romantic predecessors--or, for that matter, not much different from those of the Elizabethans.

The date of his works and his affiliation with such "romantic" composers as Chopin and Schumann might place Mendelssohn beside the romantic authors such as Wordsworth, Keats and Shelley but both his outlook and the esteem in which he was held by the English public and Victoria and Albert seem to locate him more naturally among the Victorians. (Mendelssohn was entertained privately several times by Albert and Victoria--Albert played the organ for him, Victoria sang his songs, and they were pleased to give him a tour of the royal nursery.)

Romantic tradition shaped much of his work as it did the work of Browning. Before the romantic revolution in music,

the tone poem--the musical form intended to transmit emotions and visual imagery--would not have been allowed.

Before the romantic revolution in literature a poet would not endlessly concern himself with the psychological musings of common men, could not even think such musings to be interesting or such people appropriate subjects for poetry.

Only with the romantic revolution would a poet write:

The common problem, yours, mine, everyone's,
Is not to fancy what were fair in life
Provided it could be, but finding first
What may be, then find out how to make it fair
Up to our means: a very different thing!
("Bishop Blougrams's Apology")

Conditions of life are no longer accepted as "given"; man can and should alleviate his lot. Still, the order of the Victorian era reinforced the classical preference for orderliness natural to both these artists.

Browning is rarely out of control of his medium, nor is Mendelssohn. If setting such narrow limits to one's art bars one from the company of Beethoven or Milton, it also avoids the faults of Liszt or Felicia Heymans. Besides, Milton and Beethoven demand so much, they are not companions for everyday life. Rather than depths of despair and heights of glory, one lives with (and learns from, or is cheered by) small but important variations on the commonplace--the unexpected flower, the mumbled apology, the bashful compliment of a child.

In both cases there is an appealing unity in each published work. Unlike "In Memoriam" which shows the seams with which it was put together, "Saul" for example could have been written at one sitting. Who, hearing the incidental music to A Midsummer Night's Dream could believe it was written by Mendelssohn seventeen years after he composed the famous overture to the same play--time seems imperceptible for these men. (Could this also be a reflection of their happy lives--as California wines are said to have no vintage years in such a consistent climate?)

The sense of public duty ("the white man's burden") was acknowledged by Mendelssohn and Browning only when it was convenient. Mendelssohn resurrected the previously neglected music of Bach--truly benefiting Western culture; yet he never forgave the unkind treatment he had received at the hands of the anti-Semitic elite in Hamburg, and he vastly preferred London and Italy to his home town. Browning believed in and preached the virtues of "The Englishman"; yet life in England looked better to him when he was abroad.

These men were not completely without pomposity. They were venerated to such an extent that they could not avoid being somewhat swayed by flattery. Browning might have been speaking of himself in "Pictor Ignotus" when he talks of the dangers of public acclaim. As a result of such a special

situation and their own high ideals, both Mendelssohn and Browning experienced some conflict between their devotion to pure art and their belief in the utilization as a force for good.

As I began with comments on a literary figure which applied to the musical master, I will close with comments on the musical figure which apply equally to the literary:

Struggle and suffering might, indeed have lent a deeper undertone to his songs or enabled his adagios, in old Sir George Grove's words, "to draw tears where now they only give a saddened pleasure. But let us take a man as we have him. Surely there is enough conflict and violence in life and in art. When we want to be made unhappy we can turn to others. It is well in these agitated modern days to be able to point to one perfectly balanced nature in whose life, whose letters and whose music alike all is at once manly and refined, clever and pure, brilliant and solid. For the enjoyment of such shining heights of goodness we may well forego for once the depths of misery and sorrow."

(Biancolli)

Humor in Saki's "Reginald on House Parties"
and "Reginald's Drama"

These stories are examples of only one kind of Saki's writing. However, many of the humorous devices they contain are also used in his better known stories such as "The Open Window" and "Tobermory." In fact, these two stories hardly fall into any strictly defined category of short stories--there is no plot, no character development. Even in comparison with humorous sketches by Benchley and Thurber, these stories seem to have little point. But this fact in itself is used to create humor--the humor of the "shaggy dog" story.

The character of Reginald as portrayed in these stories is a distillation of that standard figure of fun, the affected English upper-class young male, the Beau Brummel of the early twentieth century, also found in the pages of S. S. Van Dine, Dorothy Sayers, P. G. Wodehouse and Leslie Charteris. The type is difficult to write about at length in a way that will not bore or irritate the reader, since a small amount of amusing trivial chatter can easily become a monumentally dull monologue. Very educated flip-

pancy requires a response from the reader, and the reader must have a broad enough background to know what clichés are being altered for humorous effects. Reginald's comment about having wolves offstage during the drama, "It would look so well on the programmes, 'Wolves in the first act, by Jamrach'" can amuse only those people who are well acquainted with theater programs and their endless lists of acknowledgments. Whether it will amuse them is another matter.

Assumed innocence is also used by Saki for purposes of humor. Reginald, in recounting an incident at a house party where he shot a large bird and had it dragged into the house, said, "Suppose it's unlucky to bring peacock's feathers into a house; anyway, there was a blue-pencilly look in my hostess's eye when I took my departure." This device has much in common with exaggerated understatement, which Saki also employs upon occasion.

Saki's characters are as given to the individual pun or aphorism as are Walt Kelly's. Once again, these require that the reader know the reference in order to locate the intended humor. Reginald, for instance, speaks of the dreary girl at a house party who "appears at meals with unnatural punctuality in a frock that's made at home and repented at leisure." Another remark of Reginald's (rather far afield of the subject of his discourse, but Saki is a

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master of the relevant irrelevancy) is a schoolboy pun in French: "C'est le premier pa qui compte, as the cuckoo said when it swallowed its foster parent."

These stories may be seen in their entirety as having been composed for the purpose of passing off bits of satire and vivid imagery. I suspect that they seem somewhat dated today less because of the style of life they reflect than because the devices used are currently more frequent in conversations or professional entertainer's dialogues and are considered too evanescent to be printed. They defy paraphrase; there is no paraphrase of the exact humor and timing of which they are made. (How many people bog down in the middle of relating a piece of humor from the previous evening's television comedians, knowing only that "It was funny when he told it.")

(Opposition to this point of view was not summarized because, as far as the writer knows, there is no opposition.)

Should the Present Indian Reservation System Be Abolished?

Analyzing the Indian's position in America today is a very difficult task. Although there is a great deal of material written on this aboriginal culture, most of it is dealt with in a form similar to the romantic novel: relating the futile stories of certain individuals in the past, leaving the reader with the knowledge and shame of our American history, but, rarely, if ever, facing the problems that exist today and even less frequently, offering solutions.

This is further complicated by the fact that each tribe is a separate entity having its own individual and unique problems. In this paper I shall deal only with those problems which are relatively universal to all tribes. However, most of the researchers involved in the reports published find it easier to deal with a particular tribe since a broad report of all Indians would be too cumbersome and not allow for such an in-depth study. Still, it must be realized, that I have chosen only those reports which are representative of the whole.

One of the main points that arises in discussing the affairs of the Indian is that they should be appeased because of the injustices they have suffered at the hands of the Americans in the past. I will not deal with this point, not only because it is not seriously contested by any informed writers,* but because even if it could be argued, this issue is irrelevant to current situations. It is irrelevant because it deals with the false concept of racial guilt--the idea that the Anglican race wronged the Indian race and so now the Indian race must be atoned to is incorrect because it was not the Anglican race but a group of Anglican individuals who committed some wrongs against a group of Indian individuals. We need not answer for what members of our race have done in the past. We need only answer for what we are doing today and need not help certain peoples because members of their race needed help in the past but only if they need help today. For this reason, examining the current reservation system in this country is significant.

When the reservation system is analysed in this way, I find that the controversy reduces itself to three issues:

*That certain groups of Indians have been mistreated in the past is not the question. Surely no one doubts that.

1. Are the current programs of the reservation system damaging to the Indian?
2. Can the programs of the federal government be effectively carried out?
3. If the Indian were given the power of self-determination, could his programs be carried out more effectively than the present programs?

I will deal with the issues in the order they are listed. The first issue questions the inherent nature of the policy, whether it is harmful or beneficial. The second issue questions the administration of the policy, whether or not it can be executed. The importance of this issue rests on a positive answer to the first question, since the effectiveness of the policy would not matter, if it were inherently harmful. Likewise, the third issue comes into play after the first and second questions have been answered. It deals with an alternative to the reservation system only if it has been determined that the current system is inefficient. For practical purposes which shall be explained in the paper, I have had to deal with the second issue in the affirmative side of the third issue.

In the next section of the paper I have presented the issues, summarizing the strongest arguments on both sides.

In the conclusion of my paper I have examined and criticized the arguments and stated my own conclusions.

Are the Current Programs of the Reservation System Damaging to the Indian?

For the most part, the current programs of the American Indian Reservation System began in 1832 (1:345). Since these programs were initiated so long ago, it is difficult to find an up-to-date source which explains why the United States adheres to these policies.* Like many other of its policies, these are rarely explained or supported by the government; they are usually just accepted as existing. But the very fact that they do exist leads to the assumption that there is a reasoning behind the policies of the present system.

To understand why this system exists today we must go back to the past and examine the conditions that existed then in order to determine why the reservation system was first developed.

With the influx of white settlers into the areas occupied by the Indian during the nineteenth century, the United

*Herbert E. Striner says, "In the material analyzed and evaluated in the preparation of this paper, the lack of socioeconomic data about Indians was evident. Considering the continuity of responsibility for so many years and the extraordinary complexity of the problems for which the Bureau of Indian Affairs has been responsible, the discovery that such data were not available comes as a real shock to any researcher. The Bureau has no really hard data on population dynamics, income, employment, education, and so forth. It has few benchmarks against which to measure progress, and more importantly, grossly inadequate data on which to base economic development and manpower programs." (2:324)

States adopted an isolation policy toward the Indian. They were treated as separate nations and it was for this reason they had no say in the forming of one Indian policy. They agreed to live peacefully within the boundaries of certain proscribed areas of land and in return were promised protection from encroaching settlers, payments of food and clothing and other necessities. The plans to keep the Indian separate were short-sighted as it became evident that there was no area in the United States that would be able to remain permanently isolated. Integration became unavoidable and was further complicated by the fact that the Indian had been made a dependent ward of the United States government (1:343-347). At this time, when it was realized that integration would be inevitable, the government adopted its most enduring and most criticized policy--that of assimilation.

At one time the Bureau of Indian Affairs considered a man assimilated if he wore civilian dress; more recently a government official said assimilation to be attainment of literacy, some mixture of blood, acquisition of business skills, acceptance of white institutions, and white acceptance of the Indian (3:9-10). It is this last definition that shall be used in this paper.

Proponents of assimilation policy claim that civilization (i.e., assimilation) is necessary to improve the Indians'

economic status. Seeing him in a small hogan with dirt floors and drafty holes for windows, they sought to make the Indian part of their affluent white society. Basically he was viewed as a childlike creature not having the benefits of white civilization. Important in this assumption is the idea that when properly educated in civilization the child grows up and his status as an Indian (i.e., child) can be terminated. Another assumption which led to this kind of thinking was that the Indian was no different from the non-English speaking immigrant and was also under obligation to go through the melting pot so that he could be culturally assimilated into the dominant United States society. It was regarded as the role of the government to help the Indian go through the melting pot as rapidly as possible so that his status as an Indian could be terminated (2:296-297). This philosophy crystallized in the passage of the Dawes Act in 1887.

This program had a threefold approach--individual landholding, compulsory education, and religious replacements. In the thinking behind the policy the idea of allotting land in individual assignments to Indian families was a central one. It was thought that the Indian needed to be civilized and knowing how to handle individual property was the basis of civilization. With such experience will come responsibility and awareness of the obligations

of citizenship. Therefore, if the land which was originally awarded to the Indian tribes were now reassigned on an individual basis, this would stimulate economic improvement. It would bring about an industriousness and a desire to be more like white Americans. The tribal ties, which are held to lend themselves to a lack of industry and a lack of individual responsibility, would melt away and the Indian would become a participant in the American society. (1:347)

Those who hold this view that assimilation of the American Indian into the normal stream of American life is inevitable and that Indian tribes and communities will disappear, use arguments similar to those found in the speech made by Senator Pendleton of Ohio supporting the Dawes Act:

They must either change their mode of life or they must die. We may reject it, we may wish it otherwise, our sentiments of humanity may be shocked by the alternative, but we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that that is the alternative and that these Indians must either change their modes of life or they will be exterminated. . . . In order that they may change their modes of life we must change our policy. . . . We must stimulate within them to the very largest degree, the idea of home, of family, of property. These are the very anchorages of civilization, the commencement of the dawning of these ideas in the mind is the commencement of the

civilization of any race, and these Indians are no exceptions (4:11-12).

It was also believed that the Indian societies with their barbaric influences could be broken apart more quickly if all Indian children were required to go to Anglo schools. Thus a second basic feature of the program was the establishment of boarding schools far from the reservations to keep the children apart from their parents and the Indian community. Another government policy was that the Indians be taught in English only. The government's justification for this was first exposed in an edict issued by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1887:

Instruction of the Indians in the vernacular is not only of no use to them but it is detrimental to the cause of education and civilization and will not be permitted in any Indian school over which the government has any control. . . . It is believed that if any Indian vernacular is allowed to be taught by missionaries in schools on Indian reservations, it will prejudice the pupil as well as his parents against the English language. . . . This language which is good enough for a white man or a black man ought to be good enough for the red man. It is also believed that the teaching of an Indian youth in his own barbarous dialect is a positive detriment to him. The impracticability, if not impossibility of civilizing the Indians of this country in any other tongue than our own would seem obvious. (1:439)

The third provision of the Dawes Act consisted of a suppression of religious ceremonies which were particularly offensive to missionary groups and the institution of some schools on the reservation to be managed by the missionaries who would impress their beliefs and moral codes upon the Indian.

Those who defend the government policy of assimilation point out the benefits the Indian received under the Dawes Act: land was given to Indian families, their children were offered an academic and religious education, and the Indian was protected by the government from Anglican settlers moving near the reservations. Also, they were given technical assistance in developing farming, cattle raising and other subsistence activities. The Indian Bureau established its own staff of irrigation engineers and set out to increase the acreage of irrigated land on most of the reservations. This was accomplished and also provided many jobs for the Indian. The Bureau also brought to the reservation a judicial and law enforcement system.

In a pamphlet written by LaVerne Madigan for the Association of Indian Affairs, it states the progress of a more recent extension of the assimilation policy--the relocation program. It states the basis of the need for the program as set up according to the Bureau of Indian

On many Indian reservations throughout the country, opportunities for self-support are inadequate. Land resources are insufficient either in quantity or quality, industrial development is negligible, and a considerable portion of the Indian population is faced with the alternatives of leaving the reservation to seek new opportunities or remaining to live in privation or dependent, wholly or partially, on some form of public assistance. That there is a definite physical limit to resource development on the reservation is typified by the Navajo reservation. Under the most optimistic estimate of the resources of this reservation after full development might be expected to produce decent livelihood for about 45,000 people. Yet the present Navajo population is 100,000. . . . The purpose of the Relocation Program is to seek and develop areas of opportunities where Indians may relocate and become self-supporting; to disseminate information about such opportunities, to assist Indians and their families, who desire to do so, to move from the reservation and to provide or arrange for services to them in adjusting to the new environment and aid them in seeking permanent employment. (5:3)

Miss Madigan answers the criticism that the Indians are often relocated to the worst part of the urban areas by pointing out that it is good in comparison to the futility and meagerness of life on the reservation.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs statement maintains that the average income of the Indian male in the relocation program in 1956 was \$1.62 per hour. For women it was \$1.07. This is a considerable amount over the income on the reservation where most Indians were unemployed (6:153).

In 1968, then Vice President Hubert Humphrey said of the relocation program, "It is aimed at encouraging Indians to move off the less promising reservations and into industrial centers where work opportunities are more plentiful. . . . A package program--vocational training and job placement, with all expenses paid for trainee and family--has lured 50,000 Indians into successful urban living." (7:179-181)

There are some groups who, while they do not accept assimilation as the solution to the Indian problem, still support the current Federal Indian policy. They maintain that the present policy is no longer that of assimilation. Edward H. Spicer supports this idea. (1:350-355) As evidence he cites the passage of the Wheeler-Howard or Indian Reorganization Act in 1934. Under this act the allotment program was discontinued as injurious to the Indian and emphasis was shifted from off-reservation boarding schools to on-reservation day schools. The basic idea of the Indian Reorganization Act, according to Mr. Spicer, was that the cultural assimilation of the Indians individual by individual as conceived by the former policy of land allotment, of the reservation education and employment, disorganized both the Indian personality and community, and that influences of the Anglo culture could be best assimilated through the medium of a tribe. The IRA emphasized the day schools were designed to keep children

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in touch with their parents and the community rather than to separate them. It made the Indians citizens and gave the tribal council the power of political self-determination instead of having the paternal control of the Indian Agent.

This, according to Mr. Spicer, represents a complete change of attitude by the government officials. He says the Anglo-American-Indian policy has moved from indifference to Indian internal affairs to intensive concern with them, that it moved from absence of program for changing Indian culture to one of replacement of tribal landholding with individual landholding, replacement or improvement of Indian economics, and replacement of informal home education with formal secular schools. He also claims that by 1934, the government had eliminated as its policy changing tribal religions to those of the western culture but rather concentrated on the development of natural resources, roads and other forms of communication, and on subsidizing education and health services to the Indians.

Critics of the government's policy claim that the government is still pressuring the Indian with the goal of assimilation. In a radio program discussion entitled Paleface Power, Dr. Carl Mindell who is an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Yale University and the former Director of Pine Ridge Indian Reservation states the average life

span for an Indian is forty-five (twenty years less than the average American), the average number of years spent in school is six, and the average income per family per year is \$1,500. The average Indian family has seven people. (8:2)

An executive director of the Association for American Indian Rights, Mr. Buyer, who also took part in the discussion, asserts that the nationwide incidence of Indian children being separated from their homes is twenty times more frequent than non-Indian. He states that 80 percent of all Navajo children are raised in boarding schools. He concludes that the consequences of federal policy are similar to those on the Devils Lake Sioux Reservation where one out of every four Indian children is taken away from his family either to be placed for adoption, to be placed in a foster home, or to be sent to an institution or a boarding school.

The reason for the high percentage of broken homes according to him is because the children may be taken away by law if they are living in unsuitable environments (twelve people living in a one-room cabin is not uncommon), if the parents are habitual drinkers (on some reservations the incidence of alcoholism is 70 percent), or if the child is habitually dependent on the state for support. In this particular tribe 90 percent of the people are on welfare. Dr. Mindell agrees and adds two more reasons that Indians attend boarding schools--(1) there are no schools near

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residences, and (2) for behavioral and social problems. He says the reason for the high rate of foster children is that the welfare agencies are understaffed and he adds that in some reservations child welfare services are nonexistent and the people there are generally so poorly trained that it is easier to send the children away than it is to try to keep them together with problems.

He affirms that the central problem is a lack of preventative and rehabilitative services to families in trouble. He gives his opinion as a psychiatrist that boarding schools destroy the incentive for the family to continue as a unit, that rather than diminishing parent problems, it tends to aggravate them, and he cites evidence by writer John Collier who tells of a Navajo family who hid in the hills because their youngest child was supposed to go to school. It was later discovered that the family had had ten other children who were all taken away at the age of six or seven, none of whom ever returned, all of them dying of disease in institutions.

The trouble with the institutions, says Dr. Mindell, is that they are understaffed. After the eight hours of care in the classroom the percentage of counselors to students may run as high as 1 to 250. To show what a difference these services can mean Dr. Mindell points out the case of an institution where 10 percent of the children had

attempted suicide. After this came to light, the institution made mental health officials available and the suicide rate dropped to almost nothing for the remainder of the term.

"The policy of the teachers and administrators for getting Indians into the mainstream of American life invariably means to deemphasize anything Indian so that even today we find teachers who will become very angry at Indian children for speaking in their own language as if it were a terrible thing," states Dr. Mindell.

In community mental health programs on the reservation, Dr. Mindell found that this caused very bad psychological side effects: students are too hard on themselves, they have a defeatist attitude, lack confidence and ambition. They basically feel that they as Indians are lazy and not worth anything.

Dr. Mindell concludes that the government agency functions as colonial administrators. They have set ideas about getting the Indian people into the mainstream of American life as if what the Indian has is worthless.

This brings out another argument held by those who are opposed to assimilation. It is probably the least intellectual of all the arguments but I felt that I could not overlook it since it was a view of the largest segment of those who oppose assimilation--that is the Indians

themselves. They are against the benefits of the white way of life because they feel that the Indian has a better way of life. They are against civilization because they dare to believe that they are already civilized. They haven't dropped any bombs or burned any villages. They have been non-violent for the past seventy-five years and the white man is still trying to civilize them.

Indian agents have said that their language and culture are irrelevant to the modern world but they find the white world irrelevant to theirs.

The missionaries and Salvation Army are still trying to Christianize them but they couldn't worship a God in the sky whom they couldn't see; their God was the earth and nature that was all around them and from whom they got their livelihood. It was this belief that made it hard for them to accept the allotment act. The Indians treated Mother Earth well and did not fill her lakes and rivers with pollutants nor cut into her hillsides nor cut down her trees. They are waiting for their messiah who will right all the wrongs that have been done to their Mother Earth (so are the white people). They had their own form of birth control and never got overpopulated. They had a strong sense of brotherhood especially within the family. As one old Pomo Indian put it:

To us the family was everything. You have your courts and policemen. We had our family. The old people in our tribes were revered and looked up to. Your old people have no pride. They are cast aside like old dogs. Your old people must be fools. (9:13)

Another viewpoint held by the Indians themselves, that which is pointed out by Mrs. Ruth Hill Ustee, an anthropologist who worked with the Sioux Indians is that "the Indian in the foreseeable future will remain a series of separate and identifiable groups, despite the fact that some individuals will be absorbed into the dominant culture." (10:4)

This sharply contrasts with the government policy; that assimilation into the mainstream in American life is inevitable. It explains the centuries of failure in Anglo-Indian policy.

The Dawes Act is fiercely attacked by the critics of Indian policy who claim it is the main reason the reservations are not fit for Indians today; that is, they don't have enough lands. As D'Arch McNickle puts it:

The President of the United States was authorized to divide an Indian reservation into individual holdings, assign a parcel of land to each family, and declare all remaining land surplus to the needs of the Indian. This "surplus" land was then opened for homesteading and paid for at \$2.50 per acre. By this and other devices contained in the Act, the Indians were relieved of some 90 million acres or almost 2/3 of their land between 1887 and 1930. Without cost to itself the federal government transferred large acreage from Indian to white ownership, even requiring the tribes to pay

the cost of surveying and allotting. In every case the Indian tribe objected to allotment; and in most cases the lands were covered by treaties which the United States obligated itself to protect the tribe in its right of possession. (4:10)

Critics concede that there are problems on the reservations, but say that it should be clear that the government's assimilation policy has not alleviated these problems. Stan Steiner agrees. He quotes people involved in the program to show the drawback of the present relocation program. One of the authorities whom he quotes, Phileo Nash, former Commissioner of Indian Affairs, who guided the program under President Kennedy, says:

Relocation by itself solves nothing. . . .
As long as relocation was merely a program to transport people from one pocket of poverty to another, little was accomplished. Not everyone likes city living--not everyone is suited to it. To combat poverty successfully will require programs that relate people to jobs wherever they choose to live. (2:121)

Similarly, Sioux Richard McKenzie tells of Indians referred by the Relocation Office to boarding houses that were ill-run, short on food and in bad districts (especially for girls), and working up to twelve hours a day because of their ignorance of union rules. When the small amount of money given them to make the trip ran out, they were usually penniless and lost, unable to receive welfare from the state and unable to return home to the reservation.

Mr. Steiner also cites the official concern of then Vice President Hubert Humphrey:

Most of them [those Indians who go out on their own] have never held jobs of any duration and are almost totally unequipped for industrial work. They seek to escape from poverty on the reservation without realizing that they are making a worse trap for themselves. Unless we take measures to help this group, we will find new ghettos being established in our cities and towns, new slum children growing up, a new breed of unemployed--unemployables, taxing our welfare services. (7:179-181)

In a paper for the Upjohn Institute, historian Herbert Striner suggests the following to improve the welfare of Indian children.

1. Strengthen and improve the teaching staff by salaries that are competitive on a national level and better screening of teacher applicants and improved training for teachers in the areas of Indian culture, psychology and special problems of Indian children.
2. Teaching of English as a second language in the schools.
3. Provide education beginning at age three for Indian children.
4. Develop curriculum materials that the Indian culture would be reflected in. At present Indian children are taught to read books that were developed for white middle-class children. Indian history and culture must be introduced at an early age and be continued throughout their education so that Indian children have a grasp of and pride in their Indian heritage. Psychologists agree that they must acquire a positive image of themselves.
5. Guidance, counseling and mental health facilities must be provided in far greater number if dropout rates are to be reduced. (2:302-305)

Can the Programs of the Federal Government Be Effectively
Carried Out?

After a closer examination of this issue, I have found that while many informed writers give evidence to support the conclusion that government programs cannot be executed effectively, the only arguments offered by those who disagree with this conclusion are claims that the Indians would be unable to execute their own programs at all.

Similarly, in the next issue I found that while there was much information to the effect that the Indian could not stand on his own two feet if he were left to handle his own affairs, there was practically no information at all which asserted that he could, and those who wanted to give the Indian the power of self-determination pointed to the ineffectiveness of the federal government in handling them.

Since each negative argument of both issues is the same as the affirmative argument of the other issue, I would have to be overly repetitious if I dealt with both issues separately. Therefore, I have incorporated both issues into the third issue. This is very easily done since both groups

are logically opposed, the question being who can effectively take care of the Indians--the government or the Indians themselves? One group claims the Indians should have the responsibility because the government is inefficient and the other group claims the government should have it because the Indians would be inefficient.

If the Indian Were Given the Power of Self-Determination, Could His Programs Be Carried Out More Effectively than the Present Programs?

Those who contend that the Indian should be given the power of self-determination cite the fact that the government is unable to effectively carry out its programs. (10:4) One of the reasons for this is the instability of the programs. This is caused by the nature of America's political structure in which there is a new administration every four or eight years. With the new administration came a new Secretary of the Interior so that no matter what the Indian policy is today, tomorrow it may be different, even opposite.

For instance, following the American Revolution the Indians were driven over the Alleghenies and told that they might live and hunt freely there, only to be moved west of the Mississippi by President Andrew Jackson, who told them they might roam there undisturbed. A few years later when gold was discovered in California, the reservation system was started to protect the people going west. Next the

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government decided to make farmers and stockmen of them. Beginning in the 1880s, the government allotted reservation land to individuals, the result being that the Indian land shrank from 130 to 52 million acres and their population shrank to its lowest point since long before white contact.

In 1934 the government reversed itself again and passed the Indian Reorganization Act which stopped the sale of land to non-Indians. Although conditions for the Indian improved, they were still the most disadvantaged group in American life. In 1954, there came another turn: Congress announced that the policy of the United States was to terminate the responsibilities the federal government had assumed in a long series of treaties written to endure "so long as the grass shall grow and the water run."

Another reason the federal policy is considered inefficient is that it renders the Indian people powerless and deprives them of the rights assured them in the United States Constitution--that of self-determination. (8:6) It is a common Indian assumption that the interests of the dominant society will prevail over the interests of the Indians in any policy matter. This is supported with the case histories of the Garrison and Kinsewa Dams. Indian tribes were not consulted on the construction of dams which eventually destroyed their reservations either

by chopping them up or submerging them under water. Consequently the Indian believes that there is little he can do to affect decisions concerning his own rights.

One of the few federal policies supported by those who would like the Indian to be self-governing is a series of six bills passed during the Eisenhower administration under the heading of Termination of the Federal Trust. (6:123-147) As stated by a House resolution passed in 1953, the policy of Congress was to make the Indian subject to the same laws and entitled to the same privileges and responsibilities as are applicable to other U.S. citizens as rapidly as possible. The effects of the terminating relationship will be to eliminate the reservation as a government protected preserve for exclusive Indian use and dissolution of the trusteeship over Indian property and to subject that property to taxation.

The Indian tribes to be terminated will be consulted and have a choice of keeping tribal property intact under a private trusteeship or having the property or proceeds from its sale parceled out to individual members of the tribe. N. B. Johnson, Cherokee Indian and Vice Chief Justice of the Oklahoma Supreme Court, is in favor of this gradual liquidation of the Indian tribes. He claims that those who would oppose it are encouraging segregation and Indian race-consciousness and, thus, prolonging the Indian problem.

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He says that the reason that the Bureau of Indian Affairs is slow in bringing about this liquidation is because no bureaucracy can be expected to connive its own demise. He feels that the Indians are ready to run their own affairs and have outgrown the need for government protection:

Today many tribes are possessed of material resources in reservation status which require only additional development and utilization by the Indian in order to provide an adequate standard of living for the tribe. (6:128)

Justice Johnson adds, however, that there should be grants or loans from the federal government to aid the Indian and says it would be unwise to terminate some of the more depressed or illiterate tribes.

Those who oppose Indian self-determination do so only because they realize that the Indian is not yet ready to give up government protection. As evidence of this they cite the catastrophes of the Klamath and the Menominee tribes whose rich forests were parceled out with the consequence of sudden riches followed by impoverishment and the destruction of valuable resources. (6:151)

Most Indian and Indian rights organizations oppose plans for early withdrawal of federal supervision. In fact, most tribes fear that if they look too good, funds that are desperately needed will be withdrawn. (8:7) It is contended that few Indians are prepared to manage their own property and some tribes can barely subsist without government help.

To illustrate this, statistics are given: 16,000 Indian families are dependent on welfare compared with only 57,878 self-supporting Indian families. Sixty-one thousand cannot speak English and 26,000 of their children do not attend schools. Those who did were sometimes two grade points lower than the average American child. (6:124)

The Society of Friends believes that it should be left to the Indians to integrate themselves at a pace controlled largely by their own readiness to take the necessary steps. They are not satisfied with the present conditions of the Indians but they warn that all through history the pressures to let the Indian "control their own lands" or "free them" from Bureau control have been, to a degree, the result of outside, non-Indian influences, who want the Indian lands thrown open to them. (6:120)

The president of the Association of Indian Affairs recommended that instead of just consulting the Indian tribes, the government should require their consent before being able to liquidate their relationship. He recommended this in view of the fact that all of the sixty-one tribes which had been terminated were against the termination when consulted and the government ignored what the Indians themselves wanted. The government ignored the treaties that had been made.

Mr. La Farge also states:

When Indians ceded land, it was for such considerations as reservations on which they would be undisturbed, education for their children, rations until they could establish a new mode of life, livestock, seed, tools, and so on. Since the government had received full value for its grants--most of the land in the United States cost the government less than ten cents an acre--it does not now have the right to compel the Indian to pay again for what he already bought at a very high price. This he would be doing if he were compelled to pay taxes, just as other citizens do; he rightly objects to paying land taxes. (6:147)

II. Analysis and Conclusion

I will first analyze the arguments turning on the verification of a damaging effect of the current reservation system upon the American Indian, as my conclusion on this issue must be determined before my analysis of the next issue.

Fundamentally, there were two separate arguments posed by those defending the reservation system, each of them contradictory to the other. One group defends the assimilation program as government policy while the other group defends the government policy by claiming that the assimilation program has been discontinued. Whether or not this is so, is essential since the government policy must be known before it can be determined whether or not it is harmful; therefore I shall begin by examining both of the arguments to determine whether assimilation is a current policy.

Mr. Spicer cites the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act in 1934 to substantiate his claim that the assimilation program of previous years has been discontinued. This law clearly reverses the policy of assimilation as defined under the Dawes Act of 1887. It contained provisions to abolish the land allotment system and boarding schools, and repudiated the basic assimilation philosophy behind them. This would seem to be conclusive evidence to the fact that the assimilation programs have been discontinued. However, the evidence presented by Dr. Mindell and Mr. Buyer that the policy of having many Indian children attend boarding school--where they do not receive the proper care and where there is a policy of getting Indians into the mainstream of American life--leads to exactly the opposite conclusion.

I have a tendency to support the latter conclusion more readily because: (1) I believe that the evidence is trustworthy, the men being authorities in their field, having first-hand experience, and (2) I believe that the evidence is more up to date, dealing with current realities as opposed to past resolutions.

Furthermore, the introduction of the Relocation Program years after the Reorganization Act should be reasonable proof that the idea of assimilation is still an underlying factor in present-day Indian policy. I will grant that

perhaps some of the goals of the government's policy changed, but certainly enough time has passed for them to have carried out these goals. It is evident that the stated goals of a policy may be and usually are quite different from the consequences of a policy, and it is those consequences which we must deal with.

Therefore, I shall now examine the government's programs, which have been determined to have the end effect of assimilation, to find whether or not they are damaging to the Indian.

One of the fallacies made by both sides in the argument for and against assimilation is that they each seemed to be defending a certain way of life--those supporting assimilation, the Anglo way of life, and those opposing it, the Indian way. Surely, such involves an individual's personal philosophy which, since it should not be infringed upon in matters of government, is irrelevant to this issue. If a man chooses to live in a one-room mud house with his family, we have no authority to deprive him of that right; however, if his children are not getting the proper nourishment to exist upon or are deprived of an equal education, it is a different matter. Although valuatative in nature, I think it can be agreed upon that our government assures its citizens of certain rights under the law and that an equal opportunity to enjoy these rights should at least be made available to

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every man. Whether or not the current reservation system is damaging revolves around whether the government is fulfilling these rights of equal opportunity to life and education.

The idea that anyone who lives here has the obligation to "go through the melting pot" or become like the rest of the dominant society has no foundation in law. It is dubious as to whether it could be required even of the immigrant but it certainly could not be applied to the Indian who did not choose to immigrate to what is now the United States, but who settled here first.

Likewise, the idea that one must "be civilized," speak the same language, and change his mode of living or die is not applicable under our democratic form of government. On the other hand, those in favor of assimilative programs claim that in order to elevate his present economic and educational status, the Indian must be willing to make these sacrifices and change. However, with the evidence offered on the poor state of Indian education and welfare, it is clear that the assimilation program has not been able to elevate the Indian's status sufficiently to make these changes worthwhile for him. It has not.

After looking at the evidence, it is my conclusion that the present reservation system is damaging to the Indian.

It cannot be denied that, as Mr. Spicer points out, progress

was made under federal programs. Certainly land was irrigated and developed, educational and judicial systems were improved and many Indians received jobs in the city under the Relocation Program, but it cannot be overlooked that in many cases the Indian was not happy with these programs. Too often we looked at things from our viewpoint only, not consulting the Indian. This, I feel, is the main flaw in the assimilation policy. It overlooked completely what the Indian wanted for himself.

The issue of whether the Indian should be allowed the right of self-determination has as the strongest argument in the Indian's favor that it is guaranteed them under the Constitution. I also accept the inconsistencies of federal policy as proof that the government would be unable to execute its programs. However, I disagree with Justice Johnson who claims that Indians possess enough resources to have many tribes liquidated. I feel, with the evidence as to their state of resources in the previous issue combined with the knowledge that most tribes are against it, that termination at this point would be disastrous.

My conclusions on the issues are mixed. I feel that neither the government nor the Indians are equipped to solve the problem by themselves. Because of my conclusion on the last issue, I feel that abolishing the Indian reservation system at this time could only provide them with a worse

alternative. However, I do feel that the present reservation system can and must be reconstructed to implement the proper changes to prepare the Indian in becoming self-reliant and to provide better services to him until he feels that he is ready to terminate his status as a dependent. I have three recommendations:

1. Appointment of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs under a Civil Service System rather than as a political appointment, as exists now. Transfer of his responsibility to the Indian instead of to the Secretary of Interior would leave him free of political manipulation.
2. Give complete autonomy to Indians to run their own programs.
3. Make more adequate and properly trained advisors available.

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Summary

Original Text

Not until experiments with animals were undertaken near the beginning of the twentieth century did the idea become popular that lack of certain dietary constituents could cause disease. The development of current theories on human nutrition show the interplay between observations on animals and the discovery of cures for human ills.

In 1911 and 1912 Casimir Funk fed pigeons polished rice to show the connection between beriberi and nutritional deficiencies. He suggested that this and similar conditions were due to diets lacking in substances he termed "vitamines."

Some four years before Funk in investigations at the University of Wisconsin, E. V. McCollum had studied the way cereals were used as cattle feed and the effect this had on animal growth and development. These investigations led him

to Johns Hopkins in 1913 where he studied a condition known as "dry eye." The classic treatment for this disease involved the ingestion of butter and egg fat. McCollum was eventually able to extract from this source a substance that seemed to be the effective part of the treatment. He said that although in many ways this substance resembled the "vitamines" described by Funk, it could not be classified as such since it lacked nitrogen. Instead, it was to be called "unidentified dietary factor, fat-soluble A".

Over the next few years, similar substances were discovered. All were soluble--either in water or in fat. It soon became apparent that while Funk's designation was too general to be useful in differentiating these substances, the more specific identification used by McCollum was so long as to be unwieldy. In 1920, J.C. Drummond proposed that the two identification systems be combined--all these substances would be classed as vitamines, but each type would carry its own alphabetic designation.

While observations discovered that a variation in the diets of the animals producing eggs and milk resulted in a variation in the amount of vitamin A found in these products, investigators decided that the original source of vitamin A was in plants, or more specifically, in their carotene. However, since some oils and other materials con-

tain carotene but not vitamin A, a connection between the two was long doubted. By 1932, independent experiments of J.C. Drummond and some British scientists confirmed the relationship. Vitamin A was found to be one of the two factors making up carotene. Evidence showed that the animal body--particularly the liver--changes carotene into useful vitamin A.

The establishment of this connection even had economic ramifications. Oil from fish livers, especially shark livers, was discovered to contain much vitamin A. According to H. N. Brocklesby, microscopic sea plants, which are eaten by small fish, are responsible for this supply. As the fish eat one another, the livers of some preserve the vitamin. Discovery of this source of vitamin A gave rise to a booming shark-liver industry.

Another connection was then tested. Since the Egyptians had prescribed a liver diet as a cure for "night blindness," experiments were made using vitamin A as a possible cure for eye diseases similar to xerophthalmia. In 1920 Emmett tested vitamin A on xerophthalmia in rats and found indications that a relationship did exist. Later Block, Wright, and Mori proved through clinical experiments that xerophthalmia was an advanced stage of a condition caused by vitamin A deficiency.

Summary

Experiments on animals indicated a connection between diet and disease. One of the first to demonstrate this was Casimir Funk. In about 1911 he established a link between deficiency in something he called "vitamines" and the disease beriberi.

E. V. McCollum's investigations at the University of Wisconsin into the use of cereals in cattle diets was the foundation for studies at Johns Hopkins six years later where he isolated in butter and egg fat a substance useful for treating "dry eye". He named this "unidentified dietary factor, fat-soluble A."

As similar substances soluble in water or fat were discovered, J. C. Drummond suggested they be labeled with a combination of McCollum's and Funk's classification: all would be termed vitamins but they would be differentiated by alphabetical names.

Noting that the amount of vitamin A in eggs and milk varied with the food the animal had been eating, Drummond traced vitamin A to plants. By 1932 it had been established that one of the two factors making up plant carotene was converted by animal livers into useful vitamin A.

Even in the sea plant life is a source of vitamin A through a cycle in which it is eaten by fish and becomes available for human consumption in fish liver oil.

Investigations based on an ancient Egyptian cure for "night blindness" led to the establishment of a connection between xerophthalmia and vitamin A deficiency.

Analysis

Gerard Manley Hopkins--"Hurrahing in Harvest"

Hopkins is most famous for his highly individual system of metrics and "sprung rhythm" which is intended to reproduce the more natural accents of prose English. However, I believe the difficulty in grasping his poetry lies less in the unusual metre than in the compression of his language, his frequent inventions of new words or resurrection of old ones, his complicated alliteration, his concrete imagery and his many ambiguities. Keats-like, Hopkins achieves great intensity by eliminating unnecessary articles and connectives, piling up modifiers (especially participial adjectives) and using elliptical concentrations which appeal directly to the emotions and the senses.

Hopkins shares with many other Victorians (and again with Keats) the use of poetry as an outpouring toward life in a complicated canvas painted with words. More unique is the intense piety which makes his every poem a psalm.

In "Hurrahing in Harvest" we have a characteristic sample of Hopkins's work. The poem is filled with light and movement, conceived in fire and rapture. The poet's attitude is as exultant--his theme the glory of God and the beauty of his Creation. Within the poem is hidden an allusion to the psalmist who sang in a less joyful mood, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills." Hopkins mentions beauty, rapture, strength, and love. The overwhelming excitement and lift of a windy autumn day is well described. Beautiful things are everywhere, only the audience has been lacking, and now the poet is struck by the gloriousness of it all. The poem ends in almost complete ecstasy--Hopkins stops himself ("And hurls for him, O half hurls earth for him. . .") to remember that only the ecstasy of heaven is without flaw and never-ending.

Structurally, "Hurrahing in Harvest" is a fourteen-line poem rhymed abba abba cdedcd. Each line has five major stresses, establishing the pentameter (although the iambic foot has been dropped in favor of Hopkins's running foot--one major stress with any number of unstressed beats) and providing a Petrarchan sonnet form.

Alliteration is especially noticeable in lines two, three and four; "What wind-walks! What lovely behavior of silk-sack clouds! has wilder, wilful-wavier Meal-drift moulded ever and melted across skies?" Hopkins' habit of

pairing alliterative sounds, then shifting their order for emphasis and difference is also present: the final sound in silk becomes the initial sound in clouds; the l-d combination of "meal drift" and "moulded" changes to l-t (a lighter sound) in melted. The unusual forms--stooks, wind-walks, silk-sack, meal-drift, azurous hung--make the reader pause and concentrate on the implied image. Only "stooks" and "gleam" recall the harvest; "hills," "shoulder," and "stallion stalwart" add a vigorous masculine note which prepares the reader for the force of the last two lines.

These fourteen lines are rich in ambiguities which could be pursued in endless variant readings. I cannot quite agree with Bailey's comments on this poem, but I would find it difficult to prove conclusively that his emphasis on the barbarous incompleteness of nature is less valid than my impression of a paean in which the heavens show forth the glory of God. Such an emotional response to nature has been stated by other poets--Frost, Millay, Shelley--but rarely better or with more universality. While Hopkins wrote his poem in another country, I think any farmer in Kansas would recognize the radiance which suffuses this description of a bright day at the end of fall harvest.

Essay Test Question

Using the development of the action in Act II, Scene II and Act III, Scene III of Othello, discuss the psychology of Iago. Describe the way his character is reflected in the construction of his schemes and in his relationship with others in these scenes.

Essay Test Answer

Iago throughout moves behind the scenes "protesting too much" in the proper places. He will never fight openly, delights in being to everyone a friend, seeming to enjoy Machiavellian intrigue for the sake of the daring and the ingenuity involved, showing exhilaration on the brink of the highest cliff. His is the psychological type which lies instinctively, even when no necessity is visible. He is a subtle opportunist who proceeds delicately, certain only of his ultimate objective but ready to seize any chance word or deed for use to his own advantage.

His plot proceeds along the lines of his character since he would be unable to control or even to conceive it any other way. His recognition of Othello's forth-

rightness and, indeed, the relative simplicity of the other participants with the possible exception of Desdemona creates a need for coy handling of suspicions--definitely his forte and possibly the only way in which he could work.

Iago continually divides his suspicion-planting speeches into two parts (which moderns can recognize as the gossips--"I admire Jane and all that, but. . ."). First his protestations of loyalty--"I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth than it should do offence to Michael Cassio"; then his meek "good-fellow-trying-to-gloss-over-friend's-faults" doubts. He welcomes and encourages the picture of himself as an honest fellow, perhaps too honest to do himself justice. One can almost see him digging his toe into the carpet and pulling bashfully at his forelock.

Despite this almost too apparently inviting coyness (which seems to say "coax me") Iago maintains an unhumorous, almost noble deadly aspect. He tells truths in the wildest manner, he flaunts clues in the faces of his victims. The spectator holds his breath, realizing one bit of knowledge, one key to the truth of Iago's hints would remove Othello from this evil spell. Through the third scene of Act III, though, Othello continues in character, taking Iago's statements at face value. He makes a too-eager fly begging the spider to let him into the web.

In the two scenes under discussion, Iago makes use of two of the better bits of fortune to come his way. His main goal in the first scene was to discredit Cassio. It was not all fate which carried this plan to success. Iago's knowledge of the people he was seeking to manipulate made such manipulation possible. On the other hand, to have foreseen the wounding of Montano would have required the skill of a witch-doctor. A long shot won. His actual plan appears a trifle obscure. Iago was content with bringing factors together and giving them a place to happen. Invariably they exceeded possible expectations.

The second scene presents a close-up of Iago's magnificent skill in gauging the effectiveness of speech, the time best suited for pressing the point, and the time for planting a new word or phrase for consideration. Here his object was to cast doubt on Desdemona's reasons for appealing Cassio's case. Quite deftly he does this, leading into the subject by appearing a little uneasy about Cassio's presence at the castle. Whenever he can, by dropping one word, force Othello to question him, to express doubt, he does so. Seeming to appease the doubt, he adds word after word to inflame it. Truly his craft makes him almost a "prince of darkness."



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