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Re-Thinking Readings and Writing in the Study of Literature.

Mary Ann Doyle
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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Re-thinking readings and writing in the study of literature

Doyle, Mary Ann, Ph.D.
The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1992
RE-THINKING READINGS AND WRITING
IN THE STUDY OF LITERATURE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
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Agricultural and Mechanical College
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in

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction

by
Mary Ann Doyle
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ABSTRACT

While the field of academic literary studies continues to engage in contested debate over defining and revising its curricula (Graff, 1987), teachers remain situated at the sometimes contradictory and often isolated intersections of theory and practice. Decisions made about writing in literature classes, selecting texts for course syllabi, and pedagogical style are most often negotiated at the level of the individual teacher, who may or may not be responding to an increasing incidence of departmental restructuring, recommendations, prohibitions, or political pressures. Though there is no scarcity of disagreements and accusations about what revisionary approaches 'mean', (fieldnotes, Spring 1992), there is a dearth of well-considered research about what particular revisions may mean at the university level for individual teachers and students, and particular classroom communities.

In this study I have explored the teaching style of a professor in a research university English department. Addressing the work of William Pinar (1975, 1976, 1988), Jo Anne Pagano (1990), Gerald Graff (1987), Wilson Harris (1989), William Doll (in press), and Newman, Griffin, and Cole (1989), in particular, the study entertains a conversation between curriculum theorizing and
ethnographic methods, drawing upon my own educational experiences of literary studies as a frame of reference. In this conversation I have addressed issues related to what Wilson Harris calls a "literate imagination" (Harris, 1989), introducing that notion into a consideration of where reforms might lead us in an emerging post-modern age.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore issues associated with the study of literature from several perspectives. In Chapter One I will offer an autobiographical account of my own experiences of literary studies, focusing on the interpretations I constructed about a particularly troubling text I read as an adolescent. In Chapter Two I will review the literature about teaching literary studies in the U.S. in the twentieth century, considering the ways in which certain approaches became orthodox and the ways these dominant practices were and have continued to be challenged. In Chapter Three an ethnographic study will be reported in which I explore the teaching style of a university professor who employs interactive rather than direct instructional practices. In Chapter Four an analysis and discussion of the study will be offered, followed by a return to some of the issues raised in Chapter One. In Chapter Five I will consider some of the pedagogical implications which may be drawn from the dissertation.

An exploration of issues associated with literary studies is a timely project in an era characterized by contentious debates over issues of literacy and curriculum.
reform. These debates have prompted scholars such as Gerald Graff to observe that conflict has always been part of the institutional history of the field, but that this fact has been hidden by the way the field has traditionally dealt with conflict. Graff (1987) writes:

The boundaries that mark literary study off from creative writing, composition, rhetoric, communications, each bespeak a history of conflict that was critical to creating and defining these disciplines yet has never become a central part of the context of study . . . . Either the conflict of the sciences and the humanities is not offered because it is nobody’s field—or else it is offered (as an option) because it is somebody’s field. (p. 258)

Students have not learned about these conflicts, Graff asserts, because they “see each discipline as a frozen body of knowledge to be absorbed rather than as social products with a history that they might have a personal and critical stake in” (p. 258).

In his study of the institutional history of professing literature (1987), Graff argues for a reconceptualization of literary studies along the lines of that proposed by James Kincaid. Because of the significance of Kincaid’s reconceptualization to the work at hand, I will quote him at length.

Abandoning coverage as an impoverished ideal, we might begin by imagining an ideal course . . . Wouldn’t it seek to define the subject matter,
literature, and to discuss the various and competing assumptions about texts, language, meaning, culture, readers, and so forth that we make . . . Wouldn’t it show that these assumptions are themselves constructions, that there is considerable debate about such things as texts, about where meaning resides, about the importance of gender, about the relations of these things to historical situations? Wouldn’t it also show that these assumptions were not themselves innocent, that they were value-laden, interested, ideological? You are starting to suspect that this is a course in theory. One either smuggles it in or goes through customs openly . . . We need to teach not the texts themselves but how we situate ourselves in reference to those texts. (Cited in Graff, 1987, p. 262)

As Graff and Kincaid assert, the cultural context of literary studies mediates the construction of interpretations. Teachers who embrace this conception of literary studies might be expected to teach differently than teachers who believe in direct instruction and who attempt to provide as much coverage of literature as possible within the time allowed. An issue which may be less obvious in this matter is that students may not possess an understanding of the kind of theory which motivates teaching practices, nor does it follow necessarily that students will interpret practices in ways consistent with a teacher’s theory. How teachers and students interact shapes some aspects of the cultural context, but receives little attention in the current debates. I intend to explore
Reading Ethan Frome

As a freshman in high school in 1964 I read Edith Wharton's novel Ethan Frome. It was required reading in my English class. Though each of the students read the book individually out of class and answered the questions raised by the teacher aloud and on written tests, I was distressed by this novel. In Ethan Frome two young people decide that suicide is their only viable option in response to a desperation that arises out of economic and personal circumstances. I wanted to talk about how Mattie's poverty had led her into servitude in her cousin Zeena's home, and how Zeena had made use of Mattie's labor without recognizing the contributions she made to the household. It seemed to be this double-bind of poverty and lack of recognition that predisposed Mattie to silence, and eventually to desperation.

In our class discussions, however, Mattie and Ethan's attraction for one another was viewed as the cause of their tragic fate. If they had simply resisted the temptation to care about each other, Mrs. Choate explained, Mattie could have married one of the young men in the town, and Zeena would not have become angry, demanding her dismissal. The
link between fate and tragedy represented in this story seemed to be guilt. Mattie and Ethan were guilty of violating a social code about relationships between married and unmarried persons. This code was only a part of a larger network of codes which supposedly informed people about their proper place in the world. Mrs. Choate’s conclusion was that the tragedy was caused by Mattie, who refused to be content with having a place to live and work, or to choose from among the townsmen who would have taken her as a wife. It mattered little in these discussions that both Mattie and Ethan appeared to be disembodied from their imaginations. Their desperate act seemed to me to be an attempt to dispose of the barrier between what they experienced and what they imagined as possible. Within this frame of reference, it made sense to them to dispose of their own bodies altogether.

I wanted to talk about Ethan Frome in terms different from those set by Mrs. Choate. I wanted to talk about what the novel “meant” to us, a class of 25 teen aged girls, most of whom were members of working class families. We were expected to be glad to be in an academic track, since many of our parents had been forced by economic necessities into early departures from high school. Mrs. Choate, a second-year teacher, insisted that the class move on to the next novel on the reading list. There was no middle ground for
discussion between her approach to teaching literature and my experience of reading it. Our lives seemed to occupy different terrains, and in order for us to come to some understanding, I was expected to either abandon or deny those experiences which were important to me and to accept the interpretation she offered for the meaning of the novel.

Mrs. Choate's practice of asking the questions and correcting our responses according to her perspective constrained the formal interpretive process, but it did not prevent the emergence of hidden interests on the part of students. I continued to address the issues left unresolved by our discussion of Ethan Frome in all the other texts we read that year, and to some degree, for all the years that followed. Stubborn resistance became a goal because abandoning those issues represented a kind of psychological suicide. Though Mrs Choate tried to understand my difficulty, she had a larger goal in mind for the study of literature. She hoped to show us how to discover the universal truths which literature embodied.

I was considered a serious student by my teachers at this parochial school for girls, and Mrs. Choate's responses were not meant to be unkind. She assured me that I would find the answers to issues raised by my reading of Ethan Frome in the other literature we would read that year and in
the years to come. We would not address Ethan Frome at a later time, however. She was convinced that great works of literature were whole in and of themselves. There would be no reason to return to Ethan Frome once Silas Marner or Great Expectations had been introduced. Literary truth was thought to be cumulative, with each new classic adding to our wealth of knowledge.

Our stalemate was problematic, however. Literary truth appeared to me to be something grotesque and menacing. I continued to read as Mrs. Choate had advised, but I could not let go of Ethan Frome. I felt threatened by the interpretation I had constructed, but nothing that Mrs. Choate said offered a serious challenge to that interpretation. I found myself unable to read the novel as she had, and unsure about how to construct a different interpretation on my own.

Repeatedly I was drawn to the attempted-suicide scene where Mattie and Ethan climb onto the sled at the top of Schoolhouse Hill. It seemed reasonable to wonder whether they might have made another decision had the sled not been already in motion on this icy, New England hill at dusk. It was unnerving, too, to read that the natural course of the hill demanded careful steering so that riders would not be delivered without their consent to a collision with the elm tree near the bottom. So much about this scene
seemed to predispose Ethan to his decision to drive the sled with Mattie and himself on it, so that they could escape Zeena and the separation she planned for them.

The relationship between the sled as a vehicle set to carry its riders, the course traced so precipitously in the snow, and the desperation of the young lovers disturbed me. I interpreted this scene as a literary expression of an ominous truth, a truth that laid out the fate of this couple without offering them a way to change its course. Yet I resisted that form of truth. There seemed to be little chance of escape for some people from society's (and perhaps nature's) exercise of power over the course of our lives. Even suicide seemed an unreliable course of action for those attempting a final exit. Within this frame of reference, mutilation and desperation seemed as likely in my life as they had been in the account of Mattie and Ethan. It was because of this identificatory link that resistance seemed necessary.

Oddly enough, my resistance to the official interpretations of literature found in my teachers' interpretations was complicated by my willingness to read as much as I could in search of a different version of truth. This behavior was misinterpreted in interesting ways. Since my resistance was coupled with avid reading, teachers often mistook my resistance as a kind of failed
attempt to reach their goals. I was often rewarded for my reading and assured that I just had not yet read enough to understand what literature was all about. I was encouraged to read still more (which I did but for different reasons than my teachers offered) and to see things from their perspectives (which I tried to do in order to resist better). Teachers interpreted my behavior in light of their own goals, such that the more I struggled with the kind of literary knowledge school interactions seemed to sponsor, the more my teachers encouraged me to keep reading.

For years I replayed the dilemmas associated with my reading of *Ethan Frome*. It was not until I began the study to be reported later in this dissertation that I carefully re-read this novel. At that time I discovered that the sled was not already sliding downhill when Ethan brought it to Mattie at the top of Schoolhouse Hill as I had believed. One of the things which is in motion in this novel is Mattie's suggestion that Ethan drive the sled "So 't we'd never have to leave each other any more" (Wharton, 1982, p. 87). It is Mattie who drives the scene, by suggesting the ride and then taking Ethan by the hand toward the sled. It is Mattie who bears and delivers the message of suicide to Ethan.

I realize now that readers may identify with characters in very contradictory ways, and that the identificatory process is often constrained by the
autobiographical associations readers may make, or by the
limitations readers may experience during the interpretive
process. It never occurred to me, nor was the possibility
raised during class discussions, that readers of *Ethan Frome*
might not identify with any of the characters, or might
choose to consider the text from the perspective of the
author or one of the supporting characters, or even from the
point of view of someone who shared that period of history
in which the story was set.

Identifying with characters seemed a natural response
to me as an adolescent, and faced with that assumption, I
wanted to identify most strongly with Ethan, rather than
with either of the female characters. I loathed both Mattie
and Zeena for their cowardice and their physical
disabilities. I was a physically handicapped person who had
been taught since I was a year old to remain active in order
to prevent permanent disability. Zeena, Ethan's complaining
wife, distressed me in the way she indulged her tendency
toward hypochondria, and the way she used this tactic to
seize power in their relationship. Mattie's unwillingness to
act on her own behalf at the end of the novel was also
associated with gender issues. These gender connections
were strong enough that I felt threatened by the same kinds
of constraints that had led Mattie and Zeena to some form
of mutilation.
In a powerful way, however, I felt as connected to Ethan as I did to Mattie and Zeena. I enjoyed a wide range of freedoms associated with my need to remain physically active year round, freedoms not generally associated with my three sisters. In this way I felt more like a son than a daughter to my parents, though my five brothers only grudgingly acknowledged this. My parents' encouragement in this matter cut across their own, and in some ways, my notions of appropriate gender behaviors. It was generally understood that the practice of behaving like a boy in terms of physical activity was never supposed to compromise an essential feminine nature. When it came time to give formal expression to one's gendered social roles, anticipated in our family during one's high school years, the social practices I had learned outside the home were expected to give way to an emergent, docile nature. These practices, however, did not emerge, and I tried to negotiate a middle ground between my own experiences and what was expected of me.

Physically, I had become accustomed to negotiating activities, discovering ways in which I could perform a task within the range of the limitations I experienced, always realizing that my performance would be different from the way someone else might perform the same activity. Sometimes this negotiation meant something as simple as...
using my left arm rather than my right, and then reversing the directions of motions required by the activity in order to accommodate this kind of change. Batting lefthanded, for instance, represented this kind of change. Other social practices, however, particularly those involving gender issues, were much more difficult to negotiate. Determining the limits of social acceptance for particular kinds of activities was often more difficult than simply performing the practice as it was generally understood. Though others often perceived my behavior as a failed attempt to perform social practices, these performances were often the goals I had set for myself. In school, particularly, teachers were inclined to believe that if a student failed to perform the task the teacher had set for the class, it was because the student's efforts had been insufficient. Ethan was interpreted in our class as a failed man, a man who had failed to retain control over his wife, Zeena. I wondered if Ethan's failure was not the result of his trying not to exercise that kind of power at all. His willingness to drive the sled into the elm, however, left me wondering as well whether he could imagine any other way of relating besides a choice between two extreme versions of power.

Actually, both Zeena and Ethan were viewed as failures, each suffering the cost of having reversed the positions society had set for them. Zeena ruled Ethan's life
with her demands and her hypochondria, and Ethan bowed to her wishes to the point of feeling as desperate and powerless as Mattie.

The Realist Tradition and an Illiteracy of the Imagination

At this point I will offer a brief critique of two of the assumptions which shaped much of my educational experience with literary studies. At a personal level I believed opposition in and of itself was a viable way to resist social forces, including those represented by literary truths. At the level of school practice I was encouraged to believe that reading more would lead a person to an understanding of how to read differently.

Rather than reconsider my own readings of Ethan Frome, I will draw from the work of at least two critics who consider these patterns in relation to Herman Melville's novel, Bartleby the Scrivener. In the discussion to follow I will consider the ways in which these two kinds of readings (opposing the reading and reading more) can perform a block function. This function, it will be suggested, disables the reader, who, attempting to negate a particular interpretation, becomes entrapped by opposition, or, trying to find a way to read (the world) differently simply reads more (more of the same, in the same way).
Wilson Harris (1989), an exiled Caribbean novelist, critic, and scholar, claims the realist tradition structures an "illiteracy of the imagination." The logic of realism, continues Harris, steeps us in a worldview which conceives of its own history in terms of centers, origins, and essential identities (p. 19). This kind of logic constrains literary expressions as it shapes language to its own design. By defining the terms, categories, and rules of operation to be employed, realist logic authorizes certain perspectives, and disallows others. Harris claims that this kind of logic is characterized by deprivation, a deprivation of imagination. He draws upon Melville's novel, Bartleby the Scrivener, to illustrate this point.

Bartleby has performed as a scrivener, a copier of legal documents, unable to construct writings authorized by his own experiences. His writing and his life have become disembodied. In an attempt to alter his relationship to his work and to the powers that authorize it, Bartleby sets himself in opposition to it. Harris writes:

Bartleby gradually relinquishes all communication with the society in which he lives. He is given various functions to perform and he steps away from them . . . [Melville] is addressing a deep-seated problem, the problem of deprivations, the problem of tradition. How, in fact, to say certain things which he finds himself unable to say. (p. 17)
Harris argues that Bartleby reads the logic of realism and, unable to find a way to revise it, attempts to negate it. In this he does not find a way to reclaim his own body, and the embodied experiences which may save his own life. As he withdraws from society in his opposition to its codes and mores, it becomes apparent that death is the only exit possible for someone who “prefers not” to participate in society (Melville, 1942, p. 119). Bartleby does not invent a different kind of reading of society, and, through this, a different identity for himself. By attempting only to negate a system which seeks closure in self-interested operations, he enacts his own kind of closure and starves himself to death. His unrelenting preference for opposition is fatal.

Gregory S. Jay (1990) addresses this theme in his book, *America the Scrivener* which also explores Melville’s *Bartleby*. In the Introduction, Jay considers Bartleby’s predicament as an attempt on the part of Melville to critique the agenda of civil disobedience expressed in the form of nonviolent resistance. While Bartleby strategically negates his relationship to the law, in an attempt to negate the law itself, his lawyer/employer, also the narrator of the story, reasserts the strategies of the law in relation to Bartleby. The lawyer reads, writes, and speaks the logic of realism. His lifework is to always read in the same way, but more. He believes that he participates fully in the
language arts, yet he does so only to the degree that these are defined within the logic of realism. Reading as invention, as translation, as a negotiation of the cultural context where one is positioned in particular and often contradictory ways in relation to society and its identificatory codes is excluded.

As a symbol of literacy in a tradition which prizes its written laws, the lawyer exhausts his knowledge of reading without ever making sense of Bartleby's refusal to take up his writing once again. The reasons for Bartleby's refusal to comply with what appear to the lawyer to be reasonable demands are incomprehensible to the lawyer. By his repeated appeals to legal strategies, the lawyer seeks to author/ize Bartleby's return to his duty and society. He wishes to reduce his own discomfort over Bartleby's behavior by drawing Bartleby into his reasoning. He cannot succeed, however, because Bartleby's opposition is absolute.

Neither the lawyer nor Bartleby write in order to learn. Writing, for them, neither explores nor revises the social order. Each employs the operations of a system designed to exclude negotiations, compromises, and indeterminacy. The lawyer's system is designed to force compliance; Bartleby's is designed to express opposition.

These critiques illustrate how Bartleby's refusal to author/ize his own actions is no more free than his
lawyer's. By defining his own freedom as "the lack of
determination and as the absolute play of will as whim,"
Bartleby creates a system of preference which "is itself
ultimately unfree" (Jay, 1990, p. 25). He abandons what
Maxine Greene calls the notion of freedom which calls for
human action and interaction. He "feel[s] conditioned,
determined, even fated by prevailing circumstances"
(Greene, 1988, p. 124). In his total opposition, Bartleby
withdraws from society and encloses himself within his
own totalizing system. His civil disobedience succeeds at
exposing the lawyer and the legal system in their self-
interests, but it does so only at the price of his own life.

Reading in either of these ways illustrates an
illiteracy of imagination. This kind of reading is immersed
in realism's common assumptions. Gayatri Spivak calls this
immersion the "worlding" process itself (1986, p. 146).
Either strategy leaves intact the system's structural logic.
It is a logic which attempts to exclude any strategies which
might lead to its own revision.

Wilson Harris notes the paradox within Western
realist tradition as it represents itself as the origin, the
center, and the ideal of culture. Such a view denies its own
cross-cultural roots. Harris writes:

"Scholars declare that if we were to attempt to
chart four cornerstones in Western literature,
we would look to the work of Shakespeare,"
Dante, Goethe and Homer. Now that seems (on the face of it) a straightforward proposition. But then we turn to what Frances Yates has to say and we discover . . . the cross-cultural roots which may lie in Shakespeare or in Dante have apparently vanished. (p. 14)

Harris calls this kind of totalizing framework a block function. It is a framework for a theory of knowledge which is constructed in a way which eclipses its own sources (p. 15). Its system of language denies the political turbulence of its own construction and provides a kind of false correspondence between language and an idealized reality.

For Bartleby, as rumors reported after his death, years of service “as a subordinate clerk in the Dead Letter Office of Washington” preceded his employment with the lawyer/narrator. The narrator asks: “Dead letters! Does it not sound like dead men?” (Melville, 1942, p. 155).

Jo Anne Pagano (1990), in her consideration of patriarchal communities in Exiles and Community, observes that this fatal aspect characterizes patriarchal systems. The body is denied (transformed into dead letters?) while the experiences of the body become a subtext, a “hidden injury” (p. 136). Those who would speak from the site of the body are denied a voice, while those who gain a voice do so at the expense of their own gendered experiences. Such disconnections make speaking and writing complicitous acts. “Either we are locked out or we
are plagiarists. The stories we tell are not our own” (p. 132). This is even more true for women than men, Pagano argues, because it is the experience of the feminine which is most repudiated by patriarchal practices, and women retain this feminine connection through their own bodies in spite of any mastery of language they might perform in the name of reason.

The tensions which result from trying to create spaces and speak our own voices characterize Pagano’s search for a style of feminist pedagogical practice which “displays confidence in connection” (p. 81). Bartleby had lost all such confidence, and his total opposition denied connections as completely as the dead letter system. His plight illustrates the need for an approach to literary studies which explores the cultural context of writers and readers, including the subordinate goals which may characterize and motivate their actions. Within this context, the literate imagination is a collective construction, dependent upon the interactions of an interpretive community.

In this section I have recounted several aspects of my educational experiences, selected because of the formative influence they had in my life. My parents, teachers, and I were situated within a cultural context which sponsored the belief that literary studies were a means of gaining
understanding about universal truths, truths believed to be gender-neutral. Whatever barriers and constraints there were in a given curriculum were believed to be irreducible to social or historical factors. This view made the work of revising the system difficult for me to imagine, much less articulate. Held in such awe, the novels we read and the questions we answered were much like the dead letters Bartleby delivered to the fires.

Missing from these experiences was a collective negotiation of the ways by which we situate ourselves in reference to texts. Pagano (1990) has suggested that the office of literature is to test the relationship between language and reality. Drawing upon this perspective, the office of pedagogy may be to excavate those sociohistorical practices which shape learning (Newman, Griffin, and Cole, 1989). Barbara Harlow (1987) calls this excavation process the "linguistic struggle on the cultural terrain" (p. 27). The danger of reversing patterns of domination rather than reconstructing them remains a real threat, however, even in the excavation process. Harlow reminds us that it is through "self-critical controversies" (p. 29) that we may find ways to revise the patterns of assumptions and power-relations which have shaped us.

One of the difficulties we face in articulating our experiences is that we are socially constructed within a
terrain of undecidables (Laclau, 1990, p. 173). A political dimension of contradictions and coercions remains an inherent element in social structures. Within this cultural context, knowledge, even of ourselves, is mediated through a middle ground (McCarthy, 1990) wherein cultural meanings may not be mapped with any final, stable markers. As the most common tool of culture, language is itself indeterminate, even though Western traditions which have dominated this century have maintained that reality can be fixed with certainty. The work of a literate imagination is to explore this middle ground, where ignorance may be shaped by resistance to knowing (Felman, 1989; Penley, 1986; Jay, 1990), another form of block function.

The Ethnographic Study

As a researcher particularly interested in the pedagogical issues associated with literary studies, I have attempted to be self-critical about the ways my own interests in this project emerged; about how the study was designed, the data collected, and the analysis and reporting constructed. Pagano (1990) reminds us that:

School knowledge is textual and authoritative. He who is its author exercises a legitimate power to construct, define, and circumscribe the world in his own figures. He who interprets-the teacher-inscribes his desire on the world. He is the priest, the scientist, the author, the teacher.
He is the grammarian of the text and his relationship to it is one of privilege. He represents the limits and the terms of the cultural conversation. (p. 80)

These words caution the researcher as well as the teacher, reminding us to explore the question of whose interests are served by particular notions of reality, or literacy, or other forms of cultural currency. In Chapter Three I will explore Ben Trevard’s¹ pedagogical style. It is a style which at first glance excavates many aspects of the cultural context I have called the middle ground. In the following section I would like to offer an overview of the study, including the research methods which were employed.

Having studied in a literary theory course with Trevard, I visited two of his American literature classes at the beginning of the following semester. In these classes, Trevard employed questioning and mapping strategies which he had developed, but had not employed in the same way in the class I had taken. During one of the visits, Trevard mapped a student’s reading from Gertrude Stein’s novel *Three Lives*, writing with chalk on the board in a very ephemeral way. In her reading, the student had raised questions about why the author had retold the events of the death of Rosie’s child from several perspectives. In Stein’s

¹ All names associated with the ethnographic study represent pseudonyms in order to provide for the anonymity of those involved.
retellings, the event was recast, depending upon the speaker's position in relation to other characters.

After the reading was completed and the sketch was drawn, Trevard talked with the reader about the sketch, checking to be sure it represented her interpretation adequately. After a few moments of conversation, Trevard drew other members of the class into the discussion, asking if they shared this perspective, or if they had come up with other ways of reading the selection. This pattern of sketching while a student read, followed by discussions of various kinds, continued throughout the class period. It was the most deliberate form of an interactive style I had ever witnessed.

Trevard's recognition of the cultural context of learning led me to wonder about his approach to literary studies. In order to understand how this style worked, I proposed to conduct an ethnographic study in the upper division class he was teaching. I selected that class because it offered a broader distribution of students in terms of age, race, and nationality.

I was an unregistered member of this senior level literature class, which met twice weekly, beginning the study in the fifth week of a 16 week semester. I took notes from a desk in the back row, but did not read the novels at the same pace as the class, or participate in the
discussions except on rare occasions. On those occasions my part in the discussions tended to address the study itself, either by inviting volunteers for interviews or explaining my interests in the pedagogical strategies. Each class period was audiotaped. I recorded 23, ninety-minute sessions in all. These tapes were transcribed selectively. For each class period I took notes at length, focusing regularly on the dynamics of the class in general, and particularly on students who emerged, in my observations and writing, either for their contributions, their silences, or some other pattern which I perceived for various reasons. I maintained a journal of my experiences, met with and interviewed the teacher and eleven students (nine who were in the class at the time and two who had been enrolled in a previous semester), for a total of fifteen interview hours. I also read and photocopied more than 100 student essays, written in the format designed by the teacher, and given to me voluntarily. Trevard provided me with the evaluation forms his students had completed over the seven years of his practice.

In the report of the study in Chapter Three, I offer an account in narrative form, with some data placed in the Appendix section of this dissertation. A discussion of the

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2 Permission to cite student discussions under the protection of anonymity was recorded on audiotapes #002 and #010 for general discussions; on audiotapes #012, 022, 024, 026, and 028 for individual students.
study follows the narration. The organizational style of the report is intended to present the study in a way which meets the demands of formal criteria while contributing to a conversation among teachers and colleagues at the same time.

Organization of the Dissertation

In Chapter One I have offered an autobiographical account of my own educational experiences, and a discussion of those experiences. I have made the assertion that a consideration of the cultural context is an important aspect of literary studies. Even when the significance of the cultural context is denied, a person's goals may exercise a shaping influence on the interpretive process. The teacher whose socially interactive style will be explored at length in later chapters has been introduced, and a brief account of the study's methodology has been offered.

In Chapter Two I will consider a review of the literature pertaining to this dissertation. The importance of autobiographical writing in educational research will be explored, particularly as it has been envisioned by William Pinar (1975) and Pinar and Grumet (1976). A brief account of the institutional history of academic literary studies will be offered. The ways different theories of language
have contributed to the reconceptualization of learning as a constructive, sociohistorical process will be reviewed.

Chapter Three will report the findings of the ethnographic study. Four sketches of class dynamics are portrayed, and the analysis and discussion of the results are framed.

In Chapter Four I will discuss in more detail the analysis of the study, addressing the problems and limitations associated with the project.

In Chapter Five, a summary and conclusions will be offered. I will consider the connections among the autobiographical writing offered in chapter one, the report of the study, and some issues associated with the design of a good curriculum for a post-modern age.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The context, or place, of the ethnographic study is an important aspect of this research. Departments of literary studies are always already under the influence of historical forces when teachers and students, as actors engaging in discursive practices, assume their positions relative to one another. Alan Pred (1984) argues, in "Place as Historically Contingent Process" that "place is a process whereby the reproduction of social and cultural forms, the formation of biographies, and the transformation of nature ceaselessly become one another" (p. 282). Considering the process of place, it is significant that the teacher in question in this study is teaching American literature in a department noted for its early and later influence in the development of New Criticism, and where this teacher earned his undergraduate degree. It is a department which has been engaged in a curricular reform project for several years, and where tensions over reform issues often run high.

It is significant also that this study is situated in the region of the U. S. known as the Deep South, where sociohistorical patterns related to race, gender, and social class are at work in particular, and yet sometimes contradictory ways. The relationship between the teacher
and his students may be understood, in light of these aspects, as a kind of historically marked, though unstable, terrain. Tensions related to identity formation, literacy, and the politics of difference are constitutive elements of the composition of Ben Trevard's class.

The notion of subjectivity, as it may be understood in relation to the participants involved in this study, including myself as researcher, is also constitutive of place (Pinar, 1991; Laclau, 1990; Pred, 1984; McCormick, Waller, and Flower, 1987). General patterns of identity formation may be drawn between one's "place" (geographically) and the experience of one's "location" (history) (Entrikin, 1991, pp. 129-34), but on an individual level, these patterns are often contradictory in nature (Newman et al., 1989; McCarthy, 1990).

Many people concur with the notion that there is a correspondence between a person's cultural assignment of identity and one's interests, needs, and beliefs. This stereotypical understanding of identity as a stable configuration drives much of the political, cultural, and educational bureaucracy in U.S. institutions. It has been a formative principle in the recent educational programs designed to foster appreciation of cultural diversity in the "mosaic" (not the melting pot) of U.S. society. When described as a mosaic, U.S. society is viewed as a
combination of distinct cultural and ethnic groups, differing from one another, but relatively isomorphic within their own ranks.

This common sense belief in stereotypical identities is problematic, however, and has been criticized by curriculum and social theorists (McCarthy, 1990; Edgerton, 1992; Hicks, 1991). Stereotypical assumptions about identity construct barriers among people, making it difficult to recognize those interests, needs, and beliefs which people share across differences, and those areas of difference within otherwise stereotyped groups. The notion that people may be positioned in particular and contradictory ways in relation to matters of gender, race, and class, and that these interconnections may be made even more problematic by political, economic, and cultural circumstances has been proposed by Emily Hicks (1991) and Cameron McCarthy (1990) as a theory of nonsynchrony.

McCarthy (1990) argues that nonsynchronous relations are organized around the principles of selection, inclusion, and exclusion, constituting institutions such as schools as sites for the production of politics, a "politics of difference" (p. 83). We may challenge the stereotypical assumptions about identity structures in schooling by exploring the way identity is constructed; the way we negotiate the contradictions we encounter in our lives; and
the way we share interests, needs, and beliefs with people who may be represented in mass culture as categorically different from ourselves. Literature is sometimes employed as a kind of organizing principle within this approach to identity studies. Susan Edgerton (1992) argues that when we read and write about our experiences of literature, we establish a dialectic between the text and our own responses. Considering other readers' experiences of literature amplifies the identificatory dimensions by multiplying the perspectives and relations to be considered (Morrison, 1992).

Such readings take into consideration the many competing, material forces which affect the way self is constructed socially. Approached phenomenologically, self is an object of knowledge (something to be known) and a subject (one who knows) inextricably woven together (Pinar and Grumet, 1976; Graham, 1991). Madeleine Grumet's (1988) "Bodyreading" considers how bringing "what we know to where we live has not always been the project of curriculum. Schooling . . . has functioned to repudiate the body, the place where it lives, and the people who care for it" (p. 454).

The autobiographical writing included in this dissertation draws upon a model of inquiry and analysis of educational experiences created by William Pinar (1975)
and Pinar and Grumet (1976) in their analysis of curriculum as *currere*. With an emphasis on understanding the self, this method employs several stages of autobiographical exploration, during which the writer focuses on past events; on future possibilities; on an analysis of the present moment; and finally on a synthetic reading of these explorations (Padgham, 1988, pp. 374-75). Through this approach, a person may explore how she is situated among relations of power in the world, within a matrix of often contradictory interrelationships (Doll, 1992, in press).

The relationship between the autobiographical narrative and the ethnographic study I will report is foundational. I agree with Connelly and Clandinn (1990) that:

> We are, as researchers and teachers, still telling in our practices, our ongoing life stories as they are lived, told, relived and retold. We restory earlier experiences as we reflect on later experiences so stories and their meaning shift and change over time. (p. 9)

Stated briefly, *currere* is shaped by the following objectives:

> To render one's own educational experience . . . into words . . . . [To] use one's critical faculties to understand what principles and patterns have been operative in one's educational life . . . . [To] analyze others' experiences to reveal . . . . basic educational structures. (Pinar, 1975, p. 389)
This kind of self-reflective writing offers the researcher/writer an opportunity to read selected experiences closely, exposing interests and perspectives which have been constructed in the process of living, but may be hidden by daily submersion in lived experiences. Madeleine Grumet contends that "knowledge of the world requires knowledge of self-as-knower-of-the-world" (in Pinar and Grumet, 1976, p. 35). This self is an intersubjective and intrasubjective social construction, both a sociohistorical object of its own knowledge, and the subject, the knower of itself. Drawing upon phenomenological studies, Grumet argues:

This paradoxical identification of objectivity with subjectivity, each realized through the other, creates an intellectual tension that is as intolerable as it is generative. (p. 35)

This tension of contradictions characterizes the middle ground and the process of interpretation which shapes meaning. In relation to this project I am situated as a student, a researcher, a colleague, a woman, a teacher of teachers, a mother of daughters, a reader, and a writer. My own interests and perspectives have shaped and are served by the work of this study. They have determined, to a large degree, the parameters of the study, including the selection of questions to be raised and methods to be employed. By making these interests more explicit, through
autobiographic and ethnographic methods, the writing may offer ways to negotiate the passages of subjectivity between the experiences of research as "a personal discipline . . . [and] a professional one" (Agar, 1980, p. 42).

**Issues in Literary Studies**

Gerald Graff's (1987) work *Professing Literature* will be drawn upon liberally in this section in order to construct a kind of composite sketch of the field of academic literary studies in the U.S. Graff argues that English departments situated in large research universities, like the one where the ethnographic study is situated, may be characterized by their pattern of organization where each member of the faculty represents a somewhat distinct area of research interest. This approach reflects one of the operational assumptions of academic literary studies in this century, which is that departments should provide both broad coverage of the literary "tradition," through survey courses and a wide array of offerings, and in-depth coverage representing individual periods and writers.

This assumption has shaped the institutional structures and administrative policies of literary studies since the 1800's in such a way that courses have been added when claims were sustained that certain perspectives were being excluded from the curriculum. Courses added in the
last thirty years were designed to represent feminist, African-American, Latino, gay and lesbian, regional and national, post-structural, deconstruction, and "theoretical" perspectives, to name just a few. This approach has not provided a way for restructuring the institutional aspects of literary studies. Ideological challenges to basic assumptions have been marginalized just as the professors who are identified with these perspectives have been isolated. This pattern of isolation has also made it difficult for many, students and professors to understand literary studies in terms of the history of the institution, rather than simply in terms of the struggle of each group to be represented as "a body of knowledge." The larger, sociohistorical issues are masked by the immediate divisions and constraints associated with the field (p. 258).

These kinds of problems have characterized the institutionalization and professionalization of literary studies since the development of the university as an institution in the late 19th century. Designed to provide an arena for research in the U.S., in contrast to what the classical college provided for that class of citizens identified as destined for national leadership, the university became the site where the competing interests for higher education in a modernizing nation came into conflict.
In terms of the institutional structures of literature, an historical pattern emerged for dealing with challenges to whatever approach was dominant at the time. Whether these challenges were identified as expressions of humanism, traditionalism, scholarship, or criticism, (perspectives which varied in contradictory ways as their views were appropriated by the structural politics over time), issues gained support until they represented a challenge and then were absorbed into the institution in the form of courses added. Once controversial additions then tended to gain support and eventually shape the dominant views in years to come, leading to their own forms of abuse and extremes. This pattern re-occurred when a competing perspective emerged to offer a new challenge, sometimes employing some of the same language as previous issues, only in different ways.

In his research of the institutional history of academic literary studies, Gerald Graff (1987) argues that these structural patterns have served as obstacles, blinding us to the more important issues and questions at stake in the study of literature. Citing James Kincaid, Graff claims the central question is "how we situate ourselves' in reference to literary texts" (p. 262). The controversial nature of this question, Graff argues, should not dissuade us from addressing it in the public arena of literary studies,
since part of the problem has been a belief that students should be protected from the controversies which define the field and the practices associated with it. Some of the members of the department where the ethnographic study is situated have been posing this very question as members wrangle with issues of reform and restructuring.

As Graff’s institutional history suggests, there has been a great deal of contradiction associated with the study of literature. Since conflicts were systematically submerged through the practice of making additions to course offerings, rather than addressed openly, tensions among groups representing their own interests remained high. A kind of historical forgetfulness has characterized the field since its beginning. An example of this may be found in tracing the history of New Criticism.

Though accused of being ahistorical and ideologically anti-humanist in its later form (Belsey, 1980), New Criticism first appeared among the generalists at the turn of the century as a way of protecting literary studies from the materialism which was understood by some as threatening the nation (Graff, 1987, p. 93). Classical humanists, sometimes called generalists, such as John Erskine, Barrett Wendell, and Irving Babbitt hoped to maintain the shared cultural values which they associated with the study of great literature, while they also assumed
that national leadership was the right of the cultured classes (pp. 85-89). By focusing on a “close reading” of the text, these generalists later hoped to keep the humanist perspective alive in an age immersed in materialism but threatened more immediately by “positivism and vocationalism” (p. 134).

These subtle revisions in perspective illustrate Graff’s observation that factions within literary studies had to contend with frequently contradictory pressures within their own ranks and among tentative alliances. “There was a tendency to shift the emphasis depending on the enemy in view” (p. 145). Often, Graff adds, the enemy controlled the terms of the debate and what was at stake was whether a group could measure up to those terms and still maintain its oppositional stance. Sometimes, more was compromised than might have been desired.

As attendance at colleges and universities increased, and as greater diversity became represented among the student, faculty, and administrative bodies, “traditional” cultural values could no longer be assumed in the study of literature, though the validity of this claim has been challenged for many reasons. Rather than dealing with these changing conditions, however, academic literary studies tried to conceal the controversies by burying them
or dealing with them among themselves in professional organizations.

This approach had the effect of containing disagreements among factions until some form of eruption occurred, at which time concessions would be made which would acknowledge the conflict by attempting to bury it once again in a new configuration of departmental fragmentation. One of the problems associated with this kind of approach was the way schooling in the U.S., particularly in the high schools, was shaped by the practices, offerings, and entrance requirements of the colleges and universities. This becomes clear when we consider how New Criticism became a force in the late thirties as an approach to literary studies opposed to the scholarly methods of research which still controlled literature departments. Graff (1987) writes:

The new pedagogical concentration on the literary “text itself” was designed to counteract the large problems of cultural fragmentation, historical discontinuity, and student alienation. But putting the emphasis on the literary text itself also had a more humble advantage: it seemed a tactic ideally suited to a new, mass student body that could not be depended on to bring to the university any common cultural background—and not just the student body but the new professors as well, who might often be only marginally ahead of the students. (p. 173)
Twenty years later, New Criticism's efforts to "identify key images set in a recurring pattern of tension" located "within the words on the page" would be charged with being ahistorical and universalist (Belsey, 1980, p. 21). New Critics seemed to have assumed the place of the scholars as they sought to "displace content in literary analysis and, therein, to treat a work's form in a manner analogous to empirical research" (Davis and Schleifer, 1989, p. 20). New Criticism had taken to an extreme the very problem it sought to overcome. The effects of its widespread adoption in schools can still be seen, four decades after its theoretical demise in the universities.

The Emergent Reader

One of the aspects of the interpretive process which New Critics had tended to ignore in the later years was the degree to which the historical context of the reader influenced the process of identifying key terms and images. The Critics assumed that individuals could act objectively and independently of history and that works of literature could be known through a "close reading" of their forms (Belsey, 1980, p. 21). This approach to literature is still common in many schools and universities, supported by the tacit assumption that learning is little more than the reception of knowledge (in the form of information, and/or methods) disseminated by the teacher.
In the last thirty years, demands for feminist, African-American, gay and lesbian, and other forms of literary theories have led to the addition of still more components in the field of literary studies. Questions related to literacy issues have also sponsored renewed interest in pedagogical issues. This interest came at a time when more attention was being given to the role of the reader and questions about the interpretive process itself.

By the 1970's, addressing an increasingly diverse population of students in U. S. and British schools, researchers began to focus once again on issues of readers' responses to literature which had fallen on deaf ears in the U.S. in the thirties (Rosenblatt, 1968, 1970; Bleich, 1988; Holland, 1975; Fish, 1980). This emerging field framed issues of literary studies very differently from New Criticism. It focused "more on the act of reading than on the text as an object" (McCormick et al., 1987, p. 268).

Louise Rosenblatt (1968) had first written *Literature as Exploration* in the 1930's, arguing for the study of literature as work central in its "relation to the points of growth in the social and cultural life of a democracy" (p. ix). She had argued that the text, the reader, and the experience of reading were indivisible, organic aspects of the study of literature.
As was the case with much of the curriculum sponsored by the Progressive Movement, particularly the work of social meliorists at that time, the field of literary studies generally ignored Rosenblatt’s insights, embracing what was becoming a more modernist approach in the work of Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren (Kleibard, 1986; Belsey, 1980). The developing New Critical emphasis on objectivity, empiricism, and the study of forms captured the spirit of modernism which was on the rise nationally.

Rosenblatt’s critique was not altogether antithetical to that of Brooks or Warren, however. What she had actually called for was a broader interpretation of the principle of close reading, a hallmark of New Criticism. By advocating for a close reading of the interaction between the text and the reader, Rosenblatt focused attention on the dialectical tension between literature and the personal experience of reading (p. vi). I have called this field of tension the middle ground.

In Rosenblatt’s view, critics were fellow readers, first constructing, like other readers, personal and even emotional responses to texts, before negotiating their experiences into other, more closely negotiated interpretations. She rejected the notion that students were readers who were subjugated by teachers and submissive to the forms, propaganda, and faults in a work. It was her goal
to have readers read and experience literature, not just the
critical works written about literature. She believed
readers could engage in a "transaction" with the text
through which they shared in the fullness of the literary
experience.

Too often, Rosenblatt observed, the experience of
literature is "reduced to the level of language exercise. . .
for the young" (p. 217). Close readings, she believed, led
readers to negotiate "the problem of meaning" (pp. 111-
119). It was in this area (the problem of meaning) that New
Criticism had shown its weakness. By insisting on locating
meaning on the page, New Critics "failed to recognize that
meaning exists only within . . . a specific discourse . . . and
cannot . . . inhere timelessly in the words on the page"
(Belsey, 1980, p. 18).

In the 1970's, David Bleich (1978) emerged with other
Reader Response theorists to raise once again the issue of
the readers' experience of literature, at a time when New
Criticism was in decline. In the following section I will
address briefly the work of two U. S. theorists, David Bleich
and Norman Holland, and the perspective of Wolfgang Iser,
from the German school of Reception Aesthetics.

Bleich rejected Rosenblatt's notion of transaction, but
argued that readers were isolated in their responses to
literature, much as the New Critics had believed that texts
were isolated from one another. Only through dialogue within a reading community, Bleich insisted, could readers transform their emotional responses and arrive at any kind of knowledge about themselves and their reading. Bleich's work, however, turned the interests of many in the field from individual texts to the individual reader and her experience, rather than maintaining an emphasis on the discourse community. With the publication of *Subjective Criticism*, Bleich laid a foundation for a paradigmatic view of knowledge as essentially subjective. All forms of objective knowledge are derivative of subjectivity, Bleich argued. Interpretation serves "to explain a spontaneous perception and the means of understanding it in the same act" (1978, p. 237).

Bleich's subjective paradigm fueled the decline of New Criticism and re-opened the debate in the U.S. about the experience of literature and the pedagogical implications of reader response theory. It was a debate that was to become vigorous and generative for the field of literary studies for many years.

Unlike Bleich, Norman Holland believed the text guided the emotional response of the reader, but did not control it. A practicing psychoanalyst, in the American Freudian tradition, Holland understood reading in terms of taxonomic and transformative strategies. In his view, the reader
incorporates the text, achieving in the process a kind of gratification of primitive urges. The reader first defines herself through the text, developing expectations based on personal experiences. Then she uses the text to explore fantasies. These are transformed, through the specific interaction with the text, into an experience which is emotionally satisfying. Holland believed that readers transform these experiences, incorporating them into themes of identity depending upon the ways they define themselves in relation to others and the culture within which they are situated. In Holland's approach, however, how readers defined themselves was limited to an ego-centered psychological model. His foundation for interpretations ignored the problematics associated with this historically limited view of identity construction.

The German phenomenologist Wolfgang Iser (1979) was much less constrained by notions of the individual than Bleich and Holland. Iser theorized that the interaction between the reader and the text dissolves the boundaries between the two, making it impossible to see where one ends and the other begins. These meaning/text interactions involve readers at many levels in the process of making meaning. When the reader's involvement was significant, Iser argued, the aesthetics of the reading experience could be powerful. The dialectical tensions produced by these
interactions, however, made articulation of the literary experience very difficult. As a member of the German school of Reception Aesthetics, Iser attempted to keep the focus on the sociohistorical complexity of the interpretive process. This perspective was viewed generally as more complex than those of the American Reader Response theorists (McCormick, Waller, and Flower, 1987, p. 178).

The difficulties associated with understanding the reading experience led to renewed interest in individual readers' responses to literature. In the schools and universities, however, these responses continued to be marginalized within literary studies. Viewed as private, informal, or preliminary responses to the more traditional and formal study of literature, readers' responses were tolerated for their journalistic rather than critical value. In terms of the discipline of literary studies, traditional forms of criticism and scholarship remained central to the study of literature (Applebee, 1986).

Close Writing

In the United Kingdom at the beginning of the 1970's, the work of James Britton, Nancy Martin, and others raised questions about the relationship between language and learning, and writing. This work focused on the experience of language, the reasons students employ language, and the
relationship between language development and the development of writing abilities (Britton et al., 1975). Defining the language arts as those modes addressed by reading, writing, speaking, and listening, Britton's work contributed to the increasing recognition of the economic, political, and social issues of literacy related to schooling practices.

Associated with the language-centered London school, and fueling the debate and the division between this school and the more traditional, Cambridge school (which placed a traditional humanist and elitist approach to literature at the center of the curriculum), Britton et al. (1975) advocated writing across the curriculum as a way for students to learn both content and the process of writing. According to these language centered proponents, "in a class-ridden culture, working class experience has been perennially silenced" (Graham, 1991, p. 72). Writing across the curriculum provided a means for students to gain a voice in their own learning process.

Britton's emphasis on language and expressive writing at the heart of the curriculum foregrounded the political dimensions associated with the history of schooling and the construction of subjectivity in Britain. Though his work was aimed at K-12 experiences, the work of Toby Fulwiler,

In Britton's findings of 11-16 year olds' writing, students did not write outside of English classes, and these classes focused on traditional, academic writing. His work indicated, however, that students need a wealth of experience in expressive writing. Britton argued that only by writing often and not in order to produce finished pieces, but in order to explore the heuristic values of writing, can students learn to write well.

Teacher-centered practice and traditional literary critical traditions became issues of contention among the proponents of a language centered curriculum. These reformists hoped to re-situate the oral, the dramatic, and the personal aspects of the language arts in order to rework the notion of learning (i. e. writing to learn) in schooling and, by association, in society (Graham, 1991; Moffett, 1983; Bizzell, 1986).

The study of the great works of literature was viewed by the Cambridge School as offering a humanist (thought by the proponents of the London school to be, also, an elitist) view of culture. Believing that the classics of Western Civilization represented truth and were themselves the best literary expressions of this truth ever created, the proponents of the Cambridge School approach maintained a
form of expressive realism in the practice of criticism. This view claimed that a work of literature is a classic because it represents either "a natural reflection of the world . . . or the spontaneous expression of its author's subjectivity" (Belsey, 1980, p. 126). The various cultural constraints associated with the production of the text are ignored within this approach in order to focus on the expressive nature of its supposedly universal meaning.

As the chasm between the language-centered and literature-centered proponents has widened since the 1970's, related research has exposed a dialectical tension between the two. Within this terrain, issues emerge associated with the nature and development of language in the child; with the controversial notion of subjectivity and the ways its construction has been framed historically and discursively; with the role of the school in society; and with the notion of learning itself.

In his review of the place of autobiography in the English/language arts curriculum, Robert Graham (1991) notes that the literature-centered Cambridge School and the language-centered London school "both are agreed on a child-centered notion of education" (p. 69). He continues:

This focus has led to a common concentration on the child's experience and the child's place within the cultural formations of school and society . . . Whether as a rallying cry or as a deliberately theorized position, autobiography
as one way of reflecting on both self and experience begins to assume a crucial role in these conceptions of language arts teaching. (p. 69)

Graham's observation supports his argument for the central place of autobiography as fictive (expressive) writing in the process of learning. The preference for the spectator-role in writing, Britton's other term for expressive writing, illustrates the phenomenological "gap" referred to earlier by Iser, between the reader's experience of the text and her experience of herself. The blurred boundaries between the two, between object of knowledge and subject of knowing illustrate the nonsynchronous middle ground from which subjectivity is shaped.

This indeterminate zone where learning and subjectivity co-mingle lies at the heart of both reader response and composition research. Between those who would place literature at the center of the curriculum, and those who would place language (particularly the study of writing) at the center, the tensions in the field of literary studies became more problematic by the end of the 1970's. Rather than re-thinking the boundary lines between composition and literary studies, however, the field of composition research repositioned itself as a distinct discipline within literary studies, illustrating once again the field's tendency to solve its conflicts by adding a new body of knowledge.
Composition studies emerged in the U. S. in the 1970's as a diverse field of research in its own right, supported by a new emphasis on writing as a process (Britton et al., 1975; Flower and Hayes, 1980; Emig, 1971; McCormick et al., 1987) and the determination to explore the relationship between composition and comprehension (Giacobbe, 1986; Shaughnessey, 1977; Applebee and Langer, 1983). This development followed nearly a century of viewing writing as an instrumental, product-directed skill within the curriculum.

Britton's work had explored the relationship between the function and audience of writing and the form which the writing is given when the student is in different roles. His research challenged the longstanding categories of rhetoric and genre in the development of writing abilities (Britton et al., 1975). Other researchers addressed questions about writing from the perspectives of cognitive psychology (Flower and Hayes, 1980, 1984), writers' decision-making strategies (Berkenkotter, 1983), levels of inquiry (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1983), ways of evaluating writing (Cooper and Odell, 1977), and the use of journals (Fulwiler, 1982; Progroff, 1975).

The field of composition research established its own professional journals by the mid-1970's, and began to show a greater presence in other journals traditionally
associated with the study of literature (Bizzell, 1986). So
diverse and expansive did the field become in a short time
that Maxine Hairston (1983) characterized the changes as
"the revolution in the teaching of writing" (p. 4), likening
the changes to a paradigm shift.

At the level of teaching practice, the teaching of
writing enjoyed a groundswell of support in the schools
from the teachers-teaching-teachers organization known as
the Bay Area or National Writing Project, begun by
classroom teachers in the San Francisco Bay area in 1973.
The model of writing as a process challenged the former
paradigm which Richard Young had characterized in this
way:

The overt features . . . are obvious enough; the
emphasis on the composed product rather than
the composing process; the analysis of discourse
into description, narration, exposition, and
argument; the strong concern with usage . . . and
with style; the preoccupation with the informal
essay and research paper; and so on. (Cited in
Hairston, 1983, p. 4)

With this new interest in writing, the field of
rhetoric grew from its formerly instrumental relationship
to the study of literature into a field which attempted to
explore the "universe of discourse" (Moffett, 1983). At the
level of the research university, advanced degrees became
available in writing research, and composition teachers
were no longer viewed simply as literary scholars waiting
for their chance to advance in the departmental ranks. Composition research and the study of literature had become distinct fields, but in the hierarchy of the university, composition courses continued to be viewed by the more established members of departments as instrumental to the study of literature (Bizzell, 1986).

Much of the research designed for the study of writing relied on the empirical methods common within a view of education as primarily a reproducible, behavioral enterprise (Lauer and Asher, 1988). School related writing was explored within the positivist camp as a cognitive response to a rhetorical situation. For those who discounted this universalist perspective, writing was viewed as a form of personal invention. Common to each of these approaches, however, was the focus on the individual as the basic unit of measure. Both approaches produced a great deal of data and lore, but contributed little toward what Graham (1991) has called the need “to distinguish more clearly the kind of role discourse itself can play in constructing particular kinds of human subjectivity” (p. 70). Deterministic models of subjectivity have remained commonplace.

In the 1970’s, composition researcher Linda Flower, in collaboration with the cognitive psychologist John Hayes, founded the cognitive process model, employing protocol studies in an attempt to trace the mental processes
associated with composing. In 1989, however, Flower made an appeal to composition researchers to initiate theory building research which would draw upon both the cognitive and the contextual aspects of writing in an attempt to address the social, cultural, and political dimensions of literacy. This recognition by Flower of the importance of the cultural context of experience, added support to the increasing demands by theorists such as Graff (1987), Gates (1985), Felman (1989), Scholes (1985), Johnson (1987) and others that issues of textuality itself were at stake in the field of literary studies. Divisions and antagonisms within the field have remained strong, but the significance of the sociohistorical context of learning has been generally accepted.

Learning as Cognitive Change

As the significance of the cultural context for learning has received more attention, the focus for many researchers has shifted from issues about knowledge to those concerning learning. For most of this century educators have operated with a theory of knowledge which has been represented as a theory about learning (St. Julien, 1992). At the heart of such an approach lay an emphasis on information or data, and a belief that information could be transmitted by direct instruction. Theorists in this century
who have established the notion of the fundamental indeterminacy of language have represented a wide variety of fields. This shift has offered a serious challenge to what had become an orthodox approach to language in educational practice (Newman et al., 1989). By exposing the indeterminacy of language, the foundations for the Western theory of knowledge has also been challenged (Harris, 1989; Hicks, 1991).

In re-envisioning the kinds of interactions which may support learning, many researchers have drawn upon the work of L. S. Vygotsky, a gifted cognitive psychologist, born in Byelorussia in 1886, whose works were first introduced into English by Jerome Bruner (Sacks, 1989). Vygotsky's research addresses issues of thought and language development. He envisioned:

The development of language and mental powers as neither learned, in the ordinary way, nor emerging epi-genetically, but as being social and mediate in nature, as arising from the cultural instrument of language for the processes of thought. (Cited in Sacks, 1989, p. 49)

Though Vygotsky's *Thought and Language*, first published after his death in 1934, was banned as "anti-Marxist," "anti-Pavlovian," and "anti-Soviet," his contemporaries, Jean Piaget, A. R. Luria, and A. N. Leont'ev viewed his work as that of a genius (Sacks, 1989, p. 49). Jerome Bruner
developed much of his own work on Vygotsky's principles of language development and mental processes.

At the heart of Vygotsky's theory about learning lies the situated nature of learning, that is, the sociohistorical, or cultural context, including the particular social interactions which shape negotiations about meaning. In their project to develop models of effective instruction at the secondary level, Arthur Applebee, who earned his doctorate from the University of London (and wrote about Britton's research for his dissertation), and Judith Langer have worked with individual teachers (the original focus of process research) in laboratory settings, over an extended period of time. Applebee and Langer studied the effects of this clinical approach once the teachers were back in the classroom. These teachers prepared to do in the classroom what David Bartholomae claimed teachers who care about writing do in their teaching. They planned to offer regular opportunities for shorter pieces of writing; to allow student writings to be included in class work in significant ways; and to provide opportunities for revision. In this way these teachers who care about writing "make literature and the reading of literature something substantially different" (Bartholomae, 1986, p. 2).

To the dismay of Applebee (1986) and his colleague Langer, however, the instructional setting of the school
presented competing purposes for writing not accounted for in the experimental version of the process approach (p. 102). The contextual particularities of schools were found to compete with models developed around individual writers. "The major difficulties" writes Applebee, "stemmed from a tension between student-centered goals of the process activities and the underlying definition of what counts" as school knowledge (p. 103). Literacy education in the U. S. has traditionally viewed knowledge as information to be transmitted to the student by the teacher. The continued presence of these beliefs and practices in terms of standard assessment measures in the schools broke down the supports these teachers attempted to provide for students in their writing (p. 106).

Applebee and Langer's notion of instructional scaffolding (a Vygotskian notion) viewed learning as "a process of gradual internalization of routines and procedures available to the learner from the social and cultural context in which the learning takes place" (p. 108). Their work had been designed to support collaboration in the classroom, creating the learning context and the process of learning itself. In this way they had hoped to involve learners in efforts to bridge between what was already known and what was experienced but not yet understood,
either through resistance or the experience of some form of block.

What Applebee (and Langer) concluded was that when the teachers with whom they had worked moved from the laboratory to the classroom setting, there were "serious problems" (p. 102). The traditional requirements of English teaching practice functioned as barriers to the kinds of reforms and revisions which had been envisioned by Applebee, Langer, and the project teachers.

It had been hoped that instructional scaffolding would sustain students as they faced the sociohistorical obstacles which characterize traditional school practices. Scaffolding, however, functions as a system of temporary supports that are removed when no longer needed (Newman et al., 1989). They cannot be expected to sustain cognitive change when the context offers such pervasive opposition.

Applebee concluded his report with a call for significant changes in the social practices of the classroom, changes which would establish the context for learning which Vygotsky had called the "zone of proximal development" (p. 108). Such changes would treat the social context of schooling "in a principled way as part of the process of cognitive change" (p. 59).

It is this Vygotskian notion of the zone of proximal development which illustrates the dynamics of the middle
ground in terms of schooling practices. Within this zone the basic unit of analysis is no longer the individual, but the interactive, interpsychological relations of those involved in the learning community. The zone is considered “in terms of an individual's developmental history [an interactive, socially constructed history] and in terms of the support structures created by the other people and cultural tools [such as writing] in the setting” (p. 61).

In the report of the studies conducted by Newman et al. (1989), however, the authors noted several aspects of learning which contradicted the kind of changes Applebee and Langer had anticipated as fundamental to learning in the zone of proximal development (sometimes referred to as the ZPD). The importance attached to the notion of sequencing difficult aspects of a task was found to be insupportable (p. 63). Within the interactions of the ZPD, students representing varying levels of achievement in the traditional sense, appropriated one another's understandings, at times producing “performance before competence” (Cazden, cited in Newman et al., 1989, p. 64). That is to say, students and teachers often performed tasks they did not fully understand, and only later discovered the meanings attributed to their actions after they had performed them. When two or more people with unequal expertise are jointly accomplishing a task, the sequencing
of task components is not necessary (p. 61). Meaning is constructed socially, and it is the interpsychological interaction, not the sequence of behaviors, which shapes intrapsychological change, or learning (p. 63).

Newman et al. (1989) have called this zone of social negotiations of meanings “the construction zone.” The interpsychological activity that leads to intrapsychological transformation lies at the heart of the experience of learning, what these researchers call “cognitive change.” Essential to cognitive change, they argue, is the indeterminacy of language and the “aura of fuzziness and confusion which characterizes communication” (Larsen, 1989, p. xii). The emphasis on sequencing associated with much of the educational practice developed in this century was the result of believing that learning was a process of continuity. Recent research has established the fact that cognitive change is characterized by the development of a new system of organization . . . seen to be continuous with the prior interpsychological system represented by interactions in the zone. This organization is discontinuous with the system that the [student] displayed prior to entering the zone (p. 65).

It was Vygotsky’s colleague, Leont’ev (1981) who explained how this cognitive change occurred through the concept of “appropriation.” Newman et al. (1989) explain:
The [student's] appropriation of a culturally devised "tool" comes about through involvement in culturally organized activities in which the tool [a hammer; writing; language; etc.,] plays a role . . . The child only has to come to an understanding that is adequate for using the culturally elaborated object in the novel life circumstances he encounters . . . The tool may also be transformed. (p. 63)

In this view of learning, the presence of multiple perspectives is essential to cognitive change. People with different analyses support the learning process when they are allowed to interact. What we have mistaken as tasks to be learned are actually only "strategic fictions that people negotiate and use as a way of constructing an interpretation of a situation" (Larsen, 1989, p. xiii). In order to establish the kind of community wherein cognitive change is supported with both temporary and long-term practices, (a community which may be identified as a zone of proximal development), a teacher would need to provide for shared activity in which interpsychological processes take place. This kind of interactive community would be a place where teachers and students appropriate one another's understandings, and participate actively in the social construction of reality (p. xiv).

In the following chapter, I will offer a report of the ethnographic study situated in a university class where the
teacher has mixed Vygotskian ideas with his own approach to literary studies.
CHAPTER THREE
REPORT OF THE STUDY

This chapter reports on an ethnographic study of the interactive teaching style of Ben Trevard, a university literary studies professor teaching in a large research university in the Deep South. The report is the product of an analysis of historical data, classroom observations, interviews, class writings, and informal conversations I had with Trevard and his students over a semester's time. For the sake of confidentiality, participants have been given pseudonyms.

The report of the study is divided into two chapters. In the first part (Chapter Three of the Dissertation), I offer a descriptive narrative of the course of the study, introducing the teacher, members of the class, the strategies which characterize the teacher's style, and preliminary readings of the teaching/learning relationship in question. In the second part of the report (Chapter Four of the Dissertation) I offer further analysis and discussion of the findings and methods employed.

Qualitative methods of research have been employed in order to collect and analyze data, and generate grounded theory about Trevard's style of teaching. This approach reconsiders the data as it is collected, allowing emergent
patterns to contribute to the process of analysis and further data collection (Agar, 1980; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Lauer & Asher, 1988). In the spirit of this approach, the study is designed to be exploratory and descriptive, rather than definitive.

The Teacher, the Class, and the QHQ's

Trevard's style focuses on literature of the twentieth century and the readings and writing which take place in his class. As a teacher who was raised in the South, educated at the university where he now teaches, and at graduate schools in New England and California, Trevard acknowledges the influence of three of his graduate level teachers in the development of his teaching style. A pattern of repetition with a difference characterizes Trevard's return to the university where he earned his undergraduate degree and where he now teaches on the undergraduate and graduate faculty.

This study of his teaching style is situated in a 4000 level American literature class with 22 upper division students, more than half studying as English majors. Several members had never taken an upper level English course before the semester in question, however.

Believing with many teachers/researchers in recent decades that writing helps people learn, Trevard directs his
students (about one fourth of the class per class session) to write 200-250 word responses to assigned portions of texts at a time, following a pattern called a Question-Hypothesis-Question, or, QHQ. This pattern begins with the students writing a question they have about their reading. This is a question for which they formulate a response during their writing, not a question they have already answered. Students think through their questions by writing about them, often closely rereading the text for ways to resolve or rethink the questions. This thinking-through questions produces a series of hypotheses about how the questions might be understood. These hypotheses are then followed in each QHQ by a reformulated question, either a reframed original question or a reconsidered question which has emerged during the writing process.

An example of this may be found in one student’s, Ron’s, QHQ, from 2/26/91. This QHQ will be considered again later in this chapter, but serves at this point to illustrate the QHQ model. Addressing a reading from the first section of Faulkner’s As I Lay Dying, a novel about a dying woman’s supposed request to be buried with the family of her youth, Ron begins by asking: “Is the assumption Cora makes about the Bundren family not caring whether Addie Bundren die [sic] a true assumption? Why or why not?” After negotiating this question in his writing,
from the perspective of one character, Cora, whose views are featured in that section of the novel, Ron ends his QHQ by asking a different question. He writes: “Why does Addie Bundren want to be buried where her original family is buried?”

As students read their QHQ's aloud, Trevard maps out relationships on the chalkboard among key words or phrases from their readings. Discussions of the readings usually begin with an exchange between the author of the QHQ and Trevard. Other students are then invited to join the discussions.

The QHQ is used in this class as a template for constructing thoughtful written responses to novels that have been divided by Trevard into successive sections. That is, students are assigned a certain number of chapters or pages for each class session. By following this schedule, class discussions observe limits in terms of the current text, though previous texts may be drawn into the discussions at any time.

I will draw three sketches from the course of the study in which I illustrate broad patterns which characterize the class's interactions, including Trevard's teaching style, the students' QHQ's, the mapping strategy employed by Trevard, and the classroom discussions. These sketches will be drawn from three different periods of time.
during the semester. A fourth sketch will address the events of the last class of the semester.

The class met twice per week for ninety minutes each session. Students' grades were based on: 6 bi-weekly one-page question-hypothesis-questions (QHQ's) (25%); two midterm exams (2 x 25%); and one final exam (25%). The QHQ's could not be made up, but could be handed in early, and the lowest QHQ grade could be dropped unless the take-home mid-term was turned in late.

The syllabus listed nine novels to be read by the class. These included Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio; Gertrude Stein's Three Lives; Nella Larsen's Quicksand; Faulkner's As I Lay Dying; John Okada's No No Boy; Tillie Olsen's Tell Me A Riddle; Rudolfo Anaya's Bless Me, Ultima; Gerald Vizenor's Grievers: An American Monkey King in China; and Toni Morrison's Beloved.

I have introduced an overview of the teacher, the QHQ strategy, and the ways this strategy shaped the students' writings and classroom dynamics over time. Now I will turn to the sketches which have been drawn from different parts of the semester, arranged chronologically.

**Sketch One**

In this class meeting, the tenth of the semester, the students discussed Faulkner's As I Lay Dying for the first
time. Students talked before class began about not knowing what was going on in the novel. A young man, Robert, in the front row, announced loudly to a small but very visible cluster of students that "the novel [stinks], but is getting a little better in the last 20 pages" (of their assigned reading). A young woman, Nancy, in the row behind him responded by saying she spent the whole time thinking "What the hell is going on?" This raised general laughter but frustrated agreement too. A ripple effect seemed to run through the class as others acknowledged their own confusion.

Trevard entered the class at the end of this exchange, and began immediately handing back folded QHQ's with comments and grades to about a fourth of the class. Students receiving papers back turned their attention to reading the comments he had written on them while he engaged the rest of the class in brief exchanges about their exams; asking questions about how the opportunity he had offered them to write any "second thoughts" about their essays after they had finished them had worked, and about any leftover business. The discussion was lively and students offered funny, stereotypical, and thoughtful responses to his questions.

Trevard then began class asking if everything was perfectly clear about Faulkner and the class picked up the
momentum from their earlier discussion, and proclaimed their confusion in chorus. Anna and Carolyn, two young women who had not spoken up before class asked Trevard to give the class the background information about Faulkner, a biographical portrait, which would "explain why he wrote the way he did."

Trevard deferred in this, explaining that "after spending years writing about him [Faulkner], I wouldn't know where to begin and probably where to stop." He offered to add things as they went along which might be relevant to their questions. When he asked if there was something in particular that someone was wondering about, a young woman responded that she was "just lost in the reading." Trevard assured her that they would talk about that, and that he suspected some of the QHQ's would address that very problem. "Other people are probably feeling the same way," he added.

Kathleen, a young woman who had not spoken out before this time did not accept this deferment however, and asked Trevard to explain about Faulkner's family life. As he gave some biographical information, another student asked if Faulkner died of alcoholism. There was laughter throughout the class when Trevard said Faulkner "fell off a horse, though he almost died from alcoholism several times." This seemed to satisfy the class's sense of
explanation, and when Trevard suggested they turn to a QHQ, Ron, an African-American English major who always sat quietly in the back right corner of the classroom, began right away, addressing the question of which characters really loved the dying Addie. (See Appendix A for Ron’s full QHQ writing of 2/26.)

When Ron had finished reading aloud, and Trevard had finished mapping (see Appendix B for one of the sketches mapped by Trevard), the two men entered into a discussion about whether the mapping had caught what Ron was saying. The exchange also gave Ron the opportunity to re-think what he had written, now understood in terms of how Trevard (abbreviated as “BT” in transcribed passages) had understood him.

BT: Okay, there's a lot here and I'm not sure I got it all. . .
   In summary you say that she's right about
   Vardaman, Jewel, Cash, and Anse not caring very much.

Ron: Well, I think that ah Vardaman cares but, he's confused. He thinks that her death was caused by. . . He's hurt by it but, he thinks that it was caused by Dr. Peabody coming to see her.

BT: Yeah. Hm.
Ron: But Jewel and Cash and Anse. They don't care. They just think it's one of those things that happens.

BT: And, Dewy Dell? Did you mention her at the end?

Ron: Hm. She cares however she doesn't, well she's confused. She [doesn't] know. She wants to cry but she can't cry and she [doesn't] try. She [doesn't] know whether, if she tried to cry. It's just such a confused situation.

BT: So, she's confused too. And we don't, she doesn't know if she's hurt by it all.

Ron: That's right.

Once the terms were established, general discussion began. At this point in the class, Anna, Keat, Robert, and Kathleen turned the discussion toward two particular characters in As I Lay Dying. Robert tried to defend an argument by recalling a description of the dying Addie which, when asked, he was unable to assign to a character. Trevard said he didn't think Robert had invented that description and asked the class which character made that statement. Ron was ready with an answer.

"Cora says this" he called from the back of the room, as he turned his pages, sure of where he would find the passage. Other members of the class also located passages that described the dying Addie, or addressed her death in
some way. The discussion that followed addressed the characters' and the readers' need to understand, and the temptation to believe the point of view which seemed the most forceful and/or the clearest.

This discussion, Ed (an exchange student from England), William, and Holly turned toward different characters in the novel who were being represented by someone else or were telling about someone else. The issue of understanding was made complex when the issue of reliability also came up and Thomas, an African-American graduate student, addressed the possible omen represented by a mutilated fish, a fish that was bleeding and fading during the story. This introduced the issue of whether psychological factors were significant in the novel and, if they were, how they would play into characters' actions and the interpretations they offered.

Students argued that some questions seemed unresolvable without further readings and QHQ's, and the class turned then to the next reading. The discussion which followed it was in many ways much like the first one. Students repeatedly referred to the text in hopes of clarifying and resolving their questions, but these turns were always followed by the emergence of new points to clarify, and still more questions. Rather than defending
their original turf, students continued to move, though uneasily at times, through differing perspectives.

Near the end of the class period, Trevard suddenly remembered that he had met someone at a conference he had just attended over the weekend from Clyde, Ohio where Winesburg, Ohio was set. The person had told him that some of the townspeople there were still angry because there were so many traceable connections to people in that town included in the novel. The class laughed at first, but also seemed concerned that so many people could have been affected by or were actually the subjects of a work of literature. This led Trevard to compare the final QHQ read by a young woman to the Winesburg, Ohio reading they did earlier in the semester. The theme of violence as a substitute for communication wove its way through the discussion of both of these novels, and through Stein's Three Lives. It was a relatively brief discussion, but the African-American graduate student found a particular passage in As I Lay Dying to illustrate this theme, and the discussion came to a close as students were encouraged to think in terms of the connections which could be drawn as their reading and writing proceeded.

This pattern represents how most class discussions began with and after the reading of the first QHQ. As the class became more engaged in the discussions, other
members of the class would join in, and other novels would be drawn upon as well.

**Sketch Two**

During the time between the beginning of March and the second week of April, student QHQ's focused on the assigned readings for class by drawing as well on the other novels read by the class. By this time Trevard had begun to list on the board, at the start of most classes, brief descriptions about the days' forthcoming QHQ's. This organizational strategy focused the class discussions and helped students negotiate the order of the QHQ readings for the day.

During this point in the semester, the students were introduced to a kind of journal entry writing which Trevard asked them to write periodically. Following the prompts "I noticed; I learned; I wonder," students would write for a few moments at the beginning or end of class. Some students shared these aloud before Trevard collected them, though discussions about the entries also followed at the next class session.

During class discussions, Trevard emphasized an approach to the novels involving comparisons and contrasts among several novels at a time and/or the QHQ readings. He focused on the issues which kept surfacing in class
discussions. The journal entries offered him some insights into the kinds of connections students were able to make informally about the novels. Students were making connections outside their QHQ writings, but he wanted them to draw those connections into their QHQ's.

One student, Neva, constructed a comparison in early March, between the endings of *As I Lay Dying* and *Quicksand*, focusing on the characters Helga, Anse, and Darl. (For three students' full QHQ's from this part of the semester, see Appendix C.) Though she hesitated in her introduction of her QHQ, Neva's reading was strong and the class took up her questions and addressed some of the intersecting, and sometimes ambiguous terms and categories found in these novels. These ambiguities contributed to Neva's sense of frustration. She wondered aloud if Faulkner had set up any character to be reliable. Even though this had been addressed at almost every class, the issue was still difficult for her and many students to accept. Neva insisted "I want to believe in Darl; I want to believe Darl is reliable" and "speaking to the reader."

"But what if he is crazy?" she asked. The question of how to differentiate between characters who were sane and characters who were crazy raised more interest. "If Darl was crazy and yet the model of the literary artist, what did
that say about the literary works the class was reading?" another student wanted to know.

As the class addressed issues related to the readings, Noelle tried several times to address her concerns.

Noelle: Everyone is really crazy, not just Darl.
Robert: [Breaking in before Noelle has quite finished] Why would Darl burn the whole barn down and not just the coffin?
BT: Looks to Brenda who had leaned forward like she was going to speak. She passes on the chance this time, as if the right moment is over.]
Noelle: They're listening to the body bubble. But Addie didn't put much stock in words. Darl is listening to Addie's body in the coffin. [Pause]
William: Yeah, but bodies don't talk.
BT: Well, bodies talk to Addie because they bleed.
Robert: [Jumping in at the moment when BT finishes] Maybe everybody has taken Addie's words and turned them in ways she didn't mean.
Noelle: [Leans forward to speak, Thomas jumps in.] K'thleen: [Raises hand, up and down, tries to break in.]
Thomas: [Talking about his work with adolescents] In my experience it's fairly consistent that people
Thomas: [Talking about his work with adolescents] In my experience it's fairly consistent that people might be crazy, might be different, then seem OK, then get worse.

Robert: [Cuts in on Thomas] Darl is the one that has some moments of magnificent negotiations.

Robert
and
Thomas: [Exchange comments about Darl]

K'thleen: [Her hand is up and down. She is reluctant to speak up without hearing a pause in the conversation]: Cash seemed crazy at first. Darl seemed sane. This is like Anderson's novel. There's this body language.

During this class, Trevard attempted to change his pattern of standing on the left side of the board. In a conversation prior to this class, I had noted that much of the discussion took place in front of where Trevard located himself. Since the mapping occupied the central position, Trevard placed himself beside the maps, usually on the left of the board. During this class, he moved several times to the right of the board. When he did so, the hub of comments would be contributed from that side of the room.
Robert, Keat, and Thomas, however, participated in a different kind of pattern. It was traceable at first because of the agitated expressions I could read on the faces of students who turned toward them. These three young men, to varying degrees, were cutting off other speakers in the class before they had quite finished their remarks. In some ways, the interactions were not much different from the way people cut one another off when conversations involve a number of people, and everyone is trying to have a say, sometimes at the same time. But this pattern seemed to occur particularly at times when Noelle, Anna, Kathleen and Paula were speaking. Kathleen and Paula often returned to the discussion stronger, within a few moments, seizing back the moment to speak out. But Noelle did this much less, although it was obvious by her other moments of engagement that she was quite good at her writing and her speaking generally. Anna also began to display in her body language that the pattern of interruptions from these male students was making her angry.

In a later interruption of voices, following the scene offered above, Thomas promises Noelle [whose comments he has interrupted just as she began to speak] that he "will make it quick". His contribution is about "humor and hope" in Faulkner. A long pause follows his remarks. Noelle makes no effort to re-enter the discussion. Finally, Trevard
asked the class how these terms played in Larsen's writing and suggested that in *As I Lay Dying* they were tragic because the characters seemed unable to articulate their difficulties. In Larsen's writing they worked because "the ending doesn't have the last say."

Some of the students still had an interest in having Trevard lecture on the novels so they could get an overview about what the critical literature was saying about the novels they were reading. Trevard negotiated these requests by reminding the class that they were reading the novels closely, critically. They were a valuable, critical community in his view. He offered some alternative kinds of approaches to this end, however, suggesting that if some students wanted to write class journals or summaries, thinking back over the day's QHQ's and the class discussions, that would be another way to provide this kind of information for their writing. Students interested in that could substitute well-written summaries for QHQ's, he assured them.

Nancy was one of the students who found the idea interesting and she wrote two summaries in this mid-part of the semester. These summaries were substitutes for two of her six required QHQ's and she told me in an interview that she "found them harder to do than [she] thought they would be because [she] had to try to summarize
lots of questions raised in discussions without conclusive endings." Both of her summaries were four times the length of a QHQ (see Appendix D).

While she read them as she would have read a QHQ, the class leaned into her reading, attentive and quiet. It was in many ways just another QHQ, more complex, with more questions raised and considered, and more left to wonder about, too. Discussion focused on bridging the discussion from the class the day before to the current day's QHQ readings. Several other students followed Nancy's example and also wrote longer summaries than the 200-250 word assignments.

The I noticed, learned, and wonder journal entries continued into April to indicate that a few students maintained an interest in Trevard assuming the more traditional role of a lecturer. Many students made the observation that the class was more demanding than most of their classes had been. Some restated their frustrations with the class's inability to draw definite conclusions and interpretations about the novels. A few students wanted to cover more QHQ's and more topics, while others wanted to concentrate on a few themes and cover them more thoroughly for each novel.

Trevard suggested that these approaches were possible within the QHQ's. Students could write on the
same theme for each of their six QHQ's if they wanted to. That approach would provide the foundation for some strong comparison and contrast work later in the semester, he suggested. Some students insisted that if the class would stay focused on the QHQ's and move through all of the prepared papers each class instead of doing some thoroughly and some for only a few moments, there would be more variety. Trevard suggested they might try to compose an end of class QHQ, drawing together in a kind of summary what the class discussed each session. This would actually allow the students to reconsider what was discussed in ways that might help students think through the revisions the class had articulated.

Throughout this middle of the semester, Robert, Keat, Thomas, Kathleen, Holly, Ron, and Kris entered into the discussions almost every session, though students reading QHQ's for the day had a secure hold over setting the terms and themes of the discussions early in the class period. The topics of discussion remained both varied and focused, with the theme of "communication" or "difficulties in communicating" (involving translations) and "identity" emerging in some way in almost every class.

By the second week of April the class had read *Winesburg, Ohio* by Sherwood Anderson; *Three Lives* by Gertrude Stein; *Quicksand* by Nella Larsen; *As I Lay Dying*
by William Faulkner; *No No Boy* by John Okada; *Tell Me A Riddle* by Tillie Olsen; and *Bless Me Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya. Student QHQ's had begun to address themes, terms, categories, author's styles, historical settings, etc., across the novels. The mappings for the QHQ's were organizationally more complex by this time, but students still tended to address comparisons between only two, or sometimes three novels. Trevard encouraged them to entertain more questions about the contrasts between novels, reading and mapping for the class a QHQ he had written addressing several novels and the different ways characters approached the theme of identity, particularly about what they felt was required of them in order to be identified with a dominant group. As discussion followed his presentation, students reported they had a better understanding of how writing like that could be organized in their thinking, as well as in their writing.

**Sketch Three**

For this last sketch of the class's dynamics, shaped by the QHQ strategy, I focus briefly on the last three classes of April. The mappings drawn in late April illustrated the kinds of connections which characterized the writings and class discussions of the last third of the semester.
During the first of these classes, students addressed, for the first time, Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. Issues associated with the "unspeakable," presence of African-Americans (Morrison, 1989, p. 11), in American literature were raised by the QHQ readings and the discussions. The readings of Ron, Kathleen, Kris, Randy, and Cindy became embedded in one class mapping, rather than being represented by individual and unrelated sketches.

Students had only read the first 63 pages of *Beloved*, and did not yet know that in this story a baby named Beloved has been murdered, twenty years before. The murder was the result of a mother's desperation caused by the arrival of bounty hunters and a sheriff who planned to take her and her children back into slavery from which she had escaped.

Ron focused his response on the issue of the *name* and the mother's relationship to the name "Beloved," both as the name of her murdered baby and as a signifier of more complex, historically troubling issues. Kathleen addressed the issues of power and selected the term *opposed* to describe the web of relations which bound these characters together around difficulties which were at times destroying their lives. Kris addressed "The beautiful analogy between Beloved [the character by that name] and a newborn baby," and Randy sketched his own map of "a power web" to illustrate his QHQ about why the older sister "Denver has
Trevard asked students to write I noticed, learned, and wonder writings on 4/23, and to share some of their writing aloud. After ten minutes of intense silence, during which most of the twenty two students and Trevard wrote steadily, students shared their writing:

Andre: It seems the haunting has stopped, but I wonder if the revenge is over.

Kelly: There's a kind of maternal language which calls up past memories. This reappears in Sethe.

BT: [A long pause] Others?

Nancy: Sethe and Denver both tend to draw back into their own haunted spaces.

Ed: Sethe's emotional and personal relationships are caught up in the "slavery" issue. This issue is the ground of all this.

BT: Hm.--and this leads to fate and moral issues. [Long pause]: I notice that issues of power and control come up early but not out of possibilities for women to negotiate. Burial becomes a way to put to rest a relationship.
At the next class Trevard shared with the students that a few *Notice, Learn and Wonder* notes that he had collected last class continued to address their interests in lectures. Some proposed as well that a better reading of the novels would result from reading them all the way through before writing about them. He offered this response to the class in regard to that suggestion:

> I find that sometimes stopping before I get completely swept up allows me to pose questions that I might not pose if I waited till the end and came back--that I would be less likely to ask and wonder about if I hadn't stopped and asked--and articulated better what it is growing toward--what this irrelevant thing might have to do with anything. But I think there might be other ways to make note of those and come back to them too. (Fieldnotes 4/25; audiotape #018)

The QHQ which best illustrated the benefits of pausing in the readings and re-readings, and re-thinking smaller portions of the novel, was the one Anna read in late April. Anna noticed in her two readings of *Beloved* that the theme of *colors* played out in a pattern relative to the characters and the tensions with which they were associated.

Andre, Keat, and Anna had prepared QHQ's for the day, and with their brief identifying phrases listed on the board, the class decided to begin with Anna's. During her reading, it became apparent to many students that Anna's QHQ was
addressing issues they had been vaguely aware of in their own readings. They had been absorbed in other issues, but the issue of color was woven through the novel. As Anna read her QHQ, there was a low chorus of "Oh yeah" and "I hadn't thought of that" responses from around the room. Other students picked up her references and built on them, some searching through the text, others nodding and making associations aloud. In many ways Anna remained the discussant for this class, even after Keat and Andre read their QHQ's and Trevard embedded their readings into one large sketch.

As subtle as the references to colors, which Anna teased from the many patterns in this novel, was the response given to Anna by several members of the class. As Anna began her reading, Robert, seated to her right and back one row, turned toward Keat, seated behind him, and began to engage Keat in a conversation. Anna was aware of this almost whispered conversation behind her, and she asserted herself just enough in her reading to overcome the intrusion this behavior presented to her field of concentration. She continued with both her reading and the class discussion.

Thomas, just a few seats farther to the right, also caught part of Robert's discussion with Keat and acknowledged it, but turned himself back toward Anna in a rather deliberate move to attend to what she was saying.
Trevard did not address these dynamics directly, perhaps because they are so subtle, and because his back was partly turned to Anna as he attended closely to the mapping process. My position in the class allowed me to observe the interactions which surrounded this incident, including the exchange of glances and the rising and visible level of irritation on Anna's part.

Though not usually addressed as a serious matter for classes at the university level, this kind of subtle response on the part of a few students is interesting in a class where a teacher is attempting to displace traditional structures of instruction. We will consider at a later point the particular kinds of demands Trevard's style of teaching places on students, and the kinds of adjustments the approach demands of people who may have very different ways of framing appropriate, literary and disciplinary practice in university classes.

The last class session in this sketch that I address briefly occurred at the end of April. At this time there were only two sessions remaining in the semester, and the class had not completed the novel *Beloved*, though there was only one more section to be read. The class began with students pointing out all the passages they were noticing related to color (what Anna had called to their attention in the previous session), concerning either characters or
events. After a lengthy discussion, it was noted that it took Sethe (the mother) "eight years to find the color" again in her life. This discussion was lengthy, in spite of a full agenda of readings for the day.

Nancy, David, Brenda, Brook, Ed, Paula, and Holly had prepared QHQ's and after the "color" discussion, Trevard listed their themes on the board. Brenda and David had sketched their own mappings for their QHQ's and many students in the class wanted these to be read and discussed first, in case the class ran out of time. Neither Brenda nor David had written QHQ's which applied only to Beloved. Both of their QHQ's addressed patterns they were noticing in the American literature they had been reading throughout the semester.

Brenda illustrated the ways in which women characters, particularly, and Darl, from As I Lay Dying, because he was considered a literary figure, were consistently written into desperate circumstances from which there seemed to be no exits. David's reading magnified one of the intersections in Brenda's map, the relationship which Sethe had with society. By focusing on these readings the class considered the costs which characters pay when they respond to crises by choosing isolation. David's sketch worked as a gyre, illustrating that
"all responses are kinds of rehearsals" for remaining within or revising patterns of thinking about the world.

When the readings and mapping were completed, Kathleen called out, "This is the human condition. Fright or flight!" This turned the discussion to other characters in search of other responses besides isolation and escape. "Freddy in No No Boy threw himself into the fray," someone noted. Keat argued that "Griever in Monkey King screams into panic holes." And Trevard added that "Some people dance."

As Paula offered to read her QHQ next, Trevard asked if she wanted to map her own reading. In response to this suggestion, Keat slid down in his chair and let out several long sighs. Paula deferred in the offer to sketch her own QHQ, but the one Trevard mapped was similar to David's, and appeared as a reversed image of his. She addressed Sethe's thick love for Beloved and her negotiations with Paul D as she attempted to justify Beloved's murder. Paula, too, indicated that Sethe's choices led her in a cycle between safety and horror.

As the class engaged and concluded their ideas for the day, Thomas wondered aloud if the rehearsal theme of African stories had influenced Toni Morrison in her writing. Thomas considered the connections between Beloved, as the signifier, and the millions of African-Americans whose
lives were destroyed by the colonization practices of the Western civilizations. Trevard added that in the discussions of the day it seemed that characters moved quickly, in the moment when they became aware that they were ashamed of something, from recognizing their own shame to shaming someone else, or pointing out that other people ought to be ashamed of certain things.

This thought hung in the air for a long moment and then Trevard turned the class's attention back to the gyre to point out how other possibilities could be created, even for this kind of movement. "It may be possible for Paul D, for instance, to consider his own shame without running from it." "Matters left unsettled or repressed return in their own time," Thomas offered, and there was general class agreement that the issue of proper burial was a serious, social issue in many of the novels they had read, and that it would be a good question for the exam. Students seemed confident that they could address this issue across the readings of the semester.

Patterns of Interactions

A subtle but recurring pattern emerged in my observations of two clusters of students in this class. Three young men (Robert, Keat, and Thomas) repeatedly, though in a variety of ways, interrupted speakers in the
class. Thomas' interruptions almost always accompanied an
eagerness to situate a topic of discussion historically,
psychologically, or in terms of literary theory. Thomas had
already been a teacher as well, and often made references
to his own teen-age students. He was a man familiar with
issues related to African-American writers. He had been a
student of Trevard's before and was involved in outside
readings with him at the time of this study.

Robert and Keat tended to scoff, to brush off, to turn
away from some of the women when they spoke, and each
succeeded in causing distractions of some kind around them
on these occasions. They tended as well to talk out without
seeming to be aware of the other students who were
waiting for a moment to speak. Most students in this class
raised their hands momentarily before speaking as if to
announce themselves, or lean into the discussion with ready
expressions.

Anna, Noelle, Kathleen, Paula and Kelly noticed and
perhaps took the brunt of interruptions, though Anna and
Noelle represented their own small group at times. They
usually sat in the front row immediately in front of Robert
and Keat, and a kind of muted tension characterized their
body language when Keat or Robert spoke, even when these
young men were presenting their own QHQ's. In some ways,
the tension between them was reciprocal.
Kathleen negotiated the interruptions by abandoning her tendency to raise her hand early in the semester. She adopted Robert and Keat's habit of speaking out without waiting very long on other students who might have been waiting to speak. Kathleen reported she was upset and frustrated with being "cut off" in class by Robert and Keat. Her complaint surprised me when she made it. I realized that in my observations I had compared Kathleen to Anna and Noelle, and had concluded that she had not been as "stuck" as these young women in her dealings with the young men. She had made a comparison between herself and Anna and Noelle, however, and found a similarity between the way each of them had experienced the interruptions. The degree to which their responses differed was not the focus of her comparison, as it was mine.

On one occasion, not discussed in the earlier sketches, Kelly, a philosophy major taking her only upper level English course, endured scoffs and cynical comments from Robert and Keat in particular, but also from Anna and Noelle, when her QHQ reading, early in *As I Lay Dying*, was viewed, by these students as a poor reading. As I had observed the incident, it had seemed that Trevard had negotiated the situation well. In an interview during that same week, however, he explained that he thought the "attack was pretty vicious."
Kelly mentioned the situation to him again later in the semester, during a visit to his office, and in a learned, and wonder entry. She admitted that she had worked harder than she had ever had to on her reading and her writing, and that she still felt a little timid about reading her QHQ's aloud in class. Sitting on the other side of the room from this group of young men and women, Kelly held her own on several occasions after this and on one occasion even fired a steely look when she was interrupted. She regained the floor for the moment that was necessary to complete the explanation of her reading, and was not a target of interruptions in the class after that.

These incidents were never discussed in a general class discussion, though some students either initiated discussion or responded to my questions about these incidents in interviews. Trevard negotiated the QHQ incident with Kelly during the class by drawing support for Kelly's reading as a viable interpretation for that part of the novel. Kathleen appeared to regain her composure and spoke out throughout the semester, though she reported she felt angry and constrained. Noelle and Anna, however, remained visibly uneasy with Keat and Robert, and when they engaged in exchanges which involved these young men, they often exchanged understated barbs. Anna's comments were markedly condescending.
Referring to one of Robert’s QHQ’s later in the semester, Anna remarked cynically about the treatment of women in the novels. “They aren’t even as important as the ‘dead cows and chickens’ [Robert] finds to talk about.”

On the days when they were required to present their QHQ’s, Noelle and Anna performed well, as we saw with Anna’s QHQ on colors in Beloved. When at last I was able to talk with them at length, Kathleen joined us as well. I was surprised by the degree of hostility each expressed toward the class, toward Robert and Keat, and most of all, toward Trevard. Their anger was particularly acute regarding the QHQ strategy, which they believed empowered “these boys to talk about the most inane things as if they were important!”

None of the three women had any idea that Trevard was a Faulkner scholar. Each said they felt keenly the loss of a class which, had they had a “better teacher,” could have taught them what they “needed to know” about these novels. As we sat in a noisy eatery surrounded by students drinking and celebrating the end of a semester, and for some, their impending graduation, Anna talked intensely with her hands gesturing about her, about some of her other classes in the English department which had been “Wonderful!” She had learned so much about some really
great writers, she explained. Her “teachers in those classes could just talk for hours and hours.”

When I asked if she enjoyed the discussions in those classes, she insisted that there were not any discussions in those classes. In her favorite class, she continued, even if a student had a question, the teacher would know what it was before the student could ask it. Usually, Anna said, she would realize in those situations that the "teacher actually was asking a better question" than she had had, and she accepted the fact that “I learned more from that kind of instruction than I would have had the teacher listened to and answered the question I had wanted to ask.”

Noelle shared the same kind of story, even some of the same classes as Anna, with one difference. Noelle focused on what a waste of time it was to

map these silly [QHQ] questions. Who cares if you can trace some issues from novel to novel? That’s not what literature at this level should be about! We should be concentrating on each novel as a work all its own.” (Fieldnotes, 5/8/91)

The discussion continued along these lines until the women began to talk about the treatment of women in the novels which had been read. Anna became livid and immediately turned the subject to the "boys in the class." She addressed directly how Robert and Keat “cut people off all the time.” When asked if she felt she was cut off more
than others, she was confident she was not, but she was
insistent that Trevard should have put an end to this kind of
behavior. It was just like the novels, she argued. "Women
don't count for anything except to satisfy some guy's
screw-ups!"

As they talked about how the women were treated in
each of the novels, Noelle led the discussion and moved her
hands about on the table, gesturing in one place as she
talked about *Quicksand*; to another as she talked about
*Three Lives*; and to other areas as she considered the other
novels. She literally constructed a multi-dimensional,
tabletop, gestural mapping of the theme of the treatment of
women in her semester's readings. It was, in fact, what she
had written about in her final exam. Kathleen added to the
comments by reinforcing Noelle and Anna's criticisms. To
their way of thinking, Trevard had failed to perform as a
scholar/teacher and they had been made to pay the price.

There were some students in this class who tended to
speak only once in a while in addition to reading their
QHQ's, but who attended nearly every class and seemed alert
and attentive to the class discussions. One of these
students sat near or at my right most of the time.

Because the classroom in this study was small and
very crowded, it took effort to move to the back. This
class, however, like many others, tended to observe a
relatively regular seating arrangement, and Neva and I shared some awkward moments as we tried to move through tightly fitted rows of desks and people to make our way to the back row. These were the only moments in the early part of the semester during which Neva, a very petite, very blond young woman, seemed at ease. I worried that my presence in the class was making her uneasy, but she insisted, when asked, that my presence near her or in the class was not bothering. When I asked if she would meet with me and talk about how the QHQ's and the class were working for her I was surprised when she broke into a smile and said she would like that. We met on several occasions, and Neva shared her ideas about how the class was going and how she viewed it in terms of her own needs.

As an English major graduating in the semester following this study, Neva had begun to worry that she was not bright enough or a good enough writer to enter graduate school. She compared Trevard's class to two of her favorite classes in the department, both taught by a woman, a "feminist" in Neva's terms, and both addressing the theme of women in literature. This teacher arranged her classes in a circle and led discussions where people were encouraged to make connections between literature and their daily lives. Also, although she did not lecture, she did speak more than the students about the interpretations of
the novels, though many issues were brought up and students "often got off on tangents."

Most of the students in these classes were women, and Neva reported the classes "felt different than Trevard's class." I asked her if she thought the men in this class dominated the discussions. She explained that the class was not dominated directly by them. It was just that "their interests and their tendency to speak out make their concerns the ones the class has to deal with most of the time." She noted that the main difference was how closely this class stayed to the novels. "There's no room for talking about how this fits in our lives."

At my next meeting with Neva, she told me how she was realizing what Trevard wanted in the QHQ's and that her writing was getting better. She was feeling more confident about her own style. She was convinced the QHQ's were helping her learn finally how to "stay with [her] questions and really think about them by writing about them." She was not trying to resolve her questions now before writing, which is what she had been doing before. In the women's studies classes she had only written small journal type entries and one or two extended papers for the semester. The QHQ's were a pattern she found she could apply to all the novels in different ways. She still wished there was some way to have more of a personal engagement in this
class, but Neva thought Trevard's class and her women's studies classes were alike in more ways than they were different when compared to the other classes she had had in the English department. She suggested that Trevard was "really a feminist teacher too."

At our later meetings, after the semester had come to a close, Neva reported that she was more confident about entering graduate school, though she was not convinced that that was what she really wanted to do after all. She had decided to wait a while before applying for school to see if there were other things that she might discover that appealed to her. When asked if she had considered graduate school in order to become a teacher at the university level, Neva thought about the question before answering and admitted she had. She did not know, however, how she would go about helping people become better writers, something she was still very interested in primarily for herself. In teaching literature, she was confident she would want to adopt the teaching style she enjoyed in her Women's Studies classes, but she thought she might use the QHQ somehow to make their writing better.

Three of the men in the class, Ken, Ron, and Randy, met for interviews. They met with me individually, for varying lengths of time. Randy was the young man who had designed the "power web" for his QHQ (see Appendix D) of
Beloved. Randy was as quiet as Neva and just as surprising in some ways. Trevard had indicated earlier that Randy was having some difficulty writing well in the early part of the semester, but that he had visited him during office hours and had asked for some help. Seated usually in the back left corner of the classroom, Randy followed along in class discussions, but joined them infrequently. When he spoke up he seemed confident and well-read, though very even-tempered. He spoke of most things in the same tone or without much excitement.

Randy was a young, heavyset man who told me his family was “Cajun.” He worked in a visit to my office in the middle of finishing college, planning for law school, making arrangements for his wedding, and finishing a novel he had been writing for another class. This was a young man who planned to earn a degree in law so that he might support a life of writing novels and short stories. His revelations were unexpected and I stumbled into my own biases and stereotypes when I reacted to his news. Of all the men in this class, Randy seemed to me, at some level, to be an unlikely candidate for a life of writing. But as he talked it became apparent he was absolutely committed to writing, and that I had mistaken his quiet manner for disinterest. He shared with me that his bride-to-be, a practicing nurse, had accepted the risks of marrying
someone who was going to spend his life writing. Randy thought Trevard's class "helped his writing a lot" but that Trevard "cared so much about being a teacher that sometimes the discussions were too slow or devoted too much attention to individual QHQ's."

Randy noted as well that the mapping had not even struck him as "anything but odd" until it became apparent in late March that it was the researcher, I, not Trevard, particularly, who was fueling the class's focus on the mappings. Randy wondered if the mapping would have become so focused, or embedded within one another, if the project had not been underway.

In this I found Randy to be very astute, because it was my continual amazement with the visual and organizational power of the mapping strategy which encouraged Trevard to attend to it more directly. I had been struck by the central position of this activity in the class dynamics and the degree which the mapping seemed to illustrate the relations within and between the QHQ readings. The mapping had seemed undertheorized to me in Trevard's explanation of his practice, which tended to focus more on the QHQ as a device. That is not to say Trevard had undertheorized the power of either. In fact, the mapping had already been understood by him as the framework through which the readings were made spatially visible, while illustrating their instability.
Randy had observed the influence I had on Trevard's way of approaching the mapping part of his practice. Randy said he then "paid more attention" to the mapping. He found mapping "helpful" after he got used to it, and reported that the "power web" he had sketched for his reading had actually helped clarify his writing and thinking.

The difficulty of the teaching part of Trevard's job did not appeal to Randy though, and he thought he would probably map out things only if he were trying to work out some plot line or some difficult part of a story he was trying to write. The QHQ strategy was "just something that made sense. It's a way to find out what you think about something, [and it was] only hard because it was just so different from the way other teachers teach literature."

Ron and Thomas, both African-American men, were pursuing literature in terms of a profession, Thomas at the graduate level, and Ron at the undergraduate level. It seemed that Thomas reached out to Ron at times before or after class, trying to initiate conversations about their readings or the related readings Thomas thought Ron might find interesting. In these conversations it seemed that, though both men held their own positions, Thomas held his more forcefully. Ron, younger by several years, remained somewhat reserved with most of the members of the class, including Thomas. Ron's goal was "to get a teaching
certificate and teach literature for a while, but then become an athletic director for a high school or college program."

As class broke up for the last time, on the last regular class day of the semester, Robert spoke loudly about his plans to be in Europe for the summer; Keat talked about how he had regained his enthusiasm about medical school after falling into a brief literature career dream during the semester; Thomas spoke of his continued studies in his graduate work; and Ron spoke of keeping both his jobs and his studies going.

These exchanges tell something about the ways these young men were situated in the world in relation to their studies, and perhaps in relation to the patterns of behavior which each established within the class. These locations, like the ones wherein Anna, Noelle, Kathleen, Neva, and Randy found themselves and made for themselves, inform them as readers and by association, inform their readings.

This tension of relative positions was as dynamic an aspect of the class's readings of one another as it was in the readings of the novels. In their search for the teacher's position within the class, Noelle and Anna and Kathleen told me they considered "Thomas to be the person who [had] taken up the position of the scholar/teacher" which they believed Trevard had "abandoned." Thomas knew and
presented what he knew about the novels they were reading. It was only a partial recognition they offered Thomas, however; one which recognized a position which was familiar and reasserted the idea of what a teacher ought to do in a literature class. They constrained their assessment of Thomas when they discussed their appraisal of the class as a whole, however. Though Thomas was viewed as playing out a more familiar teacherly position, the control of the class was still assigned, and then blamed on Trevard, whom they perceived as one of "the boys." In this interpretation, Thomas filled a position which had lost its power.

Anna and Noelle’s seemed unaware of the kinds of contributions other men made to the class regularly. Ron, for instance (like Thomas, whose work had not been considered trivial by Anna and Noelle), did not earn recognition for his deliberate and consistent efforts to construct insightful interpretations of the readings. No mention was made of the contributions of David, Ed, Andre, William, or Matthew, either. The dislocation of the familiar power relations seemed to dominate Anna and Noelle’s experiences.

Other members of the class did not struggle with these dislocations to the same degree, particularly after the mid-point of the semester. Both Neva and Randy noticed, however, that Noelle and Anna were talented
students who were often noticeably quiet. Neva said directly that she wished Anna and Noelle would talk more because "they're so smart."

Randy noted that a lot of the good discussions went on in the front of the class among the "front row group," the group that he claimed was made up of "Ed and Andre and William and those two girls who notice the women's issues when they participate." Randy's version of how class discussions went did not even include Robert and Keat, and when I pressed him for who might have been the most articulate members of the class, he suggested Nancy (who had written two of the summaries) and Thomas and Paula, three students who were not members of this front row group he had mentioned previously.

It seems that Robert and Keat did not make the impression on Randy that they made on Anna and Noelle and Kathleen. Also, Randy noted that Anna and Noelle chose their level of participation, chose the location from which to construct their readings, and that the women's issues which these young women addressed were not discussed as often when Anna and Noelle chose to be quiet. This suggested that silence too operated as a way of dislocating positions in the class, and that at least some members of this class believed Anna and Noelle exercised their power less than they might. These same members, however,
seemed unaware of the kind of frustrations Anna and Noelle, in particular, were experiencing on a personal level.

I have wondered if the price these young women saw themselves as having paid was the result, at least in part, of a collision between the traditional structures of teaching literature and Trevard's discourse community structures. In a traditional classroom, at least Anna and Noelle might have been comfortable and also, might have performed very well. Kathleen, who participated in class discussions much more than Noelle or Anna, actually wrote with much less clarity than they. She admitted that she "didn't put much effort into her writing because [she] had so much other work to do." But Anna and Noelle had put in the years in the English department and knew how to enact the traditional approach to literary study. Noelle commented that they were "finishing their studies but had never seen half these students [the other students in this class] before this semester . . . . Where did these people come from?" she wanted to know. Both Anna and Noelle wanted to be writers, and neither, unlike Kathleen, was particularly interested in teaching. It seems at first glance that Noelle and Anna are located within this class in ways which have interrupted connections they had hoped to bring with them into their final senior level classes.
Re-Thinking the Position of the Teacher

Trevard explained that his efforts to provide a different kind of network for his students' readings represented his attempt to establish a new receiving context for his students' experience of literature, of writing, and of constructing readings of the world. Citing psychotherapists White and Epston (1990) in their work *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends*, Trevard writes:

They talk interestingly about staying "behind" the person, identifying w/ [sic] where they were, so that the person (student, in my translation) can "catch you off guard" instead of always following and failing to catch up with you . . . These therapists write to their clients after their meetings, usually in terms of "catching up" with the progress the client/person has made, in the language the person has used. I think my preparation time is spent in noticing and summarizing and highlighting how far we've come the time before (in responding to QHQ's and in talking about introductory remarks). (Personal correspondence, June 5, 1991)

In this approach the teacher is "caught off guard" and subject to the kind of rethinking and re-seeing in which the students are also engaged. Trevard suggests that Gregory Jay's (1991) perspective illustrates his own:

Our difficulties in teaching ourselves or our students to think consciously often stems from a failure to engage and verbalize the unconscious conceptual grammars of which we, and our students, are the subjects. These
grammars, in turn, compose the structures of life we inhabit, our historical positions, so that self-critical discourse means a soliciting and mapping of the locations from which we speak and the effect those locations have on what we can articulate. (Personal correspondence, June 5, 1991)

We saw in the first three sketches of the class, in the kinds of comparisons and contrasts which Trevard encouraged his students to consider and write, and even in the exam questions that students suggested and wrote about, that readings of the novels were never closed completely. Each new reading could re-open previous readings, and in fact, students were encouraged to do this. As students in this class moved through the semester, previously read novels were in fact re-interpreted in light of succeeding novels, all that is, and we might say, of course, except for the last novel on the reading list. So all the novels but *Beloved* were succeeded by other novels.

The readings of *Beloved* by David and Paula and Brenda, however, had woven *Beloved* into all the novels which the class had read in the semester. Without having talked ahead of time about their readings, all three of these students found in *Beloved*, patterns of behavior which characters played out when they were "stuck." When they were stuck they were unable to articulate their situations and unable then as well to negotiate alternative moves to different positions. For each of these students, the world was
understood as both a place in which we are located and a constructed set of relations which locates us in relation to others. Only when characters realized the implications of both of these aspects of their situatedness, these students argued, were they able to create other possibilities for themselves and those they loved.

A Final Sketch

Only one class period remained in the semester after the class during which these readings were offered. The class was behind in its readings of Beloved and the exam topics had not yet been discussed. At the beginning of the last class period, thirteen or fourteen topics were offered as possible exam questions, and one of those topics was offered by Anna. In addition to identity and mixed bloods and improper burial, Anna's suggestion of colors was added to the list. In the very engaged discussion which followed, however, not one vote was cast in support of Anna's suggestion, even though this topic had, several classes earlier, generated a great deal of interest. In a negotiation where each student voted for three topics, colors received no votes, while many other topics were negotiated, combined, or altered in some way.

This process took quite a bit of time and it became apparent that there would not be enough time for all of the
readings which remained on *Beloved*. Carla began the class discussions with a summary reading from the preceding class and then William extended Ed's interpretation of the address of Sethe's house, the numbers 1 2 4, as representing an increasing series of numbers, "the few and the millions" who died as a result of the practice of slavery. William argued that *Beloved* was a work which always addressed the common and the extraordinary, the individuals and the innumerable people who died in the middle passage. The characters in the narrative and the realities of the middle passage suggested also the multitudes of readers who found themselves located in the middle ground where meaning, contradictions, and history are written.

Nancy's summary changed the focus to a minor character in the novel whose actions actually illustrated David's gyre. She discussed how the gyre could be altered by getting involved with people, by making commitments to people rather than trying to escape the pain of relationships by seeking isolation. Holly followed Nancy's final question about Denver (another character in *Beloved*) by turning the discussion toward the issue of how white people put the jungle in black people. She was trying to look at how Sethe was the victim of slavery, but Trevard and the class negotiated her argument and turned the question in ways to include how this was not simply a racial thing. "People put
the jungle between themselves and others for a variety of reasons."

William and Trevard discussed how Stamp Paid (a character in Beloved) remembered how he had thought about breaking his wife's neck to spare her pain. "This jungle, this realization of shame" was resisted, and he "tried to locate that shame in someone else, by focusing on Sethe's reasons to be ashamed."

At that point the class turned toward a discussion of the day's QHQ's. With each reading, the discussion about entering community became stronger. Hope for each of the characters for some real love in their lives seemed to depend upon their "going beyond their best thing." Sethe's best thing had been her isolation for a long time, because in her isolation she held onto the memory of Beloved, as horrible as part of it was. But now, she had to go beyond this in order to break out of her isolation and false security. She would have to let go of the isolation and rejoin the world.

The class ran out of time on this discussion, and Beloved became literally the unfinished novel, the unfinished reading. Marilyn claimed she didn't want to end the semester. Keat said there was more hope in the last section and that the class needed to address it. Kathleen worried that Beloved "never understood why Sethe had
killed her," and doesn't really let go of Sethe and Denver in the novel. She argued that Beloved was driven away from the family unwillingly, and that the family was not really healed.

But time had run out and there was an unfinished feeling in the air for many. The class had used every minute of the period for negotiating their readings, and Trevard had offered no summary statements, either of the novel or of the semester, though even he seemed a bit ill at ease about the arrival of the end of the semester. It was at that moment that Robert and Keat, and Thomas and Ron exchanged their remarks about their summer plans, as was noted earlier. Only Ron seemed distracted by the feeling that the class needed more time. He told me later he thought Trevard's class could have been a two semester class so people could have kept working on these novels.

At the following class, the in-class final exam, Trevard extended an invitation to anyone who wanted to continue the discussion about Beloved over coffee or soft drinks at the Union later that day. But this week represented the beginning of exam week, not the end, and no students showed up. Trevard and I talked about his concern that perhaps by not wrapping up Beloved he had actually contributed to a kind of mystification of not wrapping up,
and that he had perhaps reversed the *summary* kind of closure. He wrote later:

I want instead to try summarizing without pretending a more complete summary than I believe is possible; summarize, then re-summarize, maybe, or raise another question or series of questions and other possibilities perhaps. Otherwise, by claiming or even appearing to refuse to summarize, I think I probably mystify the summary I didn't create or allow them to create as a class. (Personal correspondence, May 5, 1991)

Eight weeks later he addressed the issue again:

I don't want to *avoid* closure or taking positions or putting thoughts together; (that seems ironical and detached, ultimately suicidal); I just want to learn to take a position and still be able to negotiate between positions and maybe move to new positions. I don't think one can really avoid taking a position. *Irony is* a position, often tempting for me but not a position I want to get stuck in or to teach. (Personal correspondence, July 7, 1991)

Months later, Trevard wrote that he was still trying to work out this difficulty about seeming to take no position when what he is trying to do is establish a revisionary perspective. Addressing the kinds of revisions he has made in a temporary position, where he is expected to lecture, Trevard writes:

I think my teaching experience . . . would suggest some revisions. They wanted me to lecture here. I made the small change of scheduling my lecture not before but after discussion sessions
I have with two smaller groups on the same reading . . . This arrangement has been interesting for me as a way of avoiding the impression my teaching has sometimes given the students that I'm not taking any position because I'm not taking a single unshakable position. I'm interested in how people do take positions and make decisions "in a terrain of undecidables" as Ernesto Laclau puts it, how they construct essays in such terrains. (Personal correspondence, March 3, 1992)

In the interviews with students which followed the last day of class, Anna, Noelle, and Kathleen seemed to think Trevard had attempted to mystify a kind of silence about any closure or wrapping up of the readings or the semester. They believed this was consistent with his "political views." Neva, Randy, and particularly Marta, a young woman who was the closest companion to Ron, felt the class had just run out of time and Trevard had chosen to let students get some responses on their QHQ's "rather than talk about summaries that no one wanted to hear." Randy, like Ron, thought it was "time the class needed more of, not summaries." Ron was confident the construction of the exam questions was the summary process, but that the summary process never really ended in reading literature. "It's just another kind of QHQ like we had in the class."
Student Evaluations

Briefly I would like to note the kinds of student response Trevard has received over the seven years in which he has been employing some version of the QHQ strategy. For this I was able to read his file of formal evaluations which students submitted at the end of courses within the English department, and those which have been offered informally, in the form of letters, notes, and journal entries given to the teacher. A great majority of the students who wrote narrative entries on the evaluations over the years reported that Trevard's class was one in which they had learned to think and read more closely, and write with more competence. Few evaluations mentioned the mapping strategy specifically, though many credited the QHQ with providing a frame of reference for their reading, writing, and thinking even beyond the study of literature.

In reading these evaluations it became clear that many students recognized the different effects Trevard's style had on their learning, though they did not credit any particular aspect of the QHQ strategy more than any other. More than a few students credited Trevard's teaching (in various ways) with teaching them (many say, "for the first time") how to think through their own thinking. One former
it was too much work (Thompson, personal correspondence, May 5, 1991).

Several students in the semester of the study took issue with the QHQ as a limiting framework. These criticisms were most often reported along with requests for Trevard to lecture. In these cases it is difficult to interpret the meaning of the word "limiting," though when objections to the QHQ were raised during the semester Trevard responded by exploring other ways to broaden the interpretation of what was possible within the QHQ frame.

Two graduate level students who talked with me informally, though at some length, about Trevard's teaching, were sharply divided about the use of the QHQ. The doctoral student in curriculum theory [a woman] rated his classes as excellent; the doctoral student in English [a man] believed he spent too much time "support[ing] the development of individual questioning and thinking processes." The community dynamic of Trevard's teaching does seem to reappear, in contradictory ways, then, as an issue among his students at several levels of university study.

In this chapter I have drawn the sketches, patterns, and observations which emerged in my research about Trevard's teaching, about his students' responses to his teaching, and about the relationship between his style of teaching and the kinds of readings and writing his students
construct. It has been illustrated that Trevard's teaching style fosters close readings and focused writing; revisions rather than conclusions in the interpretive process; and self-critical analysis through the use of group negotiations and revisionary processes.

In Chapter Four I will extend the analysis and discussion to consider how Trevard's style of teaching may be read as a construction of a zone of proximal development, the significance of the collective enunciation in the literate imagination, and the place of the literate imagination in educational practice. I will consider as well the problems and limitations associated with the study.
CHAPTER FOUR
DISCUSSION OF ANALYSIS

The purpose of the ethnographic study reported in chapter three has been to explore the interactive teaching style of Ben Trevard. Several sketches of the class have been offered, drawn chronologically over the course of a semester. In Chapter Four I will extend the discussion begun in those sketches.

A Place of Change

For each of the sketches offered, Trevard's style of teaching may be characterized as interactive and repetitive. The interactions occur between Trevard and individual students; among the members of the community as a whole; and among the members of the class and the texts which are read and written. Students interact with Trevard one-to-one when their QHQ writings are first read aloud. They interact with other students in addition to Trevard when these interpretations are discussed. And students increasingly interact over a greater number of texts as the semester progresses.

Trevard's style is repetitive in the way questions are raised and written about in individual QHQ's, followed by other questions raised by the same student, before still...
other questions, (those raised by the next student's QHQ's) are raised, discussed, and followed by another QHQ presentation. The pattern for these discussions over the course of a class could be represented by the following: QHQ; discussion; QHQ; discussion; QHQ; etc. This pattern of opening and closing each student's interpretation with a question represents a significant difference from that generally associated with the three-part questioning strategy employed in most traditional styles of teaching.

Though teaching styles differ greatly from one teacher to another, a common approach to questioning involves the teacher initiating a question, followed by a student's response, itself followed by a corrective comment offered by the teacher (Applebee, 1986; Newman et al., 1989). That pattern could be represented as QAR (Question-Answer-Response). Displayed in a sequence representing the pattern which would be played out over the course of a class, this sequence could be represented by the following: QAR; QAR; QAR, with discussion occurring more randomly in the course of the class's interactions, and then followed by a corrective Response on the part of the teacher.

This traditional approach places the teacher in the position of the one who frames the terms, categories, and/or relations of the initial question. Students' answers are expected to fit the questions asked, and are followed by
a response which informs them in some way about whether or not their response did in fact "fit" (Newman, et al., 1989, p. 58). In Trevard's approach, the student raises the question, proposes a set of hypotheses for this question, and then raises another question, before Trevard even enters the interaction verbally. When he does enter into a discussion with the student, he does so with a question about whether the sketch he has mapped representing the student's QHQ, does in fact, in the student's terms, represent what the student has intended to write and say.

Whereas in the traditional QAR approach, the teacher offers a kind of corrective to the student's answer, in Travard's approach, the student has the opportunity to correct the teacher's representation of the terms and categories of the student's argument. Rather than comparing a student's answer to that which the teacher understands to be the "correct" answer, Trevard attempts to create a visual approximation of the student's argument, evaluated by the student author before the argument he has presented is evaluated publicly by anyone else.

During interactions of this kind, the assumption is made that students have constructed interpretations which represent the "task" the teacher has in mind. This was true in Trevard's class even at the beginning of the study when some of the students complained that they were unsure of
what Trevard wanted from them in terms of the QHQ. Their in-class readings were supported by Trevard's mapping and by class discussions, though the category of "correctness" could not be aligned with specific content the way it is within the traditional exchange between teachers and students.

An understanding of the correctness of students' responses emerges from the discussions which occur in the class. "Correctness" becomes a relative measure, which must be determined anew with each discussion of each interpretation constructed by each student. Even then, "correctness" as an ideal remains indeterminate, because the number of perspectives represented within the class actually increases with each discussion. By systematically raising new questions for every initiating question which is presented, the class actually multiplies the number of correct interpretations.

When students' interpretations are received "as if" they have been given with Trevard's goals in mind, Trevard incorporates his students' actions into his own system of activity, a system designed to support close readings of the novels and one another's interpretations, but close readings of the students' own thinking processes as well, as long as these follow some form of the QHQ model. That is, the QHQ represents the template for the construction of
interpretations. It guides the students’ thinking about the novels, their writings, their presentations to the class, and the class’s discussions. It also guides Trevard’s responses to the students in that he questions their interpretations in order to support their continuing search for hypotheses, and then he poses other questions which arise during discussions though they may not have been offered through a student’s writing. Here students often gain greater understanding about their own performance, only after the performance has been given; this is what one researcher calls “performance before competence” (Cazden, cited in Newman et al., 1989, p. 63). When this happens, students discover the relationship between the QHQ and the “task” the teacher has set for the class.

The notion of the learning “task” has been represented in educational practice in this century as a reproducible set of behaviors invested with certain meanings. Newman et al.’s (1989) attempt to reproduce the same task in different settings led them to conclude that tasks in different settings are never the same. “Tasks are strategic fictions that people negotiate and use as a way of negotiating an interpretation of a situation . . . They help organize working together” (p. 135). Trevard establishes the task that involves replaying the QHQ pattern differently at different times. The difference between settings created by the
different texts is significant enough to lead students to some confusion about what is expected of them. The difference between writing the QHQ and presenting it orally also masks the fact that Trevard supports the students in their oral presentations in ways that inform them about how to use the QHQ in their written assignments. In this way, Trevard uses the QHQ as a kind of tool which shapes students’ thinking and writing in one setting, and their thinking and interacting in another. The QHQ, viewed in this way, functions as a kind of cultural tool which the students learn to use, a tool which both shapes their thinking, and which is transformed by their use of it.

It was the QHQ which shaped the way students approached their writing about the novels. Identifying places in the texts which aroused their interest for any number of reasons, students used the QHQ as a way to establish the starting point of their writing. The first question framed the terms, categories, and relations in their thinking and writing about the text. The need to generate hypotheses about their original question then led them back into the texts in search of information pertaining to their question. The final question demanded by the QHQ pattern led the students to a kind of tentative closure on their writing, a closure that was contradicted by the fact that though the final question provided a stopping point for
their writing, it actually provided a new point of departure in terms of discussion.

This kind of approach to the study of literature represents a very significant difference from approaches which recognize only certain forms of interpretations as empirically correct. In Trevard's class the students were unable to convince Trevard to pass judgement on the correctness of their interpretations. What he gave them was an evaluation of how closely they followed their own thinking about the texts read and constructed within the class. As they reconsidered the questions they themselves had raised, students explored the ways they positioned themselves and were positioned in the middle ground of the interpretive process. This process led students to re-think their readings and writing, in search of support for their arguments. They returned to the novels, to the texts of other students' writings, to the mappings on the board, and to the discussions of previous sessions. In this work the class performed as a critical, interpretive community of readers.

One of the difficulties faced by the students in Trevard's class was the way authority rested within the interactions of the community. Traditionally, critics in literary studies have been viewed as individuals operating within professional communities of critics where each
critic possesses and exercises his own particular expertise (Graff, 1987). Trevard’s style of teaching challenges this tradition. By employing the QHQ (question-hypotheses-question), rather than the QAR (Question-Answer-corrective Response) approach to content presentation, Trevard shifts the locus of authority from the position of the teacher to the process of interactions within the class. With the power associated with the traditional aspects of his position, those characterized by his status as a professor within a research university, Trevard oversees the use of the QHQ, the community’s most common cultural tool. While he does this, the students’ interactions actually fashion the space of the classroom into a particular kind of place.

The anthropologist/geographer Miles Richardson writes about the notion of place. His observations are relevant to this discussion.

We walk and talk. We have bodies. For us to interact we have to come together, face-to-face, on a location. That’s the beginning of place. Then we begin to use space to create place. We fashion it with our hands, with our tools, our language, our interactions. The more we meet there the more the place is reasserted as a meaningful, particular-meaning place. And then, place begins to shape us as we shaped it. Finally, we have an image of this place, for we leave our mark on it as it leaves its marks on us. (Richardson, Classnotes, August, 1991).
Richardson's description of place leaves plenty of room for the variety of places we humans create. Some places, like expansive parking lots, can be minimal places, because the material setting, the face-to-face interactions, and the images we have of these places are just that: minimal. Other places, however, may be shown to have distinctive settings, unique patterns of interactions, and particular images. Trevard's classroom is such a place. A first-floor classroom, wider than it is deep, with floor to ceiling windows at one end, exposing the inside walls of an alleyway between wings of an old, three story building, this room is crammed with students' desks set in three long rows from the windows on one side of the room to the single doorway on the wall on the other side. Across the front of this room, a three panel chalkboard extends nearly the whole width of the class.

Within the setting of the university, the building which houses the English department occupies a prestigious place overlooking the commons area which serves as the academic heart of the campus. A significant number of departments are housed along this commons area, a huge grassy area with wide, intersecting walkways which criss-cross the commons in all directions. Of all the buildings facing this commons, the English department is the only building which is designed with an interior hallway, where
students may pass the time looking out over the hustle and bustle of students and faculty and administrators interacting in this space.

The face of the library along this commons, which lies perpendicular to the English department, is constructed of metal and glass. Students in the library may gaze out over the commons from the whole interior section of a large study area of the first floor. But from the English department, students lean against a long row of window sills, privileged by the position they have to observe the interactions within the commons. If one does this for more than a few moments, a pattern becomes noticeable. In this area of commotion, seemingly fluid in every way, there are subtly recognizable territorial boundaries. For the most part, students moving within the commons observe racial boundaries. Even when there is a great number of students, moving about and changing positions, the interactions occur within groups which share a socially constructed and understood racial identity.

Within this building, classtime in Trevard's class is characterized by attentive, upper-division students who talk sometimes at length about their own writings and readings, but frequently in a steady exchange of conversation from different parts of the room, across racial boundaries. Though I have argued that the QHQ is a tool
repeatedly used in the class, its use is less obvious when the class is described in terms of its material appearance. What characterizes the class more is the way the students and Trevard focus on the sketches mapped on the panels of the chalkboard (see Appendix B), sketches which never look the same, one to another. It might be argued, based on this observation, that the QHQ is a tool flexible enough to fashion very different landscapes across the visual field of this class.

Trevard's interactive style of teaching, including the QHQ and the mapping, shape the space of this classroom into a place where the multiple perspectives created among the members of the class lead to transformations within the individual members of the class. Newman, et al. (1989), explain: "In the dialectic between the interpsychological and the intrapsychological, the mind becomes externalized by a culture in its tools" (p. 60). Trevard's mapping mediates this transformation, illustrating both form and content in the construction of visual images and collective meanings. The interactions with these sketches function as aesthetic experiences. Their power lies, I believe, in the way they contain "an element of life-enhancing surprise," and in the way they "disturb the somnabulism of routine" (Tuan, 1989, p. 239) usually associated with school practices.
The place that Trevard's style has fashioned functions as a system where ambiguity, ambivalence, and complexity lead to cognitive change. It is a place where learning is socially constructed, and the mind is viewed "as an artifact rather than as a 'natural' system" (Vygotsky, cited in Newman et al., 1989, p. 3). In this system of social activity, it is significant that every student writes QHQ's on a regular basis and presents them to the class. Each of these QHQ's is assessed by Trevard and supported by the interactive dynamics of the class. Within these assessments, each student is located within the construction zone, that middle ground where personal interpretations may be appropriated into the larger system, and where the teacher may assess each performance, and address that performance in an assessment of the class as a whole and as a collection. This system functions as a zone of proximal development, where "cognitive change is as much a social as an individual process" (p. 1).

Resistance, Confusion, and the Place of the Individual

As was illustrated by the accounts offered by Anna, Noelle, Kathleen, Neva, and Randy, not all the students in Trevard's class had the same understanding of his teaching style or its effectiveness. Anna and Noelle represented the most distressing accounts, in that they felt they had
suffered a loss by taking the class with Trevard instead of with another member of the faculty. They also were the most adamant in charging Trevard with a political motive for teaching in the way that he did. I will consider their account in light of their own terms, trying to understand in what ways Trevard's style represents a political point of view.

Employing a common resource for students for defining the term "political," employed in the framing question of this discussion, we find that the Webster's Seventh Collegiate Dictionary, defines the term "political" as:

1 a: of or relating to government, a government, or the conduct of government; b: of, relating to, or concerned with the making as distinguished from the administration of governmental policy; 2 : of, relating to, or involving politics and esp. party politics; 3: organized in governmental terms; 4: involving or charge or concerned with acts against a government or a political system. (1971, p. 657)

In many ways, Trevard's pedagogical style may be viewed as relating to the making of governmental policy, of involving politics, and of being organized in governmental terms, if we are willing to admit that schooling has traditionally been about social control, and that the making of policies which will set the terms and limits of that
control is a kind of political activity. Accepting that, we might also be inclined to concede that if schools are forms of governmental systems, the policies which have shaped schools and those who administer those policies are forms of political systems.

Viewed in these terms, Trevard's style is an expression of his politics, as would be any teacher's approach within an institution of higher education. But what I think Noelle and Anna are asserting, is that Trevard's style is traceable to certain political views which represent some kind of charge or act against another political system, different from the one they themselves would like to support.

Considered within this frame we can say that Trevard's style is markedly different from the approaches Anna and Noelle experienced and had learned to negotiate within the English department over several years of study. As a result of displacing the traditional forms of power usually associated with the position of the teacher, Trevard's style recognizes a middle ground, which honors the significance of the social in the construction of self, meaning, and culture; he establishes the foundation for that construction within the interactions of the community. Gerald Graff (1987) has argued that teachers need to pose the question of "Whose interests are served?" by particular
forms of educational practice (p. 263). Trevard's class is structured to serve the interests of a more interactive and democratic community, though the transformation from traditional expectations to an understanding of how such a community ought to function is not without problems.

One of the problems which Anna and Noelle identified, associated with the kinds of changes Trevard's class instantiated, could be seen in the way two young men in particular, Robert and Keat, tended to use the tools which shaped this place, with little concern for the consequences their behavior had on certain members of the class, or perhaps, on the class as a whole. Whereas in the traditional class, students are expected to fit their answers to the questions posed by teachers, in Trevard's class, students fitted their interactions to the QHQ pattern, which supported their efforts to raise, address, and transform questions they themselves sponsored. Robert and Keat occupied a position of privilege associated with social interactions in that, as men, they had been rewarded over a lifetime for being outspoken and active participants in the social arena. Women find entry into and participation within this social arena fraught with sociohistorical constraints (Pagano, 1990). Anna and Noelle had already negotiated the difficulties associated with participation in a traditional, patriarchal system of literary studies, when
they discovered that Trevard's class demanded another set of negotiations, some of which once again empowered some students to retain a privilege they already enjoyed. In effect, the task faced by Anna and Noelle was very different from that faced by Robert and Keat. There were more obstacles placed between Anna and Noelle and the performance of competence.

Newman et al. (1989) address the affect of these different relations to performance by noting the importance of "cultural amplifiers." Cultural amplifiers is a term Bruner uses to describe intellectual tools, like writing, or speaking, which amplify one's ability to learn, to express one's thinking, and to engage in community interactions. Students have different relations to amplifiers, however, as we saw with Anna, Noelle, Keat, and Robert. Some students occupied a position of privilege in the use of these tools, as Robert and Keat did with speaking out, while others felt it was their vulnerability which was amplified when they spoke out. Cultural amplifiers function differently for different people, and a consideration of their use and effects takes us beyond the processes internal to the individual, to a consideration of the sociohistorical factors which may be at work in any setting (p. 130).

There were many tools employed in Trevard's class for refashioning the ways students approached litera-
texts and the ways they wrote about and discussed the interpretations they constructed. These tools did not escape their own sociohistorical construction, however, and some students used the tools self-consciously and self-critically, while others used them with abandon. In the dynamics which Anna and Noelle and Robert and Keat set in motion in terms of one another, it seems clear that Anna and Noelle felt constrained by the way Robert and Keat used language and understood their positions within the class. Robert and Keat, however, appeared to target these young women in subtle yet offensive ways, though their own interpretations of their behavior were unavailable to me.

In his efforts to transform students' expectations of traditional class dynamics into a kind of performance of collective competence, Trevard shifted much of the traditional emphasis away from individual students, though individual performances still framed discussions developed from QHQ's. This shift from the individual to the collective performance which supported individual efforts produced its own kind of confusion, which many students worked through by repeatedly using the QHQ in the context of the mapping and discussion strategies. The confusion eventually gave way to understanding for most students as they experienced success in terms of teacher and class
assessment, leading students to different levels of understandings about the QHQ as a tool.

Students who did not invest in the collective structures of the class may have represented a threat to those structures and to other students, as was addressed earlier. In order to control for these variables, for certainly Trevard's style is still about control, since teaching practices are political in nature, his view of democratic interactions must acknowledge and foreground as much as possible the lived conflicts which emerge in his classes. Just as the institutional history of literary studies has avoided dealing with the struggles encountered within the discipline, individual communities of students and teachers tend to overlook their own struggles and focus on larger issues, such as "the treatment of women in literature."

In some ways, the young student, Neva, had suggested such an approach when she expressed her wish that Trevard's classes would explore more fully the connections between the readings and the students' individual lives. It is possible that the journal responses written in the form of the I notice, learn and wonder entries could address these kinds of issues periodically in a direct way, and that Trevard could become informed about tensions and struggles within the community which may have otherwised escaped
him. This is not to say that these entries have not already served this purpose to some degree, for many of the students did in fact address these kinds of issues. But for some reason, Anna and Noelle, in particular, chose to remain angry but silent about the positions in which they saw themselves, while Trevard and I remained unaware of the degree to which the differences in approaches to speaking out in the class benefitted or oppressed some members of the class systematically.

The Literate Imagination in Literary Studies

In many ways, the autobiographical account I offered in Chapter One does more than relate a narrative of an educational experience I had as an adolescent. It describes the kinds of educational goals which have motivated years of study, teaching, and research in my life. It has not been my intention to presume that all students of literature have struggled in the same ways that I claim to have struggled. Rather, my claim is that the approaches to literary studies which have characterized my educational experiences in the past thirty years have constrained the self-reflective and participatory interactions which characterize the middle ground, where meaning and subjectivities are socially constructed.
Theories regarding the indeterminacy of language have helped educators realize the importance of multiple perspectives as a basis for cognitive change within a functional system. The social construction of knowledge draws from cultural knowledge in a zone of proximal development, and, like the QHQ, opens the interpretive process to creative changes.

When the indeterminacy of language is denied, and the functional system of constructing knowledge declared closed, the "noise in the system" increases. Literacy, in terms of the imagination, amplifies the noise, the disparity, the contradictions associated with the distinctions between an original and alien culture. D. Emily Hicks (1991) considers some of these issues in her exploration of "border writing." The literate imagination functions as a mode of operation, enabling the reader with "multidimensional perception . . . quite literally the ability to see not just from one side of a border, but from the other side as well" (p. xxiii).

One of the contributions Hicks has made to a reconceptualization of literary studies, is her recognition of the importance of the "collective enunciation" (p. xxv), the nonsynchronous relations associated with the middle ground. Unaccustomed to hearing "the multiplicity of discourses within a single language - the four keys in a
sequence of four chords, or the multiple sets of referential codes . . . a greater demand is placed on the reader" who would attempt to read in this way (p. xxvi). Such reading benefits from the translator, whose task it is, in Benjamin's words, "to piece together the fragments of a broken vessel" (Cited in Hicks, 1991, p. xxx). Continuing in the vein of Deleuze and Guattari, Hicks writes:

The task of the translator is "to make use of the polylingualism of one's own language, to make a minor or intensive use of it, to oppose the oppressed quality of this language to its oppressive quality, to find points of nonculture or underdevelopment, linguistic Third World zones by which a language can escape, an animal enters into things, an assemblage (agencement) comes into play." (p. xxx).

Trevard has served as a translator for his students, mapping the whole of their collective interpretations in the fragmentary sketches he has drawn. Perhaps he is a "cartographer in a project of remapping" (p. 118) much as the poet is who explores the middle ground. If he is, however, he serves his students in this capacity only to the extent that they choose to read his and their work in this way, because the quality of the interactive relations depend upon an investment of time and energy on the part of the students and Trevard. Without this investment of labor, the system looses some of its power. Trevard's cartography is ephemeral and his work suffers from no pretense about its
own significance. In some ways, that may be why it is effective for so many of his students. As the semester passed its half-way mark, the majority of the students reported with greater certainty and frequency that Trevard's class was teaching them how to think, read, and write critically—in ways they had never been able to do before. It was Anna, Noelle, and Kathleen who did not agree with their classmates in their appraisal of Trevard's teaching.

It would be a mistake to believe one could duplicate Trevard's style of teaching (even Trevard cannot make the same task occur in two different settings), but it would be a mistake of another kind to conclude that just because duplication was impossible, there is no way to generalize the findings of the study.

The QHQ can be used as a cultural tool to shape the way students think and read and write about texts of all kinds. The mapping can be employed effectively as a visual and cognitive aid, a temporary structuring of support for re-thinking readings and writing. And certainly, Trevard's multiplication and amplification of literary perspectives within the construction zone of his classes' interactions illustrates the basis of a functional system “in which new understandings can arise” (Newman et al., 1989, p. 61).
Those who would acknowledge that learning *requires* that students experience a *discontinuity* with the system of organization which characterized their entry into the zone, but an emergent *continuity* with the prior interpsychological system of the zone, cannot help but value organized social interactions in classrooms at every level of schooling. Trevard's style provides students opportunities to perform as novices and experts within a community where authority, as well as knowledge, is socially constructed.

**Limitations Associated with the Study**

My limited experience with methods of ethnographic research must be acknowledged as a limitation associated with the study reported and discussed in this dissertation. In attempting to "find [my] feet" as Geertz (1973) describes the work of "conversing with other members of the study in order to enlarge the universe of human discourse" (pp. 13-14), I have been selective and self-critical about the issues to address and the participants to foreground. My interests resulted in changes in the way Trevard handled the mapping part of his teaching, and these changes may have significantly altered the way Trevard would have employed them otherwise over the course of the semester. In many ways, my interest in the visual power of the mapping may
have compromised the ephemeral nature of the sketching process.

Another aspect of the study which may be problematic is my reading of Anna and Noelle's criticism of Trevard's teaching style. What I hoped to accomplish by featuring their criticism, and by setting it within the context of other students' readings of the class, was to foreground the kinds of tensions these conflicts produced for some members of the class. Though such exploration may serve to highlight these particular incidents, it may also conceal the degree to which these incidents were actually infrequent when considered in terms of the number of interactions which occurred on a daily and weekly basis. That so few of the students felt compromised by the behavior of other students is itself important to a reading of Trevard's style; but what I hoped to strike by featuring the interactions among these two gendered sets of students was a kind of balance between the strengths and weaknesses of his style in terms of the report itself.

The amount of data produced by this study contributed to its own kinds of limitations and problems. Though I have employed triangulation methods in interpreting and reporting the findings of the study, a full review by a peer has been impossible. Rather, ongoing conversations occurred during the course of the study and over the course
of the writing. I have realized through these conversations that other researchers may have foregrounded different aspects of Trevard's style and the class's interactions. Yet, in spite of the limitations associated with this research, I believe the dissertation may contribute something of value to the discourse about learning, particularly as these may be associated with issues in literary studies. In Chapter Five, connections among the autobiographical writing, the report of the study, and issues of reform in educational practice will be drawn.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Though the institutional history of academic literary studies indicates the field has successfully, and successively avoided coming to terms with the implications of some of the reform issues which have arisen during the last century, recent developments suggest that the latest round of issues may be approached differently (Graff, 1987). Part of the reason for this may be the kind of attention the notion of paradigm shifts has commanded as we near the end of the twentieth century, (with its modernist aspects), and the enthusiasm which has attended the notion of a post-modern paradigm (Doll, in press).

One of the changes represented by such visions is the shift from an emphasis on products of knowledge to the process of constructing knowledge socially, which I discussed in the literature review. This shift embodies a great many implications for the reform of curriculum. At the heart of these is the recognition that learning is not only a process, it is a process which functions as an open system.

The curriculum theorist William Doll is one of the few theorists who has attempted to articulate a post-modern vision of education, a vision which considers the
implications of a paradigm shift for curriculum design. I will consider his vision briefly, believing that one of the purposes for pursuing educational research is to participate in the design of more effective educational practice. Both the theorist and the practitioner have a share in this responsibility.

As a preliminary to offering a summary of Doll's post-modern educational vision, let me restate a traditional view of learning referred to by Newman et al. (1989), as “Gagne’s notion of the learning hierarchy.”

This is a sequence of tasks in which the transfer of training from one task to the next is maximized. For each learner the optimal sequence may be different and for any learner there may be several best sequences. Nevertheless, such sequences have important general characteristics. First, the tasks are ordered from simple or easy to complex or difficult. Second, early tasks make use of skills that are components of later tasks. Third, the learner typically masters each task before moving onto the next. This conception has little to say about teacher-[student] interaction since its premise is that tasks can be sufficiently broken down into component parts that any single step in the sequence can be achieved with a minimum of instruction. (p. 153)

In the overall structure of the field of literary studies, just as it has with other fields, this view has shaped the design of the curriculum. It is assumed
generally, that at the upper division of university courses the students have progressed through all the stages of literary analysis and composition studies that are prerequisite to the kinds of tasks to be performed at this level. The evaluation forms from Trevard's students over a period of seven years, however, suggest that in his classes students learned to think in a different way, and that many of them felt they had finally learned how to read and write with confidence. These reports offer serious challenge to the myth of sequencing skill components.

Doll's vision of education takes into consideration the fallacy of the learning hierarchy theory. By framing learning as an open system, Doll acknowledges that open systems function under certain conditions according to the principle of self-organization. It is change, not stability without change, which defines an open system. Open systems need disruptions. They need to be perturbed, in order to remain open, and in order to re-organize themselves around emergent transformations. These characteristics describe the nonsynchronous relations associated with the middle ground.

In terms of curriculum design, "In a frame which recognizes self-organization and transformation, goals, plans, [and] purposes do not arise purely prior to but also come from within action" (Doll, in press, Chapter Seven, p.
In his view of action, Doll draws upon the work of John Dewey, for whom action also implied reflection on that action. In the context of the zone of proximal development, action and reflection are amplified by the interactions among the members of the community. What is transformed is the student's prior system of organization of knowledge. What emerges is the self-organization continuous with, but not identical to the structures organized socially within the zone of interactions.

To this end, Doll argues, the three R's, so influential in the notions of curriculum development which shaped a century of schooling, need to be reconsidered. He explains:

The Three R's of "Readin', 'Ritin', and 'Rithmetic" were late nineteenth and early twentieth century creations, geared to the needs of a developing industrial society. Reading was the functional reading of sales slips and bills of lading combined with the inspirational stories of Horatio Alger and the moral aphorisms of McGuffey. Writing was literally penmanship with the Palmer method introducing a ledger-oriented style in the first grade. Such cursive training had to begin early, for by the fifth grade half of those who had entered as first graders had left. Arithmetic, not mathematics, was essentially column addition and subtraction with algorithmic multiplication and division coming in the later elementary years. Again the emphasis was on store clerk functionalism, keeping the sales slips and ledgers accurate and neat. (Chapter Seven, pp. 27-28)
An approach to curriculum in a post-modern, post-industrial age, Doll argues, ought to be fashioned in terms of the significant elements associated with communities of learners viewed as open systems. In summary, these elements would include: the practical, the local experiences associated with learning communities; the principle of self-organization, which thrives on the kinds of disturbances represented by multiple perspectives and changing conditions; the role of authority, which is constituted by the interpretive process associated with participatory dialogue; the narrative mode, which employs interpretation, rather than memorization; the goals, plans, and purposes which emerge in the process of exploring and making meaning; and an approach to evaluation as a negotiatory process within a communal setting for the purpose of transformation.

A good curriculum, fashioned according to these criteria, would then be characterized, not by the three R's of 'Readin', 'Ritin', and 'Rithmetic', but by the four R's of Richness, Recursion, Relations, and Rigor. Doll says:

Richness refers to a curriculum's depth, to its layers of meaning, to its multiple possibilities or interpretations.

Recursion refers to the way one produces a sense of self, through reflective interaction with the environment, with others, with a culture.

Relations focuses on a developing network, a community.

Rigor combines the latent power of
indeterminacy with the hermeneutics of interpretation. (Chapter Seven, pp. 31-46)

Trevard’s style of teaching, as reported in this dissertation, serves as an illustration of Doll’s post-modern vision of a good curriculum. Considered together, they support an observation that issues of curriculum change at the end of the twentieth century have transcended disciplinary boundaries. The kinds of reform issues which have emerged in literary studies are the same in many ways as those which have emerged from the field of curriculum theory in general. Sharing this period of history with other students and teachers, I too have experienced the limitations associated with the traditional approaches to educational practice, particularly those associated with literary studies. As an experienced teacher at several levels, I have shared also in the struggle to construct the possibility of other visions of education, and other worlds of interpretation. This struggle has never been simply professional or personal. It represents the autobiographical relations associated with the middle ground.

As a student of this research, a research project designed to explore a particular teacher’s style of teaching, I, like many of his students, have learned to read, to write, and to think differently, and in some ways for the first time. It became clear to me that the experience of learning
in a community where interactions are constrained and their importance is denied, which describes much of my formal educational experience, is culturally different from learning in a community where social interactions are understood as constitutive of the process of constructing meaning. In many ways, these different approaches constitute different cultures of learning, and my experience, as a result of this project, has been to cross back and forth between the two. In future writing I hope to explore more closely the kinds of negotiations which make up the embodied experience of the border crossers (Hicks, 1991) a terrain both psychological and material in nature, which I have tentatively called the middle ground. If curriculum reforms are entertaining the kind of paradigm (perhaps megaparadigm) shift which some have foreseen, the terrain of the middle ground may well become a construction zone where educational passages are negotiated. The following poem by Audre Lorde (1990) illustrates the difficulties associated with thinking in new ways.

The Art of Response
by
Audre Lorde

The first answer was incorrect
the second was
sorry the third trimmed its toenails
on the Vatican steps
the fourth went mad
the fifth
nursed a grudge until it bore twins
that drank poisoned grape juice in Jonestown
the sixth wrote a book about it
the seventh
argued a case before the Supreme Court
against taxation on Girl Scout Cookies
the eighth held a news conference
while four Black babies
and one other picketed New York City
for a hospital bed to die in
the ninth and tenth swore
Revenge on the Opposition
and the eleventh dug their graves
next to Eternal Truth
the twelfth
processed funds from a Third World country
that provides doctors for Central Harlem
the thirteenth
refused
the fourteenth sold cocaine and shamrocks
near a toilet in the Big Apple circus
the fifteenth
changed the question.
(p. 2459)

For now, the teaching style of Ben Trevard and the
educational vision of William Doll may serve us well if we
hope to build communities where students and teachers may
re-think their readings and their writing in any field, not
just in the field of literary studies.
REFERENCES


My question is: Is the assumption Cora makes about the Bundren family not caring whether Addie Bundren die [sic] a true assumption? Why or why not?

I don't think that this assumption is true. At least not true for the entire family. Vardaman was hurt by his mother's death and confused about why it happened. He thought that Dr. Peabody had caused her death but his mother was ill long before the Dr. could do any good for her. Dewey Dell was there with her mother until the end of her life. Dewey expressed that she didn't know how to react to Addie's death. She admits that "I don't know whether I can cry or not. I don't know whether I have tried to or not." (p. 58)

The assumption about Jewel and Cash not caring about Addie's death seems to be true. I'm sure [crossed out and "Maybe" inserted] they feel sorry (some sadness) for her but they seem to not care. Jewel, who was petted and favored by his mother according to Cora, continues to be his mean, money-hungry self; and he doesn't exhibit any feelings of sorrow about the situation of his mother. Cash is building his mother's burial casket, and this is all that seems to
believe he would. Jewel and Cash act as if they know that death is a part of life which has to be accepted when it happens, so they intend to continue with their lives within being remorseful.

Anse Bundren is a cold, uncaring old man who doesn't care about his wife's death; this is what Cora believes and would have others to believe. Anse feels that his wife would want him to go on with his life and not feel sad and depressed because of her death. In his own work he feels "she would not begrudge me it" if he doesn't allow her death to depress him. Cora believes that Darl is the only one who really loved his mother. Darl felt his mother would die before he came back from the job he had to do in town; therefore he stood at the doorway of her bedroom to take a long look at her before she passed on. He wanted to say something, but he could not bring himself to speak. Cora believes that "between Addie and Darl that the true understanding and the true love was" (p. 22).

Cora is partially right about the Bundren family. Jewel and Cash don't care about Addie's death; they are too caught up in being themselves to care for her. Jewel and Vardaman feel hurt that their grief isn't shown as openly as some one like Cora would like to see it. Anse's reactions seem to be the same toward her in death as it was when she was living. Of the entire family, Darl shows openly that his
mother's death affected (saddened) him, and this is why Cora believes he truly loved her.

Why does Addie Bundren want to be buried where her original family is buried?
This mapping was sketched as Neva read her QHQ (see Appendix C) about the endings of the novels *Quicksand* and *As I Lay Dying*. Neva's followup questions addressed the issue of whether Faulkner had set up any character to be reliable.
APPENDIX C
THREE STUDENTS' QHQ'S

Neva's QHQ

Some critics say that in the novel, *Quicksand*, Larsen does not supply the reader with a satisfactory ending. Helga is a strong-willed, intelligent character who displays a self-sufficient air. Some feel that it is out of character for Helga to marry a man like the Reverend Mr. Pleasant Green whom she allows to take control of her life. She even allows him to make such decisions as when a thanksgiving service for her recovery is to be held—even though she is not recovered. It seems that Larsen forces Helga to be a strong character then writes her off as a weak woman [sic] in the end looking for the stability of a husband and children.

Does the same thing occur as Faulkner ends *As I Lay Dying*? Does the ending fit in with the characters? After finishing the novel, I am satisfied with the outcome of some characters, but not of others. I feel that it is true to Anse's character to end up with his teeth and a wife even though he takes Dewey Dell's abortion money to get them. On earlier occasion [sic], we hear Anse expressing the desire and resolution to get new teeth, as well as a new wife. It is not a surprise that he ends up the way he does because I see him as a selfish character. His trip to
Jefferson contains motives outside of simply burying Addie. This is seen when he refuses to buy the spades at a Hardware store, but insists on borrowing them from the house where the music is playing. It seems that Cash finds Anse somewhat apprehensive about facing the family with his new teeth and wife. Anse is proud of them, but Cash says he looks like he's doing something "he knows ma ain't going to like" (p. 241).

If Anse's outcome fits his character, I feel that Darl's does not. Throughout the trip, Darl is seen as an extraordinary character who sees inside of people. According to Cora, he is the only one who truly loves Addie. It seems out of character for Darl to go crazy and set Gillespie's barn on fire [sic]. Darl possesses some sort of wisdom that the others do not. He is not characterized as crazy until after he knows he is being sent to Jackson. His last chapter reveals this because he speaks about himself using his name and laughs at the situations around him for apparently no reason. Like the end of Helga's life, I find Darl's last chapter is not true to character.

Going on this evidence, what is the reader to make of Faulkner's ending or does the novel set the reader up for any expectations at all?
To this QHQ Trevard had responded in writing:
Very good question, [Neva], and a good beginning on an
answer. I wish you'd suggested your hypotheses about Anse
and Darl more briefly and gotten on to your follow-up-
question.

Paula's QHQ
Q. In *As I Lay Dying* why does Addie have such a problem
with words? Why do words have no real specific meaning
for her?
H. Addie might have a problem associating real meanings
with words because of her sense of loneliness. She feels
alienated from her family and can't seem to communicate
with anyone. As a result nothing seems to have any meaning
in her life and words do not convey any real emotions for
her. In Addie's first statement we hear about her
alienation. When school let out in the afternoon, instead of
going home, she went to the spring where she could be alone
and she could hate the other children. We also hear that all
her kin in Jefferson are dead. When Addie marries Anse and
has children her "aloneness [is] violated" (p. 158). Even
though she now has a husband and family. She still feels
alone because they make her feel that way. She talks about
her children's secret and selfish lives and the only way she
can communicate with them is not with words, but with
whippings. With each blow of the switch she makes them aware of her and is then something in their secret and selfish lives. She comments that the only way she can attempt to feel any kinship is to mark their blood with hers.

When Addie had Cash she learned that words were no good. They only formed a shape for something that people lacked. She says that the words "motherhood, fear, and pride" were invented by people to help them understand something they had not experienced. The word "love" that Anse used was to Addie like other words- "just a shape to fill a lack" (p. 158). Addie even thinks of Anse as dead and when she thinks about his name she "see(s) the word as a shape, a vessel" in which she "would watch him liquify and flow into it like cold molasses" (p. 159). She also thought of "Dari" and "Cash" this way "until their names would die and solidify into a shape and then fade away" (p. 159). It wouldn't matter what she called them. For Addie, there seems to be an extreme sense of "lack" in all the relationships.

Cora is always trying to get Addie to pray and repent, but to Addie sin is just a word with a vague shape, so obviously salvation is also just a word that will have no meaning for her. Because of her loneliness, life itself doesn't seem to have any meaning for Addie. Addie seems ready to die as she recalls the words of her father: "the
reason for living was to get ready to stay dead a long time"
(p. 155).
Q. Why does Addie go out of her way for Jewel when he does
nothing for her in return? Why does Cora call Jewel Addie's
punishment while Addie thinks he will be her salvation?

Trevard's written response: From what you've said I'd guess
she has communicated with Jewel in the only way that has
any meaning for her. "Normal" relations don't count?

Holly's QHQ
Does Eva's husband really love and care for her?
He realizes his love for her and wants to do for her
when it is too late; when she is on her death bed.
At first, he seems cold and selfish, because he wants
to sell the house and move to the Haven, a retirement home.
He doesn't care that she wants to stay home and he
consistently reminds, campaigns, and sells the idea of going
to the Haven. Eva was sick of being forced to move to the
rhythms of others. She is tired of doing what other people
want and for other people. It is time she started going for
herself. She wanted to stay home and she was not going to
give in to her husband.
He would tell Eva he was going to sell the house, whether she wanted to or not. He would say that he could not live as they do now any longer. Thus, the reader may conclude that he does not care for Eva.

Eva became physically ill and had to have gallbladder surgery. At this point in the story, his care for Eva is now exposed. He experiences pain and hurt when he finds out about her surgery. Yet, he still thinks: "The money where will come the money?" Because he insist [sic] upon traveling to see the children, he still seems to do as he sees fit for everyone else but her. Letting his own fears for the future decide, he disregards her desire to stay at home.

When they were staying with their daughter-in-law, Jeanie, he went out every other afternoon and evening to socialize and play cards. Now she became more ill and he stoped [sic] going out altogether. He began to desire her death not for himself and the money, but for her. He surprisingly wept for her pain. He started holding her hand and showing his love for her. At the brink of her death, he called her by her real name. This showed not only his love for her but his respect for her. He embraced her and wanted her pain to stop. I think these little things showed that he loved her very much, but he never knew how to show it. He didn't know his love for her mattered.
This brings me to another question: Why does he call her names, such as: Mrs. Word Miser, Mrs. Unpleasant, Mrs. Inahurry, Mrs. Bodybusy, Mrs. Miserable, etc. and what is the significance of it?

I think the name calling is very significant, because it shows the change in him. At the end, he calls her Eva and that is a big difference between the names he used. He realized what she meant to him. He respects her and loves her. Although, throughout the novel he calls her names, I think he does it because he doesn’t know how to communicate with her. He is blind to his love for her and he takes that love for granted.

Trevard's response: Great reading, [Holly]. Why does he have this problem?
APPENDIX D

NANCY'S SUMMARY

QHQ’s: 1. Why do the characters blame themselves?
2. Why does Okada devote a chapter to Kenji as opposed to a no-no-boy?
3. Compare/contrast Kenji and Ichiro.
4. Ideas of racism and bigotry

[Thomas] began with the question of why the characters blame themselves . . . and why some blame their fathers, their mothers, Japan, technology, but never the government. Do they feel that by doing this they are showing their desire to be American, are asserting their rights, and are showing their will to remain American?

Perhaps the answer lies in the ideals with which the first-generation Japanese, the Isie, came to America and found themselves unexpectedly faced with a moral dilemma. Perhaps it lies in cultural or historical reasons, because unlike the Afro-Americans, they came out of their own free-will. And they came with the "immigrant myth,"—that if you came to the "land of opportunity" and worked hard you would be successful. This belief evoked a spirit of self-motivation in the Isei. The came to America to make a lot of money so they could return to Japan and live well. That is, they would "use" America. The problem came when this plan backfired. And another surprise was that their
children, the Nisei, had different goals. They were here to stay, to become Americanized, and to hold to their birthrights as Americans.

[Keat] brought up the question of why Okada devotes a chapter to Kenji as opposed to a no-no-boy. We compared the differences of the sweet, well-blended whiskey that Mr. Yamada drank. Mr. Kanno sipped his whiskey and enjoyed it. Mr. Yamada gulped his and it burned as it went down. For both it seems that whiskey was prominent in their lives as a symbol of pain. Mr. Kanno was losing a son, and Mr. Yamada's wife was insane.

Also, part of the sweetness behind Kenji's father's whiskey is that his family had let go of the war and now accepted the American way of life. But Mr. Yamada's whiskey was bitter, perhaps because they still held on to their Japanese ways after 40 years in America. The Yamada's also were still dwelling on the war and separated themselves by not even associating with Japanese families who either accepted the draft or accepted the American way of life.

Ironically though, Kenji "slams down" his father's well-blended whiskey, maybe signifying that for him, it was still bad. But as bad as it was, Kenji still would not have traded places with Ichiro. Ichiro's bad was much worse than Kenji's bad.
Perhaps the chapter on Kenji was also showing the effect he had on Ichiro. He influenced him to go back to Seattle to face his problems. Ichiro turned down Mr. Carrick's offer in Portland as well as Emi's offer to live in the country. He was going back to the city, to face his parents and the abuse or criticism of others that awaited him.

[Kris] then brought up the comparison/contrast between Ichiro and Kenji, and the question 'Why does Kenji die?'

Ichiro's parents hold to their Japanese roots only, but Kenji's parents hold to Japanese and American. Ichiro is insecure, but Kenji is very secure. Ichiro turns down the draft, is unsure of his decision, and might not choose this again. Kenji joins, is happy with his decision, and would choose this again. Ichiro has regrets where Kenji does not.

Then why does Kenji die?

This shows an even gloomier side of Ichiro's life, because knowing that he was dying, Kenji still wouldn't trade places with him. Also, Kenji was the first person to understand Ichiro. He's dying so he gives Ichiro Emi to soothe his pain. Emi shows Ichiro acceptance and a new sense of hope. But Emi has an idealistic image of life, which is easy for a woman who has never had to make decisions like Ichiro and Kenji have, and who lives in the
country, isolated from the wrongs of society. But Emi has
dealt with a lot of suffering in own life so that she can be a
positive influence for Ichiro.

Also, Emi does blame the country and government for a
lot of the problems of the Japanese, but also, she does
remain patriotic . . . perhaps because of the happiness and
opportunity she found here.

She [Anna] brought out the ideas of racism and bigotry
which were so apparent throughout the novel. Kenji had
hoped for the unattainable ideal when he wanted a country
with no race, bigotry, prejudice, etc. Yet this ideal seemed
to be that by which Emi and Mr. Carrick lived. But Ichiro
knew this wasn't realistic. Kenji also believed that each
(race) could (should) have sympathy for the other without
condescension. And he believed there must be an "inside,"
or all-American, which we (or they) should be working
towards. Ichiro, on the other hand, said there was no
"inside" or all-American because each of us has something
to deal with. But Ichiro also felt that despite all of this,
Kenji "had it made," he even died for America, so no one
could say he wasn't American. But what a price to pay!!
Kenji's death, then, could symbolize the death of this ideal.
His belief that we all need to assimilate to the inside, as
well as the notions of an America w/out race and bigotry.
For this country with no differences among people would
reduce to just men and women . . . and then could be further reduced to just men. . . and finally we simply be "the great amoeba in the sky"!!
APPENDIX E

RANDY'S QHQ

As both Paul D. and Beloved are new members of the household, why is it that Denver has taken more strongly to Beloved than she has to Paul D.?

First there is the initial bonding. When Paul came upon the house it was Sethe who first saw him and introduced him into the household. Denver and Paul D. came upon Beloved at the same time after the carnival, but Denver's was the quickest reaction giving water to Beloved.

This "tending" created a form of doctor/patient relationship between Denver and Beloved and gave Denver a caring outlet which could be all her own. There had been a one to one relationship with her mother before Paul's arrival but that had changed. Beloved was a relief from the loneliness Denver had fallen into.

She seemingly made her choice overtly when she sided with Beloved over Paul as to whether or not Beloved was strong enough to get around, picking up the rocking chair.

Denver does not like the stories her mother tells which do not concern herself. They seemed to describe a "gleaming powerful world made more so by Denver's absence from it. Not being in it, she hated it and wanted Beloved to hate it too."
But it was Beloved who delighted in asking about these stories, confounding somewhat Denver's planned partnership. This leaves the final hierarchy of relationships between Denver, Beloved, Sethe, and Paul D wide open and my final question concerns where they may close.
VITA

Since entering the teaching profession in 1972, with a B. A. in Humanities from Bellarmine College, in Louisville, Kentucky, Mary Ann Doyle has taught at the primary, middle school, and high school levels, and at Louisiana State University in the College of Education. This educational experience has been rewarding and the source of great unrest. Both the Master's degree (University of Louisville, KY, 1974) and the doctoral work (Ph. D. Curriculum Theory, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, December, 1992) have been pursued in an attempt to address some of the dilemmas facing public education in the U. S. At this time Dr. Doyle plans to continue working in the area of teacher education at the university level, focusing on issues of curriculum theory. This approach to curriculum represents the most promising possibilities for developing models of a "good curriculum," as the curriculum theoriest William Doll would say.

Dr. Doyle intends to remain an active researcher and teacher, having presented at the Bergamo Conference for Curriculum Theorizing (October, 1990 & 1991), the National Council for Teachers of English (Baltimore, 1989), the LSU/Texas A & M Conference on Languages and Literature
(February, 1991), and regional conferences around the country. *The Australian Journal of Education* has accepted for publication an essay book review, co-authored with Cameron McCarthy.

Dr. Doyle has joined the faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Stout as a senior lecturer, effective Fall 1992. This move represents a significant geographical as well as a professional change, but it is one which promises to be challenging. An area of research interest which will receive further attention is the notion of the middle ground, an experiential and material terrain within which people negotiate the boundaries of different cultures, such as national and international borders, and boundaries which are more subtle, such as those associated with educational practices. Many of the boundaries to be considered within this research are often presented as gender, race, and class neutral, when they are not.
DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Mary Ann Doyle

Major Field: Education

Title of Dissertation: Re-Thinking Readings and Writing in the Study of Literature

Approved:

[Signature]
Major Professor and Chairman

[Signature]
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination:

May 14, 1992