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TEACHING FRENCH POETRY IN THE AMERICAN SECONDARY SCHOOL.

The Ohio State University, Ph.D., 1969
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TEACHING FRENCH POETRY IN THE
AMERICAN SECONDARY SCHOOL

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School
of The Ohio State University

By

B. June Gilliam, Ph.B., M.A.

* * * * * * *

The Ohio State University

1969

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A list of all of the individuals whose encouragement, enthusiasm for learning and example of energetic scholarship have influenced the writer would be impossible to include in this restricted space. Such a list is both too impersonal and too inadequate a witness of the writer's indebtedness. The memory of Dr. Emile de Sauzé permeates the entire study as it has the career of its writer. The warmth and erudition of Dr. Henri Peyre rekindled a smoldering interest in literature. The professional promotion given by Dr. David Dougherty and the encouragement and opportunity for experimentation given by the writer's major adviser, Dr. Edward D. Allen, cannot be sufficiently acknowledged by so brief a mention. Insights into the nature and possibilities of the ideal teacher education are due to Professor Lennard O. Andrews. The insights into creative teaching are the result of conferences with Professor Ross Mooney. Professor Frank Zidonis guided the graphic presentation of the theory. Each of the teachers of the major and minor fields has added a dimension to the study that would not otherwise have existed.

Finally, to thousands of former students and to all of the anonymous teacher-participants in six NDEA institutes this must stand in lieu of individual tributes.
VITA

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Studies in Linguistics. Professor Charles Fillmore

Major field: French Literature of the XIXth and XXth centuries. Professors Charles Carlut and Pierre Astier

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   Experiencing the Unexpected: "Le message"
   Linguistic Exploitation of Poetry: Dangers and Benefits
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   Poetry and Painting: Nature Morte
   Poetry and Painting: A Long-Term View
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   The Sonnet: "Le Dormeur du Val"
   Poetry of Violence and Aggression: Henri Michaux
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CHAPTER I

TEACHING FRENCH POETRY:

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The title of this study states the fundamental limitation to which it is addressed. The term teaching is primary in the order of importance and is understood to include the objectives of the modern foreign language program for the American secondary schools as enunciated by thoughtful leaders in the field since the watershed years of the 1950's. The unresolved problems of the selection of basic materials for foreign language study, sequence and articulation in language programs, the preparation of teachers and of teacher-educators, are continuing concerns of the profession and cast their long shadow over such a study as this. They constitute complete fields of research in themselves.

Four strands enter into the fabric of the study. The first is the writer's experience in the classrooms of a single city system where the existence of a strong pioneer program of FLES has supported a six-year program at the secondary school level. The writer admits that such a unique experience does not constitute generalizable justification for programs throughout the country. The second strand is made up of the writer's experience as a participant and later as instructor of
Methodology in seven NDEA institutes in the United States and in France. The limited experience of an individual teacher was thus broadened by contact with more than 450 secondary school teachers of French from most of the fifty states. The third and most significant strand has been the encouragement of a teacher-educator and director of institutes who urged experimentation and analysis as the writer pursued courses in foreign language education and specifically engaged in instruction in methodology and supervision of student teachers. Finally, the normal procedure of research into the relevant literature revealed the lack of a framework for teachers who might wish to teach poetry.

This study is, therefore, a reflection of the opportunities and experiences of an individual multiplied by the interests and concerns of hundreds of similar individuals. It is an attempt to isolate from all of the other pertinent problems of methodology the question of the creative teaching of French poetry and its place in the program of French linguistic and cultural studies.

The need for such a study rests on the statements of active classroom teachers. Isolated articles, even the excellent descriptions of classroom practice from *Le Français dans le monde* seemed to raise more questions than were answered. Unsolicited communications from many teachers subsequent to their institute experience contained plans for the presentation of poems, poems written in French by their pupils, student reactions to poems taught, and many questions there had not been time to consider within the limits of a summer institute. Very graphic evidence of the interest and enthusiasm of teachers was the decision of a participant in the University of Oregon Institute at Tours
in 1965 to write her Master's essay on the work of Jacques Prevert following the introduction to this poet during the institute.¹

Obviously the justification for a study cannot rest on current interest alone, however widespread that interest may be. The review of the literature of the past decade has shown that, while the teaching of the English language according to new linguistic concepts has also been undergoing a renaissance, a great deal of emphasis has at the same time been placed on revitalizing the teaching of English literature, including poetry. The English Journal of 1965 contains sixteen articles on the subject, the volume 1966 shows twenty-six such articles, and that of 1967 reports fourteen articles on teaching poetry. The comparable journals for the teacher of French show an almost total lack of articles of pedagogical interest. It is perhaps because of our great need to move ahead in the listening-speaking area of the fundamental skills that we in foreign languages are a step behind our colleagues in English. We have had to convince teachers-in-service of the efficacy of the new objectives and techniques, to perform miracles of change at the college level, and to absorb the impact of the electronic theories and technology which hit so suddenly. Whatever the reasons, the journals, the textbooks of methodology, and the researchers into classroom practice have had little to say on the subject of teaching literature in the secondary schools with the notable exception of positions taken by the powerful Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages since 1954.

Professor Jeanne Varney Pleasants of Columbia University has for some years chaired a section of the Modern Language Association's
annual meeting with a primary focus on teaching literature at the college level. Originally titled "The Language Laboratory and the Teaching of Literature" the newsletter has recently been renamed "Teaching Language Through Literature" and contains valuable reviews of books and recordings as well as descriptions of lessons.

If, however, we accept the definition of research in modern foreign languages as stated by John B. Carroll in the 1966 Reports of the Northeast Conference we must eliminate all informal reports in the journals. Professor Carroll, who has a noteworthy record of research, gives the following hard-line definition:

... certain kinds of empirical studies concerned either with the development of measurement procedures, with the actual measurement and description of the results of instructional programs, with the examination of hypotheses concerning the optimally efficient and effective instructional procedures to be used, or with the psychological investigation of variables and processes in foreign language learning. ... I rule out purely speculative writings, as well as informal reports that do nothing more than recount impressions about the effectiveness of classroom practices. The criterion for inclusion is that the study must have a semblance of empirical rigor or valid experimental design so that results can be interpreted without undue ambiguity.

The stringency of the requirements outlines for the would-be researcher a very limited area of prepared ground. He will find no completed research in the lists of the National Defense Language Development Program and only one completed project in the Annotated International Bibliography of Research on Language Teaching (1945-64) edited by Howard Lee Nostrand and others. This project was conducted by a team from the University of Washington pursuant to Contract No. OE-4-14-010 with the United States Office of Education and completed in seven months during 1964.
Because of the imaginative design of the project and the writer's first-hand acquaintance with it there will be a brief summary description of it at this point.

Under the direction of Dr. Nostrand, Chairman of the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at the University of Washington, a team of five researchers undertook in 1963 to produce a Filmed Recital of French Poetry performed by Pierre Viala, an internationally known French actor and interpreter of poetry. The problems to be answered by the use of the filmed recital were stated in the Introduction to the Purpose and Procedure of the project:

Specifically three questions pressed for answers to be sought at each age level, from the primary grades to college:

I. Can such a film be used to teach the language, with its characteristic rhythms, intonations and facial expressions?

II. Can it arouse an expectation of enjoying poetry, and contribute to a life of literature?

III. Can such a film be used, finally, to give insights into the cultural and social context of a foreign language and literature, provided the teacher is assisted in formulating the aspects of the people's way of life that are exemplified in the recitations?

In a research design aimed at providing analyzable data as defined by Professor Carroll the quoted statements would be in the form of hypotheses. The project simply stated them as purposes.

The first of four projected steps was "to produce a film whose technical and artistic excellence would obviate the unwanted variables of any detrimental influences from these sources." This step was considered completed by the filming of the recitations in a private studio in Seattle on July 19, 1963. The writer agrees with the
project members and most of the correspondents that the quality of the color film and the performance of the poems are admirable responses to the original conception. The fifteen selections chosen by Mr. Viala and Dr. Nostrand from the extensive repertory of the actor covered a wide range of the centuries, length of text, styles, difficulty of access and genre since two prose selections were included.

The second step was the circulating of the completed film to "a few specialists in French culture, in kinesics and paralanguage, and in language teaching, in order to collect their ideas." The comments were included in the Cultural Commentary which was prepared to accompany the films upon distribution to "experimenters" or teachers at various levels from elementary school to college. The preparation of the Cultural Commentary was considered step three.

Step four following upon the publication of the text to accompany the materials was curtailed by the availability of prints of the films for lending and by the decision to make some prints available to NDEA institutes for use in courses in professional preparation.

Step five, called Evaluation, was the publication of reactions obtained by experimenters. Both the Cultural Commentary and the Evaluation are available from the project director.

Reports of the use of the films at various levels cannot be considered truly adequate evaluation of the project. They are in the nature of casual one-shot attempts to show the films and obtain a reaction from the viewers. Nonetheless the project has real value as the groundwork for actual classroom testing of one type of audio-visual aid to the teaching of literature. The quite excellent Cultural Commentary
includes a fine chapter on versification. The performance of Mr. Viala and the visual quality of the films are excellent models for future projects. The writer of this study feels that such a project would be extremely useful where teachers had already begun to teach poetry by more conventional methods. The added complications of kinesics and paralinguistic elements are far beyond students and teachers with whom I used the film in Methods courses. These problems require study in a different context. The directors of the project are themselves aware of the handicap of haste and indicate their reservations in the Evaluation. Recommendations that the individual poems be made available in loop or cartridge form seem valid. As the films were produced the teacher would have more poems on a single reel than would ever be studied at one time. The repetition of the filmed poems for the students would be far more likely if individual poems were available.

When one considers the work involved in the production of such materials as have been described, it is not surprising that more projects of the type have not been attempted.

In passing it may be noted that it is no coincidence that some of the poems used in the Film Recital have also been used in this study. The writer possesses tapes of poetry recitals done by Mr. Viala on visits to Cleveland and has been privileged to use them in her classes for many years.

A primary problem for the researcher in the teaching of literature is the lack of consensus around the four areas of placement, selection, methodology and evaluation. There is also a fundamental disunity concerning the very definition of literature. The first four
years of the Northeast Conference devoted time to the discussion of literature in the classroom. Not again until 1963 does the subject appear as a separate report in the article "Reading for Meaning" of George Scherer. Again in 1967 the conference took as its theme the subject of reading and literature. It is in the work of the 1967 Committee that one finds the Key Propositions on the Teaching of Reading and the Times and Places for Literature that constitute the most valuable statements of professional position presently available.

The wide dissemination of this 1967 Report and its discussion at meetings throughout the country would be a wise move in the direction of discovering the present attitudes and practices of teachers. Before attitudes and practices can be changed we must know what they are. We have seen in other areas of curriculum reform that the reverse procedure has not been highly successful.

An example of the probable lack of wide consensus is the writer's own reactions to the eleven Key Propositions mentioned. Either because of ambiguity in the statement which is not corrected by reading the entire report, or because of genuine reservations about the implications, the writer can only agree fully with Numbers 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, and 11:

KEY PROPOSITIONS

1. True literary values are by definition found only in belles-lettres.

2. There can be no study of a foreign literature worthy of the name without a solid foundation in the FL.

3. If a command of the FL (in the case of the MFLS, this entails both oral and written skills) is not achieved, the study of a foreign literature becomes trivial, un.rewarding, and devoid of humanistic content.
4. If literature is not to be taught as literature, then why bother with it at all?

5. "Literature" is far from being the only way to teach language in the elementary stage; furthermore, it is probably the least efficient way of teaching the fundamental skills.

6. Exception must be taken to Wellek's and Warren's limitation "imaginative"; both traditionally and in current practice Classical literature has included not only poetry and the drama but also history, oratory, the essay, and some philosophy.

7. We should not demand of our students a degree of explicitness in definition and linguistic analysis that exceeds what they ever do in their English classes.

8. Acquaintance, that is, a casual but still pleasing experience, is a valuable and defensible part of the FL curriculum which precedes liberated reading.

9. There is nothing wrong with an emphasis on feeling, so long as it does not lead to an imbalance; but it is essential to stress the intelligibility of literary works as well as their power to convey emotionally charged views of things, people, and actions.

10. Whether the educational objective for presenting a literary work is "acquaintance" or "assimilation" a teacher must 1) understand why he has chosen this work to present at this point in the FL curriculum and 2) know in what context he and his students want to confront this piece of literature.

11. We cannot avoid at any level making commitments to principles and assuming the responsibilities involved in coherent, informed discourse. We cannot do everything at once; we must choose our context; and as it varies, so will the relevant aspect of the text.

Despite some reservations about the statements cited the writer finds the Northeast Conference Reports accurate in their restatement of the objectives in behavioral terms, the definition of levels, the proposals for articulation and longer sequences, the selection and preparation of foreign language teachers.
Recommendations for longer sequences echo back through the years to the reports of the "Committee of Ten" in 1893 and the "Committee of Twelve" in 1899. Longer sequences may become a matter of actuality without solving the problem of what the student transports from one level to the next as useful tools. This continues to be a legitimate subject of dialogue however vexatious or repetitious. The position of the present study is an optimistic one. It does not anticipate a reversal of interest in foreign language study nor a wide return swing of the pendulum to a single emphasis on reading and translation.

Much of the redefinition of objectives, levels and appropriate materials is due to the now classic work of Dr. Nelson Brooks who in his Language and Language Learning confirmed the "new-key" emphasis on the spoken language and the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Dr. Emile B. de Sauze had earlier combined them in his Multiple Approach and they have since been called the fundamental skills but under whatever label they remain the foundation stones of modern foreign language instruction. The profession also is indebted to Nelson Brooks for a restatement and new concept of culture in the modern foreign language program. It is Dr. Brooks who questioned the use of years of language study as the appropriate measure of achievement. The profession has since come to speak of levels with great unanimity although in practice many schools continue to identify the learner as a first, second or third year student. Levels will be used in the study to indicate plateaus of performance and years to identify the point of contact with a specific class.

Other scholars, among them Dr. Wilga Rivers, have questioned the
apparently exclusive emphasis on stimulus-response theories of learning as the basis for modern foreign language methodology. The continuing dialogue, not all of it well-considered, is reflected in the bibliography of this study. The position of the writer is that while some mechanistic practices are undoubtedly necessary in the early levels of language learning there must be more open-ended approaches used alongside programmed approaches if we are to realize the full objective of liberated speech and writing. The work of Dr. Gertrude Moskowitz with student teachers and cooperating teachers has value in this direction. A state supervisor, Frank Grittner, has devoted a valuable segment of his textbook on methodology to a full description of the Flanders matrix for the observation of teacher-student interaction as adapted to the foreign language classroom.

The Explication in Teaching Literature:

The words explication de texte or explication française frequently cause great uneasiness among American teachers who have not experienced this method of analysis as college students. The aura of prestige surrounding this intellectual practice is such that we have considered it best left to the native French. Teachers having access to an inter-university library loan would profit from reading a doctoral dissertation on the subject: History and Analysis of the explication française presented to the Department of Romance Languages of Western Reserve University by Marjorie Meyer Kupersmith in 1959. The thorough research into the background of the method, the first-hand acquaintance with it as practised in French schools, and the support of its use in
American universities constitute the excellence of this document.

Earlier descriptions of the explication in French schools are to be found in *How the French Boy Learns to Write* by Rollo Walter Brown which might be sub-titled: How Careful Literary Analysis Leads to Careful Writing. Originally published in 1915 and long out of print, the book of R. W. Brown was reissued in 1963 by the National Council of Teachers of English as "a source of inspiration and help." More recently than either of the sources mentioned, Alfred Owen Aldridge observed the explication in France and contributed an article in a "Symposium on Explication de texte" in *Books Abroad* in 1963. He concludes that despite ferment for change among French teachers the method is still very much used in the traditional manner, "status quo ante bellum."

All of the sources named express admiration for the results obtained by the French who use a variety of related approaches to textual analysis under the generic heading of explication.

Textual analysis has for so long been a central concern of the educational system in France that we can surely learn from generations of experience and modification of the technique. What seem to be the basic elements which reappear in all of the descriptions?

1. An auditory experience of the text most often done *viva voce* by the teacher. This first reading must be intelligent and expressive.

2. The situation of the text in the whole work of the author, the book and chapter in which the passage is found. This situating of the text is often followed by general information about the author, his times, associations, etc.
3. The establishment of the central point of the text or passage, the articulation of the text in terms of action, characters, the matter immediately preceding and following the passage in question.

4. The study of the vocabulary or language in detail. The reasons for the choice of certain words. The color given by them to the entire passage. Here enters the work in etymology and reference to previous states of the French language.

5. The detailed commentary on composition or structure, the depth attained in the passage, the progression to be observed from paragraph to paragraph or from line to line. The relationship of structure and theme.

6. A personal evaluation. The statement of the impression left with the reader. Critical reflections.

Obviously the teacher and students using such a method must be in command of a considerable equipment of linguistic, historical and literary knowledge. The French teacher of his own literature is so equipped, and his students through years of observation and eventually active practice become skillful in manipulating this sophisticated instrument also.

A much respected Inspecteur général, Pierre Clarac, in a pre­valedictory message to his colleagues in 1964 has supported the primary aural experience:

Le texte, le vrai texte, ... ce n'est pas le texte imprimé. Si on ne l'entend pas en le lisant, si on n'en perçoit pas le rythme et les sonorités evocatrices, on risque d'en méconnaître l'essence. Noir sur blanc, il est en léthargie. C'est la voix qui le ressuscite."

Professor Clarac is speaking to French teachers of the French language.
in France. His insistence on the value of the spoken form of the text is supported by references to the essentially oral quality of literature from Rabelais and Montaigne to Proust. There is considerable evidence that in France's classical century writers themselves demonstrated this primacy of the oral in literature by reading aloud works meant for the theater. Flaubert is a well-known example of the author who tested his writing by its effect when spoken. We might add the current practice of recording the voice of the author reading his own works.

This recognition of the primary value of the recitation should speak clearly to us. With our readily available recordings on disk or tape there can be no excuse for the American student's not having an accurate and even a professional rendition of poetry as model. Obviously the teacher can also learn by listening to recordings and in this way improve his own performance. One feature of an American approach to analysis will then be an aural experience to precede the reading.

Professor Clarac concludes that despite the general recognition of the oral quality of literature all is not well in France. Many French students do not read or recite their language acceptably. If this be so in France how much more must we avoid the garbled recitation, not by eliminating all recitation, but by preparing the student to do a better job.

If we have seemed to support the first element of the explication that is not to say that the entire process is recommended. An additional recommendation to the teacher in France provides a key. Professor Clarac declares that the preliminary situation of the text so often stated as a sine qua non of the explication is "parfaitement inutile." If a
successful teacher and educator of teachers in France can find little value in the detailed reference to information outside the text when the work is a play or novel there seems all the more reason to avoid them where poetry is the corpus. There must be a time and place for such information, but the delaying of the entry into the real matter for the foreign language student can only dampen enthusiasm and burden him with an excess of talk to be ruminated while the principal lesson should be engaging his entire attention.

The final element of the classical explication can also cause the American student of French a serious handicap. He can be taught to respond to the text within the limits of his command of the language, but the pronouncement of a personal critical statement will most often lead to the repetition of a few stale formulas. The position of the writer is that we can eliminate this step from an American adaptation of the method on the assumption that the literature chosen for study is worthwhile and requires no other justification.

Descriptions of the explication as practised in France leave us with the impression of much more teacher performance than student participation. We must remember also that in manuals such as those of Jean Thoraval we have idealizations of the possible response to a text or a question...always from the point of view of the riding master who has not fallen from his mount in years. It is to reverse this process that we would adapt the techniques of analysis to the fundamental skills approach. The teacher must guide the student through the text, that is granted. He should confirm, however, at every step the presence of the student. An example of an effort at such an adaptation
is given in Chapter Four of this study.

**Design of the Study:**

The study has been designed as an introduction to research in the classroom by the American teacher. Chapter Two considers the nature of poetry and its relevancy to the objectives of fixing the fundamental skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing French. Chapter Three is the graphic presentation of a theory of the teacher as road-builder given the relationships that exist between the teacher and the American student, between the poem as corpus and its probable correspondents. Chapter Four contains eighteen units of demonstration based upon actual classroom practice, speculation from the principles enunciated in the study, and courses in methodology at the college level. The units take up problems from the earliest level through the advanced classes. In addition there is discussion of certain problems, such as the use of visualization, specific critical terminology and developing writing skills, that seem to cut across levels. The demonstration units have been given titles. Chapter Five summarizes the implications of the study and proposes several areas of improvement in teacher education if the teaching of poetry is to be successfully incorporated into our French programs.

The bibliography, considered as an integral part of the study, contains not only the sources cited or referred to but a wide selection of articles and books of easy accessibility for the American teacher who may become interested in teaching poetry and in engaging in the classroom research recommended. Many of the books are in inexpensive
soft-cover editions and should be a part of the teacher's personal professional library or that of the school system. Most of the books and many of the articles contain excellent bibliographies of special import to the category in which they appear. The categorization is based upon the most essential concern of the works listed though some of the titles may be relevant to more than one category.

The writer of this study does not claim to agree with all of the positions taken by authors cited, especially in the area of literary criticism. Nonetheless the reading of diverse opinions has helped to establish the positions taken in the study. As the reading and checking of intuitions progressed it was as if a stone had been thrown into a calm lake, the outer rings, peripheral studies reaching far beyond the point of entry.

There being no value in polemical or purely personal manifestations of opinion, only such journal articles as have been found to contribute to dialogue have been included. Many excellent articles of an earlier period have not been included because of the emphasis on translation or the lack of evidence that the aural-oral skills were considered.

The bibliographies available in Foreign Language Annals have not been listed although they are essential first references for the teacher. Items listed in these bibliographies will become available through the MLA/ERIC Clearinghouse on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

The category Textbooks and Anthologies is not exhaustive and represents only those titles with which the writer is familiar through use in the classroom or as sources for the study. New anthologies
appear regularly so that the classroom teacher would be advised to procure all of the catalogues of the American and French publishing houses. This is easily accomplished at regional and national meetings of the profession.

Finally, a small number of recordings of poetry or song-poems has been included. The writer is particularly indebted to Professor Marie Naudin for the loan of many of the records from her private collection. Professor Naudin's article reveals a special competency and sensitivity in the matter of contemporary popular song and its relationship to genre poetry. Though addressed to the college level, we find in it a valuable point of departure for the secondary school teacher.

The writer of the study does not recommend all of the recordings as pedagogically useful. For example, the recording of his own poetry by Jacques Prévert has a distracting guitar accompaniment and cannot be used in the presentation phase. It is appropriate and effective after the students have learned some of the poetry. It would serve as a link between the poem and the living poet whose voice somehow symbolizes the character of his poetry. Its use would constitute a kind of motivation after the fact. The French American Cultural Services and Educational Aid (FACSEA) publishes regularly a catalogue of recordings available to French teachers on loan. The 1965 catalogue No. 2 (Literature) contains numerous recordings of the work of individual poets, collections based on themes or centuries and two dozen recordings of the series, Chants et Poésie, produced for use in French schools by the Radio-Scolaire. Some large municipal
libraries such as that of Cleveland, Ohio, regularly purchase foreign language records and distribute listings of their holdings. There are several commercial houses that specialize in imported records. The American teacher of French can have no excuse for failure to use recordings of poetry in the classroom.
Notes for Chapter I

1Patricia C. Bohn, "Le Cirque dans l'oeuvre de Jacques Prévert" (unpublished Master's essay, Division of Foreign Languages, Hofstra University, January, 1967).


CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF POETRY—THE RELEVANCY OF POETRY TO THE OBJECTIVES OF THE MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CURRICULUM

The preceding chapter of this study has presented the recent concern for the "Times and Places for Literature" and the need for a definition of literature for the secondary school foreign language curriculum. Despite the unusual growth in foreign language enrollments in the past ten years, the growing sophistication of methodology and technology and the great degree of national consensus as to objectives, it is clear that a serious lack exists with respect to research in the teaching of literature at the level of the practitioner, the classroom teacher.

The prosperity of publishing houses and the abundance of beautifully designed textbooks of readings for the secondary schools are evidence that, for better or worse, foreign literatures continue to be an important part of the curriculum. Nearly always these textbooks contain poetry even where poetry is not the primary emphasis. Whether the poetry is truly integrated into the program, whether it is well chosen for the level of language competency and social maturity of the students, and whether its use leads to improved cross-cultural perceptions, immediate performance and continuing self-education are questions that can only be answered if we come to grips with the nature
of poetry and the specifics of teaching-learning strategies. The writer of anthologies has rarely faced both of these issues forthrightly.

The present and pressing need for a study of the contributions of poetry to the fundamental skills programs can best be demonstrated by such a close look at the nature of poetry and the objectives of second language learning as identified in the preceding chapter. It is to these concerns that the following paragraphs will be addressed.

Poetry, as an operational definition, will be taken to include that product of creation through language in which an artist has sought to communicate the ultimate of a human experience in a crystallized, controlled, and "structurally harmonious pattern". Purposely set aside are questions of specific form—rhyme, meter, vocabulary, imagery, in order to establish at the outset that we may include poetry of widely varying formal aspects, expression, consistency. Indeed the door has been left open to include prose poems since they may certainly be seen to have "structurally harmonious pattern" a phrase for which I am indebted to Morris Sweetkind who has used it in his book for English teachers, Teaching Poetry in the High School.

A further focus of the study is based on an operational definition linking poetry to communication. To communicate explicitly requires that the language and the ideas be accessible—poet and audience are as one in the act of communicating. The special audience with which we are concerned has built-in barriers to this unity of the poetic act. We are concerned with American students aged twelve to eighteen whose native language is not that of the text and whose maturity and experience of the human condition are demonstrably less than that of the artist who created the text. The study will proceed
from a position that hermetic, sophisticated poetry of whatever literary merit is automatically beyond our purview. This practical and basic view is in agreement with that of Germaine Brée who has taken a stand in her Preface to *Poésie, la vie entière*:

"Toute poésie, cependant, n'est pas accessible, surtout pour ceux qui commencent seulement à apprendre une langue. Certains poèmes demandent, même des plus compétents, de longues heures de travail." Les poèmes que l'on trouve rassemblés dans des livres de classe sont, en général, des poèmes 'classes', riches en valeur certes, mais impossible à aborder avec la spontanéité dont vivent également la langue et la poésie."

The emphasis in the above citation is mine and cannot be too strongly reiterated. Unless we have with great care chosen our poetry to communicate through the language proficiency and maturity of our audience, the American school child, we cannot hope to serve either language or poetry or the student.

For this primary reason, poetry of relatively contemporary fabrication has been selected for the exposition phase of this study. In order that there be no doubt of the meaning of contemporary it is defined for the study as any creation which does not contradict the basic structures or vocabulary of the French language of today. The presence of poetic inversion, the occasional absence of a subject pronoun, a handful of archaisms in "l'Epitaphe Villon" would not be a priori reasons for failure to include it in a program at the appropriate level, for example. With such a poem, the directness of its language and the power of its universality far outweigh any minor linguistic problems it may present. As we look more closely at the nature of poetry this fairly open aperture will be defended.
The characteristics of poetry seen as contributions to foreign language learning:

**Poetry is crystallized communication.**

The poet as an artist has transmuted a personal experience deeply felt and influential in his own life into an encapsulated moment through language. The moment of poetry is thus made tangible, transportable, a concrete object of trade—no longer merely a personal experience but an interpersonal, trans-human experience, the key to which is in the eyes and ears of another human being. Poetry is made to be launched like a message in a bottle—and to be found by one capable of releasing and responding to its message. I have said message and not lesson. A message from one human being to another may be as fragile as a smile, a simple recognition of the humanness of the other. Our students of the French language have a right to receive the messages of an artist along with the necessary lessons of the teacher. Indeed message and lesson complement one another to perfection.

**Poetry is language in situation.**

The revolution in modern foreign language teaching has been described in many ways but in essence is a strengthening of the primary concern for language in situation. The emphasis on dialogue in the texts written for the secondary schools since 1959 solidly underscores this fact. Indeed the over-emphasis on dialogue to the near exclusion of other forms of statement has produced a reaction from those who feel that the "logical" presentation and exploitation of linguistic structure has been neglected. It is not within the scope of this study to argue this point. I would simply suggest that a poem has, by its nature, a
statement to make about man in the universe, in time and space, that conforms closely to the objective that a pupil learn to say something about himself or some other individual in situationally possible or credible terms. If in a poem such unlikely visions as "la plume de ma tante" and "le chapeau de mon oncle" should appear in juxtaposition we can be sure that the selection was not fortuitous. Relatedness is natural in poetry though difficult to realize in artificially constructed textbook language.

Poetry is culturally authentic.

The "language of the tribe" as Mallarmé has called the ordinary social use of words, is inseparable from the ideas of nationhood, community, identity with one's place. The pupil in beginning French studies learns that the major languages are the same as the names of those who speak them. He has understood this central unity by the time he has recited:

Un Français parle français.
Un Italien parle italien.
Un Allemand parle allemand.
Un Japonais parle japonais.
Un Chinois parle chinois.

We will subsequently investigate a possible use of poetry in translation. For the present we agree with those scholars of language who have found that poetry, more than any other formal linguistic creation, is untranslatable. Despite the excellent "recastings" of foreign poetry by certain poets, there remains the untranslatable essence that leaves unsatisfied one who is familiar with the original creation. There immediately come to mind the beautiful "Lorelei" of Longfellow that was in its time favorably compared with its German original,
Wyndham Lewis's translations of Villon, Edna St. Vincent Millay's excellent renderings of some of "Les Fleurs du Mal". Despite these and other noble efforts one has only to have met the original to feel its "unhappy shade" moaning to be let out of the new incarnation.

If we wish to insure the establishment of a coordinate system of language as Dr. Nelson Brooks has suggested we can find no more legitimate corpus than a well-selected poem for it has been forged in the cultural crucible of its own language and no other. There can be no doubt of its cultural authenticity even to occasional peculiar twists and unconventional usage. When Raymond Queneau writes "kekchose" or "je crains pas ca tellment" they become cultural facts not to be further tampered with. The observation of peculiarities is a necessary part of language learning that is often delayed overlong in the scholastic materials that we use in our classrooms.

French poetry is influential in the education of Frenchmen.

The French system of education through a century and a half of commitment to free, public, secular education has given an honored place to the study and appreciation of poetry. The "poetes du programme scolaire" have changed from generation to generation as certain poets have risen or declined in academic respectability, but there is a continuous body of old and newer classics that one can trace through the manuals and collections used in the schools of France. The centralized school system, of course, allows a greater degree of uniformity in the matter offered to students than is possible for us in the United States or perhaps even desirable. Nonetheless the precious national cultural heritage of the Frenchman who may possess only his "certificat
"d'etudes" consists in large part of poetry learned and savored throughout his years of schooling and it may be considered that such a unifying force is not to be discounted. Along with the monthly "Bulletin de la Radio-Télévision Scolaire" listing available programs at every level, the French teacher receives a folder with the text of the poetry being broadcast each week and with a substantial amount of supplementary information for presentation and analysis.

One of the publishing coups of post-war France was the unequalled popularity of the poetry of Jacques Prévert (by 1952 there were 200,000 copies of Paroles in print.) Few American poets of any period can claim a comparable popular success. And what is more, the French were reading and learning and discussing the poetry of Prévert without the official stamp of academic approval. Apparently a considerable number of French people did not leave their interest in poetry behind them at the lycée.

Placing well-chosen French poetry at the disposal of our students can bring them into immediate contact with a facet of French culture that is esteemed in France and wherever French is spoken. Poetry is versatile.

The approaches to poetry are as varied as the permutations of poem, teacher and student. The rigid formulas imposed upon the teacher by certain of the current textbooks happily cannot be applied to poetry. The personal reaction to a poem must begin with the teacher. The teacher must know the poem in all the ways a poem can be experienced, but he must also know that a poem cannot be finally caught in a single net. His own maturity, experience of life, knowledge of the language,
familiarity with the poet's other work and the formal qualities of the poem, all enter into his own experiencing of this particular poem. The absolute or relative lack of such experience, skills, information and motivation on the part of his students will determine their level of insight. The teacher needs to be ready to accept the unwelcome fact that the poet does not often (perhaps ever) pack his poem with all the significance, allusions, and design that later readers have found. If the lover of poetry had awaited the scholarly exegis of Mr. Eliot himself or of the critics before dipping into "The Waste Land" he would have read a very different poem. A part of the value of truly great poetry is the expansion that occurs with each subsequent reading.

A cardinal principle in teaching poetry is, then, the presence of a basic humility on the part of the teacher. This is above all a cooperative venture, an occasion for a mutually rewarding intellectual participation in the discovery of meaning. The teacher whose formation has all been of the directing, correcting, pointing-out variety will need some exposure to open-ended teaching strategies. John Ciardi, in the introductory statement to *How does a poem mean?* has underscored this participatory feature of teaching and learning poetry in this way:

Analysis is never in any sense a substitute for the poem. The best any analysis can do is prepare the reader to enter the poem more perceptively. By isolating for special consideration some of the many simultaneous elements of the poem, analysis makes them more visible in one sense, and less interesting in another. It is up to the reader, once the analysis is completed to re-read the poem in a way that will restore the simultaneity and therefore the liveliness and interest of the poetic structure. The only reason for taking
a poem apart is that it may be then put back together again
more richly. 4

The danger of overstating one's thesis is ever present. Keeping
in mind that we are discussing the teaching of a foreign language
through its poetry we may consider Professor Northrop Frye's lucid
position on the responses to a work of literature taken from his
excellent collection of talks entitled The Educated Imagination:

In all our literary experience there are two kinds of
response. There is the direct experience of the work it-
self, while we're reading a book or seeing a play, especially
for the first time. This experience is uncritical, or rather
pre-critical, so it's not infallible. If our experience is
limited, we can be roused to enthusiasm or carried away by
something that we can later see to have been second-rate
or even phony. Then there is the conscious, critical response
we make after we've finished reading or left the theatre,
where we compare what we've experienced with other things
of the same kind, and form a judgment of value and proportion
on it. This critical response, with practice, gradually makes
our pre-critical responses more sensitive and accurate, or
improves our taste, as we say. But behind our responses to
individual works, there's a bigger response to our literary
experience as a whole, as a total possession. 5

There are, then, such distinctions as the "livingness" of the
poem itself, the initial or relatively uninformed reaction of the reader,
and the critical or informed reactions based upon analysis that make up
the voyage into the interior that we call knowing a poem. In the follow-
ing chapter the schematic relationships between the teacher and the
student of French poetry, between the student and the poem, will be
explored. At this point we may summarize by saying that the second
responsibility of the teacher is to provide only so much of the road-
map as will help the student to find his own way into the poem; the
first responsibility is obviously to have selected poetry that is worth
the effort. The methodology of teaching poetry is infinitely variable,
can be tailored to fit many teaching styles and many levels of language proficiency. A poem ultimately calls for creativity on the part of the teacher and the students. 

**Poetry is thematic and universal.**

The well-chosen poem will have a central idea that can be used as the core of a thematic approach to learning. One of the continuing theories of learning holds that the more bonds we create among our "bits of knowledge" the more we ultimately control. The teacher who sees nature and its phenomena, human activities, sentiments, concerns, etc., as being focal points for unifying learning can find in poetry immediate points of support. The well-chosen poem will have universal appeal and though it may speak of generalities it will do so in language that by its "rightness" for the ear and to the mind will lay claim to the student's memory. Poetry frequently seems to reveal what we already know. Few young Americans of our time, "wandering lonely as a cloud" are likely to have come upon "a host of golden daffodils". Unless they have visited southern France they are unlikely to have seen acres of valley land blanketed with lavender or, anywhere in France, the railroad sidings crowded by a pushing clump of poppies looking as if they planned to board the train. The lack of such specific experiences does not preclude the likelihood of a student's having been at some time in his life arrested by the sight of some local flora in an unexpected context.

Professor Ernst Cassirer suggests a vital principle as we consider the relevancy of poetry to the lives of our students:

We have already demonstrated that the primary function
of linguistic concepts does not consist in the comparison of experiences and the selection of certain common attributes, but in the concentration of such experiences, so to speak, in distilling them down to one point. But the manner of this concentration always depends upon the direction of the subject's interest, and is determined not so much by the content of the experience as by the teleological perspective from which it is viewed. Whatever appears important for our wishing and willing, our hope and anxiety, for acting and doing; that and only that receives the stamp of verbal "meaning."  

It is unlikely to be completely fortuitous that so many poets began to write poetry as adolescents. Though some destroyed or abjured their early attempts or, as did Rimbaud, ceased to write poetry before reaching chronological maturity, the early attempts coincide with the profound efforts of the adolescent to set himself in the world and the world in order. If it is true that all revolutions are the same revolution, some of the universal, generalized and poorly expressed or inexpressed gropings of the American adolescent who is our student may be brought to the surface and find their echo in a poem.  

Poetry is integrative.  

Poetic language is inherently integrative language. In the poetic experience assimilation and correspondance are fundamental not ancillary. The attuned ear of the poet captures subtle harmonies. The regarding eye of the poet sees a broader horizon, heightened colors, a choreography that are not often ours to appreciate in the normal run of things. Time-lapse and micro-photography reveal, even to the untrained eye, miracles of motion and ferment, or nuance and depth in the natural world that normally pass unseen. Here technology gives power to human perceptions. So poetry arrests for us, as it has for the poet, the casual, superficial scanning of life and allows us to
integrate experiences that would otherwise disappear into the disintegrated and chaotic environment.

This ordering of the environment through language is not the exclusive function of poetry, nor is the poet the sole practitioner of the art of synthesis. Mathematicians, physicists, chemists among the scientists can be seen to bring form out of void through specialized use of language. They may be poets among themselves. Our claim for poetry as the literary ordering of experience par excellence rests on the greater audience for which the language is intelligible and the experience meaningful.

We cannot, nor need we aim to, hold all that we experience. Forgetfulness is a precious safety-valve for the human organism. We do propose, however, in teaching the use of languages, to hold fast to a goodly amount of language in order to use it creatively. In other words we aim ultimately to have the student become himself through the new medium. In poetry, language has already served this purpose. The poet has experienced the fundamental steps of observation, interpretation and integration. The retracing of his route can lead students to a similar, if less intense, experience of their own.

In this light it is perhaps the repeated, limited and emphatic use of certain combinations of words, the syntactic relationships, that strike us as being absolutely right, that can most readily serve the teacher of a foreign language.

What we have just suggested relative to poetic language at the level of syntax is equally true of the basic unit of poetry, the word. A student of a foreign language is constantly engaged in the
active and passive acquisition of the new vocabulary. Modern American methodology does not place high in the order of practice the learning of word lists or equivalencies, preferring instead the development in the student of a sense of appropriateness of word to context. This is as it should be. The teacher committed to such a process may profit from a consideration of the role of poetry in generating sensitivity to the essential word as distinguished from the word in a lexicon however well conceived.

The word in a poem
1. evokes
2. questions
3. integrates
4. denies
5. equivocates
6. revitalizes and renews
7. expresses flux

The word in a lexicon
1. states
2. guarantees
3. isolates
4. justifies
5. limits
6. controls and conserves
7. expresses stability

Admittedly, to the uninitiated, the word in poetry can lend itself to a distressing confusion. It can also become the basis for a stronger sense of personal involvement with meaning because the student of poetry must stake out his claim and work it for all it is worth. The mother lode of language is inexhaustable and continually being renewed by the poet's discovery of its possibilities.

Poetry is liberating.

We have discarded several shaky claims for the presence of
foreign languages in the curriculum. No serious spokesman any longer maintains a theory of transfer of learnings (unless such be the object of instruction), of pervasive "cultural" values, of development of "mental faculties". Instead, the more thoughtful foreign language specialists, along with curriculum theorists, support a more honest point of view that any matter can be valid if it serves the aims of the liberation of the student from the pressing fears and obsessions of his place and time and the undergirding of his efforts to move toward and not away from other human beings. In very few of our classrooms do we customarily behave as though we appreciated this principle. The modern foreign language curriculum has the unique opportunity to demonstrate the liberating experience at work by allowing students to use effectively, at each successively higher level of control, a new mode of expression for their own purposes.

Poetry, added to the basic corpus for the development of the fundamental skills, can fill a profound abyss in our French programs by adding a dimension of realness to the teacher-to-student and student-to-student dialogue. The unlocking of the affective domain necessarily precedes and prepares the release of language. The listener first reacts to a poem in a kind of internal, private way and subsequently seeks to communicate his reaction.

Professor Ross Mooney has described this process of "creation in the classroom setting" as a "communicative system [of the] basic nature: two creative systems intercoursing, feeding one another." Professor Mooney's statement deserves quotation at some length because it is so appropriate a description of the chain reaction which is at
the base of creative and liberating teaching:

The teacher is a sender and a receiver; the student is a sender and a receiver. What the teacher sends, the student needs to be able to receive; what the student sends, the teacher needs to be able to receive. As the teacher receives a particular sending from the student, the teacher needs to be able to organize a response which is relevant to what the student can next receive and use; the student, receiving, then organizing his response to be relevant to what the teacher can next receive and use, and thus to continue the sequence of communication. As each receives and sends, he has to be able to project into the inner world of the other and to sense what is forming there. Then his communication can be meaningful (a means) to the sequential and emergent development of the communication. Otherwise, communication fails; education fails. Communication is the center of the educative system.7

Poetry is related to the other arts.

The use of audio-visual adjuncts to the teaching of modern foreign languages has been steadily increasing as technological equipment has become available to the classroom teacher. An interesting experiment in the use of film in the presentation of French poetry has been described in the previous chapter. In the exploitation phase of the study we will consider the effect on a contemporary poet of his experiences in film-making. Professor Donald Hall of the University of Michigan has made insightful remarks on the effects of technology on the imagination or on the artistic product of the imagination. Professor Hall, who is himself a poet and critic, noted the change in literary perspective subsequent to the invention of the camera and the influence of the motion picture camera on the literary representation of time sequence.8

Aristide Bruant, who is to many people, an anonymous cloak-wearing figure in a Lautrec poster, was in the 1890's a well-known and influential composer and singer of song-poems or poetry set to music.
In a sense his concerns with the miseries and glories of "la vie parisienne" may be compared to those of Villon while a contemporary counterpart may be found in Jacques Prevert. It is essential to note that the composer Joseph Kosma has brought some of the poetry of Prevert to unforgettable musical expression. Contemporary French poetry has served the composer of popular music in an unusually productive manner, George Brassens, Charles Trenet, Leo Ferre and Jacques Brel can be named offhand among those composers of music for popular consumption who in addition to being their own librettists have created admirable settings for the work of poets such as Aragon and Eluard. In an earlier generation Debussy's musical "recreation" of the Mallarme poem, "L'apres-midi d'un Faune", became almost inseparable from its inspiration.

If it were not apparent in his own work as poet, the comments of Baudelaire, the critic of esthetics, would reveal the solid link he felt to exist among the arts. The following citation from his chapter on Delacroix states the position succinctly:

C'est...un des diagnostics de l'état spirituel de notre siècle que les arts aspirent, sinon à se suppléer l'un l'autre, du moins à se prêter réciproquement des forces nouvelles. This mutual reinforcement of the arts can serve the foreign language teacher in his presentation of poetry. Poetry is an art form that can stand alone, but music, painting, sculpture, the dance and now the cinema, have through the ages been both seed and fruit of poetry. It is sufficient for the teacher to realize that the support of the other art forms can only be enrichment in the teaching of poetry so long as we maintain the proper perspective and do not permit the other expressions
to overshadow our basic objective, communication through language.

Despite the appeal of much poetry to the visual sense, and the attempts of certain poets to glean poetic value from the "calligraphic" aspect of the printed poem, the central fact of poetry is that it is primarily a recited art form and secondarily a written form. Poetry is meant to be spoken aloud. Like ourselves, the French have a long tradition of juvenile rhyming and rhythmic chants to accompany children's games. These "comptines" or counting-off chants illustrate the primacy of the voicing of poetry and that at its most elementary level. There is even a critical school which maintains that poetry is the primal literary form universally and that prose is a late development citing in support of their theory the presence of the chant among peoples who did not seem to possess, or feel the need of, narrative folk literature. Whether or not we agree with this proposition we can be sure that poetry as an oral art of literature has a long and tenacious history.

Very young children fortunately lack many of the prejudices that as adults we fondly nurture. However, there is an irrational resistance to poetry which seems to develop early in the adolescent American school child. Some of the articles of our colleagues who teach English recognize the need to seduce the junior high school student into the study of poetry. Why this resistance does develop I do not claim to know but one might guess that there is something in the presentation of poetry at the junior high level that establishes it first as a written and therefore a reading experience. Is there a shock of unrecognition by the very fact of the unusual printed format?
Is there a predisposition to fear the blank space surrounding a poem? There would seem to be a valid case for the experimental testing of the reaction to poetry presented first as an experience as against a first appearance as words on paper.

At any rate, in this study there will be a recognition of the natural sequence appropriate to poetry. Poetry is first a sequence of sounds and patterns and because of its "fit" can bear more repetition than some of the linguistic drills without leading to the deadly tedium we all deplore. Listening and speaking with the support of rhyme and rhythm can help us in developing the first two skills. Beyond developing the listening and speaking skills, however, we will see that the well-chosen poem may contribute to reading and writing skills as well, and in many ways.

Having thus summarily recognized the features of poetry that seem especially adapted to the aims of modern foreign language teaching I must add that I do not propose to substitute a program of poetry for all the other language building elements of the secondary school French curriculum. Poetry in all its variety and richness is an apt and neatly tailored supplement allowing a great measure of teacher and student creativity and calling upon all of the teacher's knowledge of his students' backgrounds in language and life. The use of poetry as supplement requires the teacher to think first of his students in the preparation of his lesson. He should always do so, but the ready-made teaching corpus often seems to have done this job for him. Such is not the case with poetry.

Therefore, the following study is justified on the basis of the
nature of poetry, the contributions and the appropriateness of well-chosen poetry to the secondary school French program, and its use in the development of creative teaching and learning. The difficulties and limitations of teaching poetry will be explored with reference to the specific poems treated in the demonstration units.
Notes for Chapter II


3 Since 1961 the writer has had the privilege of seeing a number of student notebooks in France testifying to the vitality of this tradition. In these personal "cahiers" pupils of all ages have copied and often illustrated favorite poems learned in class. Some of the poems had been the subject of dictation or of composition assignments. All were painstakingly written with an obvious pride in the appearance of words on paper. See Appendix A.


8 Donald Hall, "Technology and the Imagination," presented as the fifth Keller Memorial Lecture at the University of Hartford, March 5, 1969.


CHAPTER III

IN SEARCH OF A THEORY: THE TEACHER AS ROAD-BUILDER

In his preface to the Collected Poems of Robert Frost the poet speaks of "the figure a poem makes" and proponents of many schools of criticism have seen the poem as a living organism having a birth process, a life-span and an eventual death. Despite the hundreds of thousands of perceptive statements by poets themselves and by scholar-critics, linguistic scientists and philosophers, the mystery of poetic creation continues to elude us. If poetry is both an art and a craft and the poet an inspired visionary and a technician what must be the position of the teacher and the student of a foreign language face to face with a poem? This dilemma accounts for the reluctance of many conscientious, forward-looking French teachers to introduce poetry as a continuing part of their programs.

Responding to a questionnaire on the use of poetry, teacher-participants at second-level N.D.E.A. institutes in France have given the following generalized statements:

1. Lack of the teacher's own academic background in poetry in English or in French. This was most often cited.

2. Lack of enthusiasm for poetry on the part of their students.

3. Uncertainty regarding methodology. Teachers somehow sense that teaching poetry is different from teaching dialogues or narrative text materials.
4. Dislike of the poetry selected for inclusion in their texts. Most frequently cited poems were by La Fontaine or Hugo.

During discussions it often became evident that these teachers, who represented an especially energetic segment of the total teaching population, felt it possible to overcome lack of academic background. Many of them had already done so by attending university courses or by assiduous self study motivated by their promotion to teach Advanced Placement courses. They would also frequently recognize that the lack of enthusiasm on the part of students was simply a reflection of their own lack of interest in poetry. Their negative attitude toward anthologies or the poetry in their textbooks also reflected their own insufficiency rather than any sound position on appropriate selections for the various levels of French study.

Dazzled by the intricate *explications de texte* performed by the native French members of the staff who are masters of this technique the American teachers would return to the Methods course even more convinced of the impossibility of bringing French poetry to their students in this manner. In summary, the only true impediment to the teaching of French poetry in American secondary schools seems to be the lack of theoretical structure upon which to build. Descriptions of actual classroom practice are not enough, say these wise teachers. There is such a thing as a poem, a class and a teacher. The possible combinations of these separate entities cannot be resumed once for all by a single presentation. What is their possible underlying structure? What is the role of the teacher? On what principles is this role founded? How is the experience of poetry different for the non-native? In short, French
poetry has not been seriously considered by American teachers of French because they have not sensed a theoretical framework compatible with their basic theory of language instruction.

The theory to be illustrated and defended in this study can be stated in this way: The relationships among the several co-respondents of the poem as linguistic artifact are expressible in terms of a time-distance continuum modified by a factor of purpose. In order to reduce the verbiage necessary to the elaboration of the theory it will be stated graphically beginning with its central figure, the poem as linguistic artifact.

Figure 1.—The Poem

The poem as linguistic artifact is considered as having seed or central generative force, core and outer layer. Some might conceive of it as a fruit, its outer covering being rough and pitted, capable of expansion, penetrable. For the purposes of this theory the outer layer represents langue or language in the Saussurian sense, the social manifestation of communication among human beings, that which is conventional, established and universally accepted by the members of a speech community. The inner core is parole or speech, the individual, eccentric, "heterogeneous" manifestation as defined by Ferdinand de Saussure. This description which has been so important to linguistics of the twentieth
century is to be found throughout the first four chapters of the notes collected by students of De Saussure and published under the title, *Course in General Linguistics*. In this study we have begun with the poem rather than the poet. The poem is all that we may rightly claim to possess even when the poet is still among us. Once delivered from his pen the poem contains all of the experiences of langue and parole that the poet has chosen to make use of at this moment in time. For our purposes the poem is the poet.

The poem as linguistic artifact has four compartments which penetrate the layers of langue and parole:

1. The life experiences of the poet and his language community. The reality of the poetic experience.

2. The susceptivity and perceptivity of the poet which in part account for his reaction to the reality of the moment.

3. The situation or impulse which are at the heart of the poetic and human experience.

4. The power of imagination or momentum leading to the poetic incarnation rather than to the scientific or generalizing statement of the experience.

Figure 2.—The Native Speaker
The poem has a co-respondent, the native speaker (NS) with his own inner core of parole and outer layer of langue which resemble in varying degrees those of the poem. It is to the native-speaker-co-respondent that the poem is addressed if it is addressed to anyone. Given his place in time, closer to or more distant from the moment of the poem's creation, the native speaker is equipped with antennae that respond to the resonances transmitted by the language of the poem. The maturity of the native speaker, his experiences, his sensitivity and his imagination also enter into his ability to tune in to the multiple messages being broadcast. Depending upon his purpose in seeking out the poem the native speaker will respond more or less strongly to the emissions it gives off. When the native speaker is only an accidental or casual reader of poetry he may have no reaction at all, not even that of the common reader described by Samuel Johnson or Virginia Woolf. This type of native speaker remains outside of our theory as he remains outside the poetic experience. In Figure 3 we see the native speaker who is truly a co-respondent of the poem. His antennae are out. He has a purposeful if not academic stance. He chooses to enter into dialogue, to measure himself against another's experience.

Figure 3.—The Native Speaker as Co-respondent
The second individual to be included in the list of co-respondents of the poem is the scholar-critic (SC). He may be a poet himself as was Baudelaire though this combination rarely involves a poetic artist of the first order. For our theory the scholar-critic is an academic specialist whose interests lie in the establishment of texts and their explanation or the evaluation of the poet in terms of biography and literary history. He is often competent in philosophy and the history of ideas and may have a strong interest in structural linguistics as well as philology. The scholar-critic may be a native speaker or polyglot but he will certainly be a thoroughly effective bilingual in his own language and the language of the poem. His purpose in addressing the poem is direct, the poem is to him an object for study and analysis. With his own parole and langue the scholar-critic approaches the poem doubly equipped for success: sensitivity and experience of the total creative output of the poet serve the scholar-critic. Despite the direct, premeditated and efficient pursuit of the poem the scholar-critic may arrive no closer to the heart of it than does the sensitive native-speaker. The poem would exist if no scholar-critic ever studied it.

Figure 4.—The Scholar-Critic

Two other individuals stand in much the same relationship to the poem as does the scholar-critic. The first is the teacher of the foreign
language (TFL). He may share some of the qualities of the native speaker co-respondent and the scholar-critic but his purpose is different from that of either. He has gone to the poem not for itself but for its utility as an instructional corpus. He has chosen the poem in order to teach it to students and through it to increase their store of language and their power to communicate in the target language. In Chapter Two it has been shown that he is justified in doing so. The teacher also has his components of langue and parole plus a direct relationship with the last of the co-respondents of the poem, the student.

Figure 5.—The Teacher of Foreign Language

The student of French is the most distant, the least well-equipped of the co-respondents of the poem. His component of langue is incomplete and his parole in the foreign language miniscule in comparison with that of the other co-respondents. If he were to approach the poem directly he would be short-circuited at both ends. He cannot even be permitted to choose the poem for himself as he is not competent to select the basic corpus of his foreign language learning. But for his presence in the foreign language class the student would be light years away from the experience of French poetry.
Figure 6.— The Student of Foreign Language

Now that we have defined the five essential elements of the theory, the poem and its four co-respondents, in terms of their characteristics and purpose, we can see their primary relationships graphically:

![Diagram of relationships between TFL, SC, SF, S, and NS]

Figure 7.— The Relationships between The Poem and Its Co-respondents

As we can see, the teacher has a direct relationship to the poem and to the student. Unfortunately many teachers do not trust themselves to benefit from their own experience of the poem and their knowledge of the capacities and maturity of their students. Because of their desire to provide the one true meaning of the poem they frequently go first to
the scholar-critic to buttress their preparation. The resulting lesson is often a winding country road full of cobblestones, pot-holes, roadblocks, deadends and detours. The student never really arrives at a personal encounter with the poem at all. The experience having been filtered through two adult minds is completely devoid of vitality and flavor. Is it any wonder that many students quietly decide never to expose themselves to the ennui of such an effete experience.

What seems to be needed then is an "ideal" highway, ideal in the sense that it does not exist. We need a route of direct access, high speed on two levels, langue and parole. Somehow as teachers of French we must build a road that will bring the student to the position of the native speaker and allow him to find his way into the poem without hindrance. When we remember that the native speaker has limitations of maturity, sensitivity, education in the broad sense, we become less despondent about our ability to build such a road. We are not aiming to put our students into the position of the scholar-critic who has devoted a lifetime of study and research often to the work of a single poet. Our task is a possible one if we view it as progressively preparing our students to experience many types of poetry in the same way if not to the same degree as would a native speaker of the same age and maturity and experience of life. The teacher of French as road-builder constantly concerned with langue and parole uses the same building blocks necessary for a properly structured general language program:

1. Experiences in listening, speaking, reading and writing the foreign language.

2. Visual-tactile experiences with the foreign culture. Evidence
of how the language reflects what the French accept, require, admire and abhor.

3. Creative experiences for individual students and involvement in group activities with the language. The development of awareness and perceptivity.

4. Selection of the appropriate learning corpus, integration of the corpus into the total program and dramatic momentum for the learning situation.

5. Motivation to use the language and opportunity to display increasing command of the language.

Taking these building blocks one by one we can see that they are not peculiar to the experiencing of poetry but that the experience we hope for in teaching poetry is impossible without them. If poetry is first to be listened to, experienced through the ear, our students must have had many hours of learning to hear the French language. Our first poems will be chosen in aid of this step along the road. They will have strong rhythms and recurring phonological patterns. Their structure will be simple and their vocabulary easily grasped through visualization or paraphrase. They will have few cultural differences that require prior knowledge. They will appeal to the student as understandable generalizations of his own experiences or as humorous revelations. At the first level the student is not ready to respond to irony, multivalent imagery, mythological references or profoundly philosophical themes. The motivation must come from the poem itself. It must have the force to evoke response without a great deal of persuasion by the teacher. The first poems should provide the taste for poetry that will
make the later poems palatable.

We now see that the teacher is the most important of the correspondents of the poem since only he can build the ideal highway. From his knowledge of the complete language program he alone can choose appropriate poetry at every stage of his students' development. Ultimately the teacher becomes an anthologist, selecting and testing and rejecting poems based on his experiences with them in the classroom. The teacher will keep extensive notes of the reactions of students at the various levels, of the successful presentational techniques, of the culminations used and refined. Unanalyzed experience is no experience at all. The professional teacher will teach poetry selectively and will use unsuccessful experiences as learning opportunities. He will consult the journals and his colleagues. He will most certainly go to the work of the scholar-critic for clarification of problems of language, imagery and genesis but he will not expect the scholar-critic to justify the selection of a poem nor to assign it a place in the program. This is the role of the teacher as road-builder. The demonstration units of the following chapter of the study will illustrate this theoretical framework:

![Diagram](image)

Figure 8.—The Teacher as Road-Builder
CHAPTER IV

DEMONSTRATION UNITS: THE THEORY IN

PRACTICE IN THE CLASSROOM

Chapter Four consists of eighteen units demonstrating the role of the teacher as elaborated in the theoretical framework of Chapter Three. Twelve poems are discussed in some detail and essential practices necessary to the development of poetic sensitivity and skill in analysis are described. The demonstration units are not intended to serve as models. The position of the study has been consistently in favor of the widest possible diversity in classroom practice based on the objectives of a program supporting the fundamental skills. This position bears repeating. Only the teacher in daily contact with specific classes, knowing the language background and the psychological makeup of his students, can finally design the appropriate lesson.

Since 1962 the writer has received many letters describing the use of poetry in the classrooms of former participants in NDEA institutes. These communications have been much appreciated but have not been included since they were of the informal nature of personal letters. They have served the writer as confirmations of intuitions rather than as the basis for research.

Where the units describe actual classes the location of these classes was the public schools of Cleveland, Ohio. The students described
were frequently, but not always, the products of the Major Work Program for students of better than average general intelligence. Many of the students had begun the study of French in the elementary grades. The first level work of fixing aural-oral skills had often been accomplished by the elementary school French specialists to whom the writer acknowledges a great debt.

During fifteen years of teaching throughout the six year program offered these exceptional students and the three to four years available to the average students the writer collected notes with the help of student observer-recorders. In more recent years lessons were occasionally recorded using a centrally placed tape recorder. Notes taken from recorded lessons have been reduced to the essentials in order to underline the direction of the lesson and the techniques employed.

No apology is made for the use of familiar poems in the study. If the study is to be useful to teachers it should lead to an inner response on the part of the reader. This is only possible if the poems discussed are those the anthologies and textbooks have already made available to American classrooms. All but three of the poems are included for the purpose of ready reference with a notation of the source actually used by the writer of the study.
Level One: Recurring Sounds and Patterns

It would be dishonest to suggest that the first level, constituting the first two years of a typical junior high school program, would lend itself to an extensive use of French poetry. The students have not the prerequisite store of vocabulary or structures to give the teacher much liberty in the selection of poems. The major emphasis is on the achievement of accurate control of the phonology aurally and orally and upon the manipulation of a very limited amount of grammatical machinery. In most level one materials the present tense, past indefinite and future are the only tenses available with any surety. The imperfect often appears at the end of this level. The present subjunctive may have been used without conscious awareness in certain basic sentences. The imperative, without the complications of pronoun object placement, is also frequently seen. On the other hand, the sound system will have been rather thoroughly surveyed with the possible exception of the negative prefixes that seem to continue to cause difficulty far beyond the first level. Lexical emphasis is necessarily on the concrete corpus and function words. All of the elements described are essential and fundamental to the development of the skills of later levels and we do not list them in a deprecatory sense. It is simply the part of wisdom to recognize the limitations at the outset.

Given the linguistic limitations of our students what poetry can we hope to use? We can use poems to support that which they already know and poems to supplement or prepare the ground for subsequent harvest. We cannot choose poetry requiring extensive presentation of
abstract vocabulary. We can even at level one begin to open the eyes of our students to the structure of a poem. Mme Louise Bégué has made an interesting and valuable contribution to the users of her collection, *Poesie la vie entiere*, by grouping the poems according to certain grammatical structures appearing in them.

Four poems for level one will be discussed in the unit.

*Le pélican*

Le capitaine Jonathan,
Etant âgé de dix-huit ans,
Capture un jour un pélican
Dans une île d'Extrême-Orient.

Le pélican de Jonathan,
Au matin, pond un œuf tout blanc
Et il en sort un pélican
Lui ressemblant étonnamment.

Et ce deuxième pelican
Pond, à son tour, un œuf tout blanc
D'où sort, inévitablement
Un autre qui en fait autant.

Cela peut durer pendant très longtemps
Si l'on ne fait pas d'omelette avant.

"Le pélican" of Robert Desnos is an obvious choice for the earliest level because of its ringing of the changes on the single nasal sound [a] and for its absurd central figure, a pelican that simply will not stop reproducing itself. The generation or re-generation of the inescapably perserverant bird can only be terminated by an act of outraged, bizarrely humorous, retribution. The poem is a perfect example of rhythmic, rhyming, structural and thematic redundancy. If one insists upon literary analysis one sees the imagery as only slightly disguised symbol of inevitability. The poet has indeed given us the word, *inévitablement*. 
We cannot say that Desnos has made use of early Christian iconography which represents the Christ as the pelican because of the attached mythology of self-sacrifice. But the egg itself was a natural symbol of immortality, of birth and regeneration, long before its incorporation into the Easter pageantry. Our approach to the symbolism will have to be limited to the use Desnos has made of it, lightly humorous. There is in the structure of the poem the monotonous reiteration of rhythms and the childlike play on a single sound to signal the playful intention. The poem seems to say: Look what happens when an idea takes possession of one's brain! The compulsion to hum or sing a song one has heard someone else sing is here illustrated; the feeling of frustrated annoyance when one has collected a tacky substance on the sole of one's shoe. The distaste of the poetic artist chained to a theme or a pattern is possibly being described by Desnos whose surrealist origins are well known. At any rate, we will not need to dig very deeply into the "meaning" of this poem, for its surface is attractive enough. It is pure fantasy and at level one that is all we need.

Phonologically it should present no problems even for a mid-first-year class. The students will have met the sound [a] in many different disguises:

J'ai treize ans.
Quel temps fait-il?
Maintenant on va chanter.
Mes devoirs sont dans mon cahier.
Il marche lentement.
Il fait du vent.
Le papier est blanc.
Quand vas-tu partir?
George est devant moi.
J'ai acheté une paire de gants.
Il est au premier rang.
The nasal [ɔ] of pond, son, on should be contrasted with the nasal [ã].

The poem is particularly useful for calling attention to the many orthographic forms of a single sound.

The final two stretched lines of ten syllables serve to underscore the extreme monotony of the basic octosyllabic pattern. This stretching out of the final couplet is also appropriate to the sense of the poem. Students will be able to count the syllables after the first hearing and this activity should be a part of the lesson.

The vocabulary is nearly all concrete thus lending itself to contact visualization, a rapid display of the specific context words, le capitaine, le pêlican, une île, l'Extrême-Orient, un oeuf. The very few remaining words lend themselves to paraphrase: inévitablement—forcément, nécessairement; autant—qui fait la même chose; étonnamment—à la grande surprise de Jonathan le deuxième oeuf ressemble exactement au premier. C'est extraordinaire!

The question-response portion of the lesson should proceed from the concrete, specific textual reference to the more intellectually demanding and to personalized questions:

1. Qui est le héros de ce poème?
2. Quel âge a-t-il?
3. Où voyage-t-il?
4. Qu'est-ce qu'il y trouve?
5. Comment est-ce que le pêlican surprend Jonathan?
6. Qu'est-ce qui sort de l'oeuf?
   Est-ce normal qu'un petit pêlican sorte d'un oeuf tout frais?
7. Que fait le deuxième pêlican?
   Et le troisième?
8. Que faut-il faire pour terminer l'inévitable succession des pélicans?  
Qu'est-ce que Jonathan propose de faire de ces œufs?

9. Aimeriez-vous manger une omelette faite d'un œuf de pelican?

10. Seriez-vous capable de la manger tout seul?

11. Faut-il prendre au sérieux l'histoire des pélicans?

Le Hareng Saur

Il était un grand mur blanc—nu, nu, nu,  
Contre le mur une échelle—haute, haute, haute,  
Et, par terre, un hareng saur—sec, sec, sec.

Il vient, tenant dans ses mains—sales, sales, sales,  
Un marteau lourd, un grand clou—pointu, pointu, pointu,  
Un peloton de ficelle—gros, gros, gros.

Alors il monte à l'échelle—haute, haute, haute,  
Et plante le clou pointu—toc, toc, toc,  
Tout en haut du grand mur blanc—nu, nu, nu.

Il laisse aller le marteau—qui tombe, qui tombe, qui tombe,  
Attache au clou la ficelle—longue, longue, longue,  
Et, au bout le hareng saur—sec, sec, sec.

Il redescend l'échelle—haute, haute, haute,  
L'emporte avec le marteau—lourd, lourd, lourd;  
Et puis, il s'en va ailleurs—loin, loin, loin.

Et, depuis, le hareng saur—sec, sec, sec,  
Au bout de cette ficelle—longue, longue, longue,  
Très lentement se balance—toujours, toujours, toujours.

J'ai composé cette histoire—simple, simple, simple,  
Pour mettre en fureur les gens—graves, graves, graves  
Et amuser les enfants,—petits, petits, petits.2

The sympathetic treatment of Charles Cros by Jacques Brenner in the volume dedicated to this little known poet should cause us to reconsider some of the lyrical and truly lovely poetry from his pen. Charles Cros has suffered from a reputation as a dilettante and practical joker so that his most famous poem is Le Hareng saur, the perfect example
of only one side of his many-faceted character. It seems ready-made for establishing the agreement of adjectives, almost as if it had been written for pattern practice.

Underlying the fantasy we again find a possible serious intent that we can avoid developing at level one. The poem may be considered a statement of an *art poétique* wherein the poet warns us against seeking too deeply into the meaning of his poem. It was composed to annoy and even infuriate the too serious critic and to amuse children. That is all the poem means, all it is.

The repetition of the adjectives in final position almost compels participation by the listener. The anonymity of *le petit bonhomme* invites individual visualizations by the students. Only after having collected the students' illustrations should the original, contemporary caricature of Cros himself be shown. Shown on page 88 of the Brenner volume this cartoon seems somehow too literal since it identifies the poet-narrator with the unnamed figure of the poem.

The poem begs to be dramatized. For students beginning French in the seventh grade the call to active participation by physical demonstration as well as by oral repetition is evident. Young students do not object to standing on a chair in imitation of the climbing described in the poem. They will mime hammering the nail into the wall while seated at their desks and show the pendulum action of the swaying herring hanging at the end of a cord. Since all of the concrete vocabulary can be shown through pictures it is not necessary to have three-dimensional objects at hand. It would seem that the miming of the actions of the poem without three-dimensional objects serves the language
objective as well as the poem. Students are thereby helped toward the realization that one is not always in the actual presence of the things being talked about. In fact, the expressed concept, that which is signified (le signifié) is more often than not outside the environment in which the phonological representation (le signifiant) is manifest as indicated by De Saussure.

Pour Toi Mon Amour

Je suis allé au marché aux oiseaux
Et j'ai acheté des oiseaux
Pour toi
mon amour

Je suis allé au marché aux fleurs
Et j'ai acheté des fleurs
Pour toi
mon amour

Je suis allé au marché à la ferraille
Et j'ai acheté des chaînes
De lourdes chaînes
Pour toi
mon amour

Et puis je suis allé au marché aux esclaves
Et je t'ai cherchée
Mais je ne t'ai pas trouvée
mon amour.

Some level one students will be mature senior high students in tenth grade. We owe them an experience with poetry appropriate to their concerns but still within the linguistic level permitting a direct encounter. "Pour Toi mon amour" of Jacques Prévert is such a poem. It uses only the past indefinite which can always bear reinforcing. The images are direct and culturally significant. The bird market, the scrap-iron market, the flower market are to be found in many of the larger French cities. The final shock contained in the imposition of the slave market image does not have the same historical implications for the French as it does for Americans and must be handled carefully.
Structurally, the images progress from a directly stated imprisonment, that of the caged birds, to an implied condemnation of life, that of the cut flowers, again to the direct statement of the theme of enslavement. We see the first-person narrator as wandering rather blithely from one life-negating act or environment to another to end upon a note of bewilderment, "mais je ne t'ai pas trouvée mon amour."

Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk, seems to have caught the implied message of the poem though he has not referred to it in his article, "A Buyer's market for LOVE?":

The power of genuine love is so deep and so strong that it cannot be deflected from its true aim even by the silliest of wrong ideas. When love is alive and mature in a person, it does not matter if he has a false idea of himself and of life: Love will guide him according to its own inner truth and will correct his ideas in spite of him. That may be dangerous, but the danger is nothing new and the human race has lived with it for a million odd years.

The trouble is, though, that our wrong ideas may prevent love from growing and maturing in our lives. Once we love, our love can change our thinking. But wrong thinking can inhibit love. Overemphasis on the aspects of need and fulfillment, and obsessions which encourage a self-conscious and narcissistic fixation on one's own pleasure can easily blight or misdirect the growth of love.

We need the help of articulate voices, themselves taught by inspired love. This is the mission of the poet, the artist, the prophet. Unfortunately the confusion of our world has made the message of our poets obscure and our prophets seem to be altogether silent—unless they are devoting their talents to the praise of toothpaste.

Though lacking the philosophical insight of Thomas Merton our students can nonetheless sense directly the futility of the search for love considered as the enchainment of the "loved one." They will also be able to see the calligraphic imagery presented in the form of the
The poem is presented as a series of chains. Its linguistic structure is equally symbolic, the repetition of the conjunction et serving as the link between the images.

For students beginning their study of French in seventh grade the poem would be withheld until second level when their interests and maturity would make it appropriate. A common mistake is to introduce a poem having simple vocabulary and structures uniquely because of the ease of presentation. Nothing could be more detrimental to the true appreciation of poetry.

The students should be familiar with the past tense so that they can answer without hesitation the textual questions and ultimately the contextual question: Pourquoi le narrateur n’a-t-il pas trouvé son amour?
Déjeuner Du Matin

Il a mis le café
Dans la tasse
Il a mis le lait
Dans la tasse de café
Il a mis le sucre
Dans le café au lait
Avec la petite cuiller
Il a tourné
Il a bu le café au lait
Et il a reposé la tasse
Sans me parler
Il a allumé
Une cigarette
Il a fait des ronds
Avec la fumée
Il a mis les cendres
Dans le cendrier
Sans me parler
Sans me regarder
Il s'est levé
Il a mis
Son chapeau sur sa tête
Il a mis
Son manteau de pluie
Parce qu'il pleuvait
Et il est parti
Sous la pluie
Sans une parole
Sans me regarder
Et moi j'ai pris
Ma tête dans ma main
Et j'ai pleuré.

Any poetry deserving the title is susceptible of interpretation at many levels. The apparently straightforward, unadorned and even prosaic statement of "Déjeuner du matin" is revealed as truly poetic by its multiple valency. Initially this poem served the instructional purpose of reinforcing the past indefinite at the first level of the junior high program. The four regular first conjugation verbs, tourner, reposer, allumer and pleurer, the intransitive partir and the reflexive se lever ideally lend themselves to pattern drills as do the irregular
verbs, mettre, boire, faire and prendre. We do not often find such a generously exploitable corpus at the first level. Many classes responded to the events of the poem as the unique experience of a single day based on the poet's use of the past indefinite. A second level class, already familiar with the imperfect and the implications of habitual action, first caught the underlying possibility that the events as recorded are the culmination of repeated action therefore giving greater weight to the despair in the final line: Et j'ai pleuré.

It was the unexpectedly amused reaction of an unusual first level class that resulted in my first communication with the poet himself. This class consisted of many students with a great deal of elementary school background in French. Among the students there were many more boys than is usual and the general atmosphere of the class was far livelier. Previous classes had accepted sympathetically my dramatic interpretation of the unhappy partner in a disintegrating marriage.

Drawing upon their greater store of vocabulary and their penchant for mimicry and gesturing to supplement language the students of this class re-wrote the poem from the point of view of the male partner. They saw the speaker as only half awake, wearing curlers in her hair, a dressing-gown and slippers! They ended their "poem" with the image of the husband fleeing into the rain because "elle parlait et parlait et parlait." When several of the students reappeared in an advanced class several years later they reminded me of my promise to send their "poem" to M. Prévert. Thus tardily and with much misgiving I conveyed to the poet the students' reinterpretation. His response was immediate and characteristically generous. Needless to say one would not report to
students his explosive and irritable open letter on the subject of the poem in Fatras. 7

The poem lends itself so readily to dramatization that the teacher would enjoy presenting it viva voce taking care not to overemphasize the pathos. The boisterous students of an eighth grade class taught one teacher this lesson and stripped off forever the veil of sentimentality from the poem. Beyond the dramatic presentation, the repetition of the poem by the students would be followed by oral response to specific questions. A second set of questions would be used to establish the underlying themes and the mechanisms used by the poet. Finally the model sentences appropriate to the level of the class would be used for pattern practice.

Première répétition orale

1. Où a-t-il mis le café?
2. Qu'a-t-il mis dans le café?
3. Qu'a-t-il fait avec la petite cuiller?
4. Qu'a-t-il fait avant de reposer la tasse?
5. A-t-il parlé à sa femme?
6. Qu'a-t-il fait avant de fumer la cigarette?
7. Qu'est-ce qu'il a fait avec la fumée?
8. Où a-t-il mis les cendres?
9. Pourquoi a-t-il mis son manteau de pluie?
10. Pourquoi la femme a-t-elle pleuré?
Questions pour l'analyse

1. Quelle ambiance (atmosphère) est-ce que le poète établit par les courtes phrases, la répétition, le choix d'un vocabulaire simple?

2. Comment faut-il réciter ce poème?

3. Qui parle? De qui parle-t-elle? A qui parle-t-elle?

4. Quel temps faisait-il?

5. Faites la comparaison du temps à l'extérieur avec les sentiments de la personne qui raconte l'histoire.

6. Est-ce que les plaintes sont justifiées?

7. Où est-ce que cette scène a lieu? Dans quelle pièce de la maison?

8. Comment sont les personnages? Quel âge ont-ils? Comment sont-ils habillés? Quels changements y a-t-il pendant le temps de la scène?

9. Quelles phrases servent à marquer la fin d'une strophe (la fin d'une série d'actions)?

10. Pourriez-vous imaginer un autre titre pour le poème? Pourquoi le titre "Dîner de matin" est-il parfait?

Only one cultural identification imposes itself. The café au lait of the French breakfast should be clearly seen as distinct from the strong coffee Americans typically drink at the same meal. The milk is heated and the mixing of warm milk and coffee is frequently done in a large cup as a half and half blend. Student illustrations have often shown the "wife" dressed as they may be accustomed to seeing their mothers dressed in the morning. They might be informed that the practice of wearing curlers is not quite so widespread in France.
Phrases modèles

Il a mis le café dans la tasse.

_____ le thé

_____ le lait

_____ le chocolat

________________________ le verre.

_____ le jus d'orange

_____ le lait

_____ le citron pressé

_____ l'eau

Il a bu le café dans la tasse.

_____ le lait

_____ le chocolat

_____ le thé

Vous

_____ le café

Nous avons bu le jus d'orange dans le verre.

l'eau

le lait

Nous avons mis

dans le réfrigérateur.

dans la bouteille.

dans la tasse.
Il a fait des ronds avec la fumée.

_______ des avions _____ le papier.
_______ des boules _____ l'eau savonneuse.
_______ des balles _____ la neige.
_______ un bonhomme _____ les balles de neige.
_______ une auto _____ les morceaux de bois.
_______ des ronds _____ la fumée.

Qu'a-t-il fait avec la neige? etc.

Il est sorti sous la pluie.

Vous __________________

Nous __________________

Les garçons _____________

Tu ______________________

Il est sorti sans me parler.

__________________ regarder.

__________________ dire au revoir.
An Oblique Approach: "Le Ciel est, par-dessus le toit"

An oblique approach was chosen for presenting to a ninth grade, third year class Verlaine's "Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit." The students had recently completed the first level, i.e., the thirty-four chapters of Nouveau Cours Pratique (2nd edition), and had had almost no contact with poetry except for the La Fontaine fable in their text and a few brief poems presented by previous teachers for memorization.

It was felt that the lyrical Verlaine poem could serve as a welcome bridge between the grammar oriented work of the first text and the reading which was to come. In addition, the writer wished to establish from the onset of reading the necessity for a personal and individual reaction to material created by an artist from an inner experience. The objective of maintaining oral skills and continuing the exclusive use of French in the classroom placed immediate limitations upon the method and depth of the approach to be used.

Le Ciel est, par-dessus le toit
Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit,
Si bleu, si calme!
Un arbre, par-dessus le toit,
Berce sa palme.

La cloche, dans le ciel qu'on voit,
Doucement tinte.
Un oiseau sur l'arbre qu'on voit
Chante sa plainte.

Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, la vie est là,
Simple et tranquille.
Cette paisible rumeur-là
Vient de la ville.

Qu'as-tu fait, ô toi que voilà
Pleurant sans cesse,
Dis, qu'as-tu fait, toi que voilà,
De ta jeunesse?
Level Two: New Vocabulary and structures

par-dessus  bercer  la palme  sans cesse
  tinter  la rumeur
  la jeunesse

faire qqch. de qqch.

Critical vocabulary

la rime  le vers  le sentiment  l'inversion
la strophe  le rythme  le sujet
  apparent
  réel

la voix  s'interroger
  intérieure
  extérieure

Essential preparation for the teacher:

1. A knowledge of the life of Verlaine, the age at which he wrote this poem, the circumstances surrounding its composition.

2. The formal structure of the poem, its rhyme scheme, rhythm and the progression of mood.

3. A thorough knowledge of the students who will study the poem, their linguistic experiences and social maturity.

4. A plan for retrieving from previous language learnings the essential vocabulary and for building new experiences onto the former.

Linguistic traps:

The poem is relatively free of linguistic stumbling blocks for the level chosen. However, there are two which must be noted lest they cause a misapprehension of the meaning to prevail.

1. The essential structure of the first two stanzas is a series of declarative sentences interrupted in their expected progression by an explicit or implicit sub-construct.
Le ciel est... si bleu, si calme.

Un arbre... berce sa palme

The interruption set off by commas must be understood to have the implied form *(que je vois)* par-dessus le toit. In the second stanza the structural relation is explicit:

La cloche... doucement tinte.

Un oiseau... chante sa plainte.

Reversing the poetic inversion the sub-construct reads:

qu'on voit dans le ciel

2. The apparent apostrophe beginning stanza three is not to be literally taken as an appeal to God. Jean Thoraval speaks of this line as a pathetic invocation:

... L'émotion qui grandit avec le champ du rêve et avec son objet plus proche du cœur du prisonnier, se trahit par une invocation pathétique deux fois répétée.9

While the explication of M. Thoraval is excellent in the French tradition one might do well to compare it with the remarks of Professor Henri Peyre who finds that "the prisoner mechanically whispers an appeal to God."10 Given the setting of Verlaine's temporary conversion, the Belgian prison cell which is the scene of the poem, the word mechanical in Professor Peyre's statement seems decisive. There is, first of all, not nearly the strength of the English words, "My God" in the French, *Mon Dieu.* We have here what may be little more than a sigh put into words.

**Rationale for selecting the poem:**

The first, and perhaps a primary, reason for selecting any poem is that it be one the teacher himself loves and appreciates. It will never be necessary to explicitly announce this predilection to a class.
It will be apparent from the manner of presentation and from the teacher's ability to respond to questions.

The poem, in four quatrains, contains only six words entirely new to the class. The syntax, basic declarative and interrogative sentences, is thoroughly familiar and would be so even at first level. The extremely regular rhythm and rhyme scheme present no problems of versification that need a priori explanation. The students, accustomed to the audio-lingual game of identifying sounds, are able to hear the rhyming words from the first audition.

The exterior or "natural" mood, set in the first three stanzas, and the interior or "mental" mood of the final stanza allow a rapid if superficial view of the poetic structure to penetrate the listener's mind from the start. The poem has a languorous charm that belies and somewhat contradicts its melancholy culmination. The teacher anticipated that this slight paradox might give rise to questions.

Questions regarding objectives:

1. If one wishes to be certain that the mood of the poem be felt by the students must there be a lengthy technical preparation?

2. How can questions of esthetic emphasis be avoided while still doing justice to the real weddedness of form and meaning in this poem?

3. How can audio-lingual skills best be continued and exploited through this poem without destroying it as a work of art?

Questions regarding method:

1. Can ninth grade pupils approach this poem through the act of creating a poem of their own?
2. Can the creation of the pupils' creation serve a specific linguistic end? In this case, can we use a classroom creation to clarify the underlying structure of the first stanza?

The decision to try an oblique approach resulted in the following sequences:

I. On the day preceding the introduction of the poem:
   A. The class was asked to react to the following incomplete sentence written on the chalkboard.

   Le ciel est ______.

   The presentation was done in the following manner:

   Si je vous présentais une phrase comme celle-ci est-ce que vous pourriez la terminer?

   The first word offered was, as one might expect, the word bleu. For such a class this is not only a probable but an almost inevitable response since our students are so conditioned to certain word chains and cliches. In order to free herself for rapid appraisal and acceptance of words offered the teacher designated a student to go to the chalkboard to act as recorder (secretaire). The list of words developed rapidly as pupils became aware that many adjectives could fit the slot. Note that the first seven words offered are colors.

   The teacher was surprised when the word azur was offered by a student who, on request, explained it as "une sorte de bleu." She had conceived of it as co-equal with the English having a final e. The spelling was corrected by the teacher.

   List 1: bleu, azur, bleu-vert, gris, jaune, rouge, noir, couvert, caché, haut, loin, menaçant, brillant, lourd.
The adjective chaud was offered but rejected by the students as inapplicable. The teacher was unaware that the class had ever heard the word menaçant which aroused no reaction of unfamiliarity and was spelled aloud from its pronunciation. The cedilla was supplied from the word ça.

B. The class was then asked to read all of the sentences engendered from the list.

C. The students were asked to think of nouns that might be associated with the sentences previously developed. Note that in the list far fewer abstract nouns were available to the pupils. Gender was supplied or corrected by the pupils. The word tendresse was developed from tendre offered tentatively by a pupil.

List 2: la joie, le bonheur, la tendresse,

l'amour, la peur, la terreur, la pluie,

la mélancolie, le mystère

By this time a number of pupils were aware that something more than a pattern drill was in process. One student attempted a combination pattern by offering "Le bonheur est dans le ciel bleu." but gave it up with a shrug of the shoulders.

D. The writer then asked if by looking at the two lists anyone could produce a verb to accompany the ideas generated: Vous avez bien fait. Vraiment, c'est excellent, mais je vais vous proposer quelque chose de très difficile. Qui peut trouver un verbe pour exprimer l'action d'une personne sous un ciel bleu, par exemple?

List 3: regarder, marcher, courir,

se promener, chercher

The verbs courir and chercher were suggested by the same student. He attached them to the black, overcast sky and to the words pluie and
peur. He was asked: Chercher quoi? He replied: Chercher un arbre.
The class decided the relationship was legitimate and added the word
arbre to the list of nouns. Note that the students were already
participating in a kind of poetic shorthand. They were much more
ready than their teacher to be convinced that the student had something
in mind. With their shared and limited experience the communication
among them was immediate.

II. The amount of class participation, active use of French,
interest and enthusiasm cannot be conveyed in a summary report. By
the end of Step I the class had far outstripped the teacher's original
expectations and the time consumed had been far less than planned for.
It was therefore decided to take advantage of the momentum to go on to
Step II which had been planned for the following day.

A. The teacher requested that the pupils use the
sentences and vocabulary to create a poem.

The original sentences were rejected almost immediately! There
was apparently some subconscious poetic feeling working against the all
too familiar sentence structure of Le ciel est bleu. The following
"poem" is the result of less than fifteen minutes of trial and error
by this ninth grade class:

Comment est le ciel?
Bleu. . .
(Je marche) Je me promène
Sous le ciel bleu.
Bonheur.

Comment est le ciel?
Noir. . .
Je cours
Sous le ciel noir.
Terreur.
The bell interrupted an argument concerning the third line of the first stanza. Several students were unhappy about the verb *marcher* which seemed to them to indicate walking toward a destination and to be incompatible with the sense of the stanza. Others preferred it as rhythmically akin to the verb chosen for the second stanza. No decision was reached.

III. On the following day the original poem was reviewed and a reluctant vote taken in favor of discarding *Je marche*. The teacher made no observation as to the quality of the poem produced by the students. The objective had been reached and several unexpected values had come from the exercise. The class was now ready to tackle a real poem.

A simple statement was made concerning the poem to be heard on tape. The name of the author was given and written on the board. No text was provided at this point. The few words deemed necessary for direct comprehension were presented. A distinction was already possible between the ordinary meaning of a word (le sens ordinaire) and its poetic use (le sens poetique) since the students had briefly experienced this distinction in their own work of the previous day.

**Essential vocabulary:**

*berger*:

sens ordinaire/ La mère berce le bébé. Pourquoi? Pour le calmer, pour l'endormir.

sens poétique/ un peu synonyme de balancer—un mouvement de va-et-vient avec la douceur d'un berçement (Both meanings demonstrated.)
tinter: La cloche sonne à l'école pour annoncer la fin de l'heure, mais c'est une sonnerie électrique. La cloche de l'église sonne avec un son plus distinct et plus court. On pourrait dire que les petites cloches de l'église tintent. Un poète américain, Edgar Allan Poe, a employé le mot *tintinabulation* dans son poème, "The Bells."

la rumeur: un peu synonyme du mot bruit, tous les sons confus qu'on entend comme un murmure

la plainte: Lorsqu'on est triste on ne chante pas une mélodie gaie et heureuse. On chante une plainte qui exprime la tristesse, la mélancolie. Qui pourrait ajouter une syllabe devant ce mot pour nous aider à comprendre le sens? Cela ressemble beaucoup à un mot anglais, n'est-ce pas?

la palme: Les feuilles d'un arbre tropical; des feuilles longues et étroites dont on fait parfois un objet pour mettre l'air en mouvement, un éventail. (Later it will be made clear that in Belgium Verlaine would not have seen palm trees. In his own notes on the poem he mentions *un peuplier*. )
tranquille: Vous allez entendre trois mots qui ont à peu près la même valeur: tranquille, calme et paisible.

The students readily identified jeunesse from its root. They responded to the question by: C'est notre age, l'age de quatorze ou quinze ans. The teacher suggested that even twenty or thirty years old might be considered youth by a person of forty! The word par-dessus was related to au-dessus which they knew: Je vois le tableau par-dessus la tête de Marc mais le tableau n'est pas au-dessus de sa tête.

IV. The poem was played from a taped recording made in France by a young law student who, while not a student of literature, reflected his formation in the appreciation of poetry and who has a fine reading voice. The first listen-through was done without the text. When the mimeographed texts were distributed the students read and listened simultaneously. The taped model was then used to provide a line by line repetition exercise for the first two stanzas.

Before the teacher was ready to suggest any individual reading there were volunteers, including several boys. The sound of an indisputably masculine voice had already caused a distinct reaction on the part of the girls and even the boys were impressed. The first boy who tried to read made an excellent, if caricatural, effort to imitate the deep tones of the French speaker. The teacher and the class applauded. However, since it was apparent that silliness was about to set in the teacher did not immediately call on other readers.

V. It was now possible to look at "the poem itself" by means
of a questionnaire with limited responses. Further work must be done to develop the aural sensitivity to the poem before questions as to its form should be presented. Note that inexact terminology is used at this point.

**Questionnaire:**

1. Que fait le narrateur dans la première partie du poème? Est-ce qu'il regarde ou est-ce qu'il écoute?

2. Qu'est-ce qu'il voit? Quelle impression a-t-il en voyant ce ciel bleu?

3. Quel objet attire son attention? Pourquoi?

4. Qu'est-ce qui limite la vision du poète? Quel est son horizon?

5. Dans la deuxième partie du poème est-ce qu'il regarde seulement?

6. Qu'est-ce qu'il voit cette fois-ci? Qu'est-ce qu'il entend?

7. Comment fait-il l'union entre les deux premières parties?

A final playing of the first two stanzas followed this exercise in reading between the lines. The students repeated the stanzas with the teacher as model. The assignment to memorize the first two stanzas was not obligatory.

VI. Having decided that the students had had enough of Verlaine for a time the teacher prepared to introduce the new reading text on the following day. Much to her surprise more than half a dozen students had prepared the assignment and were eager to recite. Since the enthusiasm seemed running high she asked if the class would just as soon discuss the final stanzas. The students accepted with near unanimity. She explained that they might need to know a few words to make it possible
to talk intelligently about the various parts of the poem and quickly introduced *une strophe*, *un vers*.

**Questionnaire:**

1. Comment est-ce que le poète introduit la troisième strophe? Y a-t-il une différence entre ce qu'il raconte dans les deux premières strophes et ce qu'il imagine dans la troisième strophe?

2. Qu'est-ce qu'il entend dans la troisième strophe?

3. Est-ce aussi direct et clair que ce qu'il entend dans la deuxième strophe? Quel mot indique que ce n'est pas très clair?

4. Savons-nous si le narrateur est à l'extérieur ou à l'intérieur d'un bâtiment?

5. Peut-on deviner où se trouve ce bâtiment?

6. Pourquoi le narrateur reste-t-il dans un endroit si la vie l'attire au dehors de cet endroit? Est-il libre de ses mouvements? S'il n'est pas libre où se trouve-t-il peut-être?

7. Qui est-ce qui pose les questions de la dernière strophe? À qui?

8. Que fait le poète? Est-il heureux ou triste? Qu'est-ce qu'il regrette?

**VII.** Having felt no resistance from the students, the teacher chose not to continue the discussion of the formal aspects of the poem. Instead the poem was assigned for memorization with a due date two weeks away. During the two weeks the poem was played at the end of each laboratory session and students were permitted to play the tape for themselves at will. Several students copied the tape for use on their home recorders.

Two fifteen minute sessions were later used to present a bare outline of the facts of Verlaine's life that are pertinent to the poem.
and for a presentation of the rhyme scheme that was already apparent to the students.

**Evaluation:**

With limited objectives it was felt that the three full class periods and parts of several other periods devoted to the poem were time well spent. The students had an introduction to a useful poem in terms of its form and subject. They had become sensitized to some of the creative problems faced by a poet and some of his satisfactions. Many of the students continued to consider their own "poem" on a par with that of Verlaine. This was an obvious failure in the teaching process to be corrected by subsequent acquaintance with real poetry. No strictly linguistic drilling or exploitation was planned for this poem although the aural exercise and the oral recitations were valuable in themselves. No test was given though one had been planned. The learning experience was felt to have been completed when the students cheerfully accepted the assignment to memorize the poem and indeed did so with notable success for the most part.

**Exploitation of new vocabulary and structures:**

While the poetic experience, the primary objective of the use of poetry, must ever be kept in mind, it is *liberated language* that we aim for at level two and beyond. For this reason we are justified in integrating a limited exploitation of the language of the poem into our unit. We have identified this new language at the preparation phase. We may now examine some possibilities for its exploitation.

The verb *bercer*:

The poetic use of *bercer* should be allowed to stand as a
tribute to Verlaine. In order to emphasize the poetic quality of its use we may try a brief oral drill to contrast the ordinary use of the verb in prosaic terms.

Teacher: Dans le poème un arbre berce sa palme. C'est de la poésie. Je vous propose quelques nouvelles phrases où on va employer le verbe dans son sens de tous les jours.


Répétez........................

Ecoutez les mots que je prononce et faites une nouvelle phrase.

la mère. . . . le bébé
la petite fille. . . le chat
le garçon. . . le petit chien
vous. . . votre petit frère
la mère. . . son enfant
l'arbre. . . sa palme

The adverb doucement:

The poetic inversion of adverb and verb is artistically necessary but our students have been taught that the normal position of "ment" adverbs is following the verb.

Teacher: Nous avons un joli vers: La cloche. . . doucement tinte. Le poète a changé la position du mot doucement pour son poème. Dans le langage ordinaire nous disons: La cloche tinte doucement.

Répétez: La cloche tinte doucement.
Faites une nouvelle phrase avec les adverbes:

... agréablement
... mélodieusement
... régulièrement
... joliment
... rapidement
... doucement

Comment est-ce que Verlaine le dit? La cloche doucement tinte.

The prepositional phrase:

Keeping *on voit* as a constant we may develop the prepositional phrase through a progressive substitution drill requiring considerable linguistic agility and attention on the part of the students.

**Teacher:** Qu'est-ce qu'on voit sur un arbre?

Répétez: On voit un oiseau sur un arbre.

Maintenant faites très attention. Je vais changer une partie de la phrase. Je dis:

... devant une maison. Vous dites: On voit un arbre devant une maison.

... dans une vallée

... entre des montagnes

... à l'horizon

... au loin

Excellent! Qui peut répéter toutes les phrases depuis la première?
Useful review of the verbs *venir* and *faire* as used in the poem, of the present participle exemplified by *pleurant sans cesse* can similarly be designed. It would be particularly useful to the comprehension of the poem to underscore the light self-mockery of "0 toi que voilà pleurant sans cesse."

**Writing exercise: Level Two**

Writing exercises should develop naturally out of the classroom aural-oral work. The following example of controlled composition may be divided into as many as four parts depending on the time the teacher assigns to writing during a unit. Given in its entirety it would best be a home assignment. Note that all of the questions would have been answered orally during the recitations and, in fact, are frequently identical with some of the questions of the two questionnaires. Comparison is invited between the presentation of a level two writing exercise and the less controlled format of the same exercise for level three.

**Presentation:**

Répondez aux questions suivantes en mettant les réponses de chaque groupement l'une après l'autre *sans les numéroter*. Vous verrez à la fin du travail une petite composition de quatre paragraphes.

Comme d'habitude, on vous prie de sauter une ligne en écrivant à la main, deux lignes à la machine afin de laisser de la place pour la correction:

**A.**

1. Où se trouve le poète lorsqu'il écrit ce poème?
2. Par quelle ouverture regarde-t-il le monde extérieur?
3. Qu'est-ce qui limite sa vision?

4. Qu'est-ce qu'il peut discerner (voir) quand même sa vision est ainsi limitée?

B.

1. En même temps qu'il voit le monde extérieur, quelle autre sensation physique a-t-il?

2. Quelles sont les sources des sons qu'il entend?

3. Quelle conclusion tire-t-il (strophe trois) à cause de ce qu'il voit et entend?

4. Comment exprime-t-il son regret de ne pas être libre, de ne pas pouvoir participer à cette vie "simple et tranquille?"

C.

1. Comment passe-t-il les jours en prison?

2. A qui le poète adresse-t-il la question de la dernière strophe?

3. Quels sont les sept mots essentiels de cette question?

4. Comment met-il une distance entre le moment du poème et le temps où il était plus heureux?

D.

1. Le poème est composé de combien de strophes?

2. Chaque strophe comprend combien de vers?

3. Quelle formule emploie-t-il pour les vers rimes?

4. Combien de syllabes y a-t-il dans les vers longs, dans les vers courts?

5. Est-ce que le poème est régulier ou irrégulier dans sa forme?

Votre étude comprendra les renseignements suivants:

a. Les circonstances de la vie du poète qui ont contribué à la naissance du poème.

b. Le lieu (la scène, l'endroit) décrit dans le poème; ce que le poète a pu voir et entendre, son point de vue.

c. Les sentiments du poète envers le monde extérieur.

d. Les sentiments qui viennent de l'intérieur du poète, le monde psychologique.

e. Comment le poète réussit à "faire le pont" entre les visions de l'extérieur et son attitude.

f. Une appréciation personnelle du poème.

Maximum: quatre paragraphes

L'étude sera jugée sur: 1) le style (l'exactitude) 2) le vocabulaire (employez autant que possible le nouveau vocabulaire critique) 3) l'organisation.
The Problem of Image and Symbol: A Chalkboard Lesson

Despite our use of "approximate" terminology in communicating poetry to our students at lower levels of their linguistic competency, there are some terms which may not be reduced or replaced. To do so would be to obscure essential concepts and therefore to work against our primary purposes. Two such terms for which we seem to have no adequate substitutions and which we need at a fairly early level are *une image* and *un symbole*. In our discussion of the poem "Le capitaine Jonathan" it was observed that, while the fundamental value of the poem for the first level lies in its marvelous exploitability for the phonological-graphemic system, it is also an early source of a recognition of primitive or natural symbolism through its form and its principle figure.

Because the terms image and symbol are fundamental and because of their multivalent quality (even as used by scholar-critics!) we propose an early lesson to establish their use for our students and for ourselves, a convention within a convention so to speak. This lesson in discovery is particularly indicated since we have already used *une image* as quasi synonym for *un dessin, un croquis* and even *un tableau*.

A rapid search of dictionary definitions will confirm the position that no definition nor even a series of definitions will suffice. *Le Petit Littré* (1959) gives:

IMAGE (lat. *imago*), sf. Ce qui imite, ce qui ressemble, ressemblance. . .Représentation d'un objet dans l'eau, dans un miroir, etc. . .Fig. Ce qui imite. Ces jeux sont une image de la guerre. . .Fig. Idée. . .Description. . .Métaphore, similitude.
SYMBOLE (lat. symbolum...), sm. Signe... Figure ou image employée comme signe d'une chose.

Our most completely documented source, Henri Morier's Dictionnaire de Poétique et de Rhétorique divides image more explicitly into image abstraite, image impressive, image incohérente, image plastique departing from the following basic definition:

Term abstrait indiquant de manière imagée l'essence, l'état, la manière d'être, le mouvement de l'objet ou la disposition d'un ensemble d'objets.

An extensive list of "symboles consacrés ou conventionnels" follows this definition of symbole:

Objet concret choisi pour signifier l'une ou l'autre de ses qualités dominantes. La sphère est le symbole de la perfection; l'eau le symbole de l'écoulement, de la souplesse, de l'inconstance, de la transparence, de la purification, du baptême.

It would not serve our purposes to quote other guides to literary terms since the same ambivalence pertains throughout. Somehow we must provide the two terms with sufficient unequivocal meaning that they may be used by our students when a poem calls for their use. Concreteness and active participation are the keys to this lesson. The vocabulary must not present a problem. With what body of shared vocabulary can we bring to life these abstract concepts? The cognate vocabulary of mathematics, the names of geometric figures, the names of animals, all of these would lend themselves to the audio-lingual-visual lesson we have in mind. The choice of geometric figures is an arbitrary one.

Setting: The students have no books or papers on their desks. They have been informed that the lesson will require their complete attention.
to what is done at the chalkboard and their rapid movement to and from
the board on signal. The lesson proceeds with much the same pacing as
an oral drill and indeed calls for some of the repetition activity of
a drill. Only the first figure has already been drawn by the teacher.
It is a square.

**Teacher:** Voilà un carré. Rédétez: un carré. (Students repeat.) Un
carré est une figure géométrique. Rédétez: Un carré est une figure
géométrique. . .Maintenant, écoutez bien. Robert, allez au tableau et
dessinez un rectangle. Vous savez ce que c'est qu'un rectangle, n'est-
ce pas? A côté du carré, là, dessinez votre rectangle. Bien! Qu'est-
ce que c'est? . . .Oui. C'est un rectangle. Facile, n'est-ce pas?
Bien. Au-dessous du carré, Anne, dessinez un cercle. . .Voilà! Un
peu faible, mais nous savons ce que c'est. Qu'est-ce que cette figure
géométrique?. . .Oui. C'est un cercle. Maintenant, André, on va voir
si vous connaissez bien les figures géométriques. Allez au tableau
Bien. Qu'est-ce que c'est?. . .Voilà. Nous avons quatre figures
géométriques. Prononcez! (The teacher moves from one to another of
the figures and requires the appropriate response.)

Bon! Ecoutez maintenant. Ces figures que nous venons de
dessiner sont des images. On ne peut pas les emporter. Elles
n'existent pas en trois dimensions. Est-ce que Robert peut mettre son
rectangle dans sa poche? Non. C'est que son rectangle est là au
tableau et dans la tête, mais c'est tout. Cela représente alors une
idée abstraite, quelque chose que nous acceptons par l'intelligence.
Le cercle d'Anne, est-ce qu'on peut l'emporter? Non, ce n'est qu'une
idée abstraite représentée par quelques traits au tableau.

Je vais vous proposer une progression, une sorte de petite promenade à travers cette idée de l'image. Regardez. Je copie la figure ovale mais... je la dessine verticalement. Est-ce que c'est toujours un ovale? Oui. C'est toujours un ovale mais regardez-le bien attentivement. Est-ce que mon ovale vous rappelle quelque chose? Regardez bien. Si je vous dis que mon ovale représente à mes yeux un objet que vous connaissez bien, un objet qui peut être blanc ou brun clair, un objet qui renferme de la nourriture... Vous n'y êtes pas encore? Il y a dans cet objet quelque chose qui fait partie du petit déjeuner américain... On en fait une omelette. (Student: Un oeuf?) Voilà! C'est curieux. Pour Marc et pour moi c'est un oeuf. Mais pour vous autres?... Mais vous avez raison. Ce n'est pas un oeuf. C'est l'image d'une abstraction, de l'ovale. Mais pour deux personnes cette image représente un objet réal, un oeuf. Alors, pour nous c'est un symbole. C'est parce que nous voulons accepter une idée derrière une image. Regardez. Si je mets des couleurs sur cet ovale, cela devient déjà le symbole d'une fête. Cela devient un oeuf de Pâques.

Lisette, à côté du triangle que Charles vient de dessiner, mettez un autre triangle. Mais...écoutez! La base de votre triangle doit être plus longue que les côtés. Parfait! Nous avons deux triangles qui ne sont pas pareils. Regardez! Je dessine deux triangles ensemble. Qu'est-ce que c'est? C'est un pyramide, n'est-ce pas? Est-ce que cela vous rappelle quelque chose? Les pyramides de quel pays? De l'Egypte? Oui. Cela peut être le symbole de l'ancien Egypte. Les deux triangles séparés, comme le carré, comme le cercle, comme l'ovale horizontal ne
sont que des images d'idées abstraites pour le moment. Mais déjà l'ovale vertical et les deux triangles prennent un sens un peu plus large. S'ils nous rappellent quelque chose qui n'est pas là, c'est que nous les acceptons comme des symboles.


guide pour les touristes. Si on le trouve dans un guide touristique qu'est-ce que cela signifie? Un hôtel? Bien sûr. Dans le fameux Guide Michelin pour la France on voit toutes sortes de symboles pour indiquer la qualité d'un hôtel ou de la cuisine d'un restaurant. On trouve des étoiles (** * * *), des fourchettes, une petite auto pour indiquer que le stationnement est possible. Ce sont alors des symboles acceptés par tout le monde.

If at this point the teacher should feel that the concept of visual images which become symbols has been made clear he might go on to the next step. The line drawings for this part of the lesson appear in Figure 10. I have sometimes continued the visual explanation with the drawings of Figure 11. The series of triangles is seen as the symbol for a chain of mountains. The circle and wavy line become an apple and a serpent leading to the statement: Si vous voyez une pomme et un serpent à quoi pensez-vous? The teacher must know his community and his students if he expects a ready response to Biblical symbolism.

The next step in the lesson is the assignment: Vous comprenez maintenant la valeur des symboles. Pour demain trouvez quatre symboles publicitaires ou dessinez quatre symboles que vous montrerez à la classe. This assignment provides not only the opening oral portion of the next day's work but a generous supply of material for display. Step three will bring the use of word-symbols from the poetry already known to the students or from a new poem. Material from the visualization assignment will often lead directly into such a discussion. Students have, for example, drawn the hour-glass symbolic of the passing of time. They do not know the name for the object in French.
Teacher: A quoi sert cet objet?
Student: ...pour l'heure...
Teacher: Oui, cet instrument sert à marquer l'heure. De quoi est-il rempli?
Student: ...le sable...
Teacher: Oui, il est rempli de sable. Voulez-vous répéter?
Cet instrument rempli de sable qui sert à marquer l'heure s'appelle un sablier. Qu'est-ce que c'est qu'un sablier?
Répondez, s'il vous plaît.
Student: C'est un instrument rempli de sable qui sert à marquer l'heure.
Teacher: Voilà. Maintenant, comme symbole qu'est-ce que le sablier représente?
Student: Le temps?
Student: Le désert?
Teacher: On trouve beaucoup de sable dans le désert. Dans le désert le sable bouge tout le temps. Le vent change la forme des tas de sable d'un moment à l'autre. Alors, on pourrait penser au sable comme symbole de l'instabilité, du changement capricieux. Si un poète trouve que la vie est capricieuse, il peut invoquer l'image du sable.
In the poems we choose for the secondary school program the types of imagery and symbolism are easily understood by the students once they have passed the original conceptual hurdle. The chalkboard lesson is not a lesson in poetry but a pre-conditioning lesson in poetic awareness or poetic sensitivity.
Figure 10.—Figures Used in the Chalkboard Lesson
Figure 11.—Additional Figures for the Chalkboard Lesson
Developing the Poetic Pulsebeat: Two Poetry Games

While we have reservations about referring to such unscientific, unmeasurable qualities as "sensitivity" or "imagination" there are areas in foreign language learning that have not yet been isolated by any methods of controlled research. We are aware that the ability to correct one's own performance while in the process of speaking or writing is a valuable skill. The student who early in his studies begins to develop a feeling for what "sounds right" is well on the road to correct and fluent use of the new language. The attempts of the audio-lingual school to produce this reaction by repetition of correct forms prior to analysis have borne fruit on a low level. That is, the basic structures and fixed phrases learned from dialogues and recombination narratives are quite readily assimilated. When the student needs or wants to create a sentence he has never heard or practised there enters the same type of interference that we complain of when students have been permitted to interpose the English language in their recitations. Dr. Wilga Rivers has contributed to the dialogue concerning habit formation as the sole modus faciendi of the modern language program. As a result of the experiences of practicing teachers we have come to realize the need for providing opportunities to use the language beyond the repetition and transformation stages.

As the student becomes acquainted with poetry he will notice the richness and variety in the poetic use of words. A sense of rhythm and cadence in language will become awakened. The teacher can take advantage of the urge to discover that is still part of the
adolescent by producing an occasional game in which he may test himself against the actual performance of a poet. Two such games are described in the following materials.

Using a poem of Paul Verlaine I have asked students to discover the rhyme scheme, the metrical pattern and a few missing words by their "fit". The student is given beside each stanza two lists in which are hidden the necessary words to complete the lines left unfinished. His prior knowledge of structure and vocabulary are called upon, as well as his growing feeling for poetic necessity.

An excellent chapter by Margaret Schlauch in *The Gift of Language* explores the contributions of poetry to the growth of languages and to the individual's language awareness. Among the contributions she sees, "semantic rejuvenation" or the poet's way of reminding us of earlier and more exact meanings that have become worn away by the erosion of time and overuse. Other contributions she has described as the use of "abstractions to express the concrete", "evocation of the unsaid", and a primary quality of poetry, the "reinforcement by sound". In the first game I have tried to incorporate some of these values.
"LA LUNE BLANCHE"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>La lune blanche</td>
<td>la fois</td>
<td>la fois</td>
<td>manche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(I) Luit dans _______</td>
<td>les bois</td>
<td>les bois</td>
<td>revanche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(II) De chaque _______</td>
<td>les lois</td>
<td>les lois</td>
<td>branche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part une voix</td>
<td>les mois</td>
<td>les mois</td>
<td>avalanche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sous la ramee...</td>
<td>les toits</td>
<td>les toits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O bien-aimée.</td>
<td></td>
<td>(I)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L'étang reflète,</td>
<td></td>
<td>(II)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(III) Profond</td>
<td>tiroir</td>
<td>ce soir</td>
<td>girouette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(IV) La _________</td>
<td>la gloire</td>
<td>la gloire</td>
<td>pirouette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Du saule noir</td>
<td>a boire</td>
<td>a boire</td>
<td>silhouette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Où le vent pleure...</td>
<td>pouvoir</td>
<td>pouvoir</td>
<td>voix répète</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(V) Rêvons, c'est _______</td>
<td>miroir</td>
<td>miroir</td>
<td>omelette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(VI) Un vaste et ________</td>
<td>grande</td>
<td>grande</td>
<td>appartement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apaisement</td>
<td>apparemment</td>
<td>apparemment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semble descendre</td>
<td>lentement</td>
<td>lentement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(VII) Du _________</td>
<td>méandre</td>
<td>méandre</td>
<td>firmament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Que l'astre irise...</td>
<td>prendre</td>
<td>prendre</td>
<td>changement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(VIII) C'est l'heure _______</td>
<td>tendre</td>
<td>tendre</td>
<td>néant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>moindre</td>
<td>moindre</td>
<td>batiment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(VI)</td>
<td>(VI)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Que l'astre irise...</td>
<td>(VII)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C'est l'heure _______</td>
<td>(VIII)</td>
<td>cerise, jolie, exquise, brise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Answers**

I. les bois        V. l'heure
II. branche        VI. tendre
III. miroir        VII. firmament
IV. silhouette     VIII. exquise
Nous Sommes Tous Des Poètes...  

Dans la première colonne (A) on vous donne le premier vers de dix poèmes. Dans la deuxième colonne (B) il y a le deuxième vers de ces poèmes. Choisissez le vers dans le deuxième groupe qui convient le mieux par la structure, le rythme, l'image, le sens, pour continuer le vers dans (A):

(A)

1. Il était une feuille avec ses lignes  
2. Quand nul ne la regarde,  
3. Le temps a fui  
4. L'univers, une toute petite chose,  
5. Mon amour est triste  
6. On ne peut me connaître  
7. Est-ce que le temps est beau?  
8. L'air c'est rafraîchissant  
9. Je ne remplirai plus vos questionnaires  
10. Quel jour sommes-nous  

(B)

a. Parce qu'il est fidèle  
b. Se demandait l'escargot  
c. la mer n'est plus la mer,  
d. Je ne sais comment je m'appelle  
e. Entre en moi à pas de voleur,  
f. le feu c'est dévorant  
g. Ligne de vie
h. Nous sommes tous les jours
i. Mieux que tu me connais
j. Mars est fini

The correct responses and the poets are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Poem</th>
<th>Poet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(g)</td>
<td>Robert Desnos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>(c)</td>
<td>Jules Supervielle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>(j)</td>
<td>Paul Claudel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>(e)</td>
<td>Jean Wahl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>Rene Char</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>(i)</td>
<td>Paul Eluard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>Robert Desnos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>Claude Roy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>(g)</td>
<td>Pierre Emmanuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>(h)</td>
<td>Jacques Prévert</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The game of matching lines of poetry in a creative sense makes no appeal to poems previously studied and is therefore not to be used as a test. There are correct answers, of course, since these lines of poetry have actually been written but here they are used as an exercise in poetic exploration by the student to advance further on the road to sensitivity. When the students have checked their papers they are asked to explain why they made certain choices. They make appeal to structural relationships: Il n'y a pas de verbe dans le vers quatre. Le vers (e) commence par un verbe à la troisième personne. Their sense of vocabulary enters into play: Il y a le verbe connaître dans
le vers six et dans le vers (i). They can follow an image: Le temps a 
fui, alors quelque chose est finie. A student who was looking only for 
rhyme found that lines (3) and (g) satisfied him. Appeal was made to 
the thematic appropriateness, to the development: Le vers (10) est une 
question. Le vers (h) répond à cette question. Dans le vers (8) et 
le vers (f) il y a la même forme du verbe ou de l'adjectif.

The poems chosen from *Poesie la vie entiere* included selections 
from poets already known to the students. After the oral defense they 
were asked to guess the names of the poets. This they did with some 
success in the case of Prévert and Desnos. When another class was 
allowed to choose from the list a poem to study they chose the Eluard 
"On ne peut me connaître."
Experiencing the Unexpected: "Le Message" by Jacques Prevert

According to research in the use of interaction analysis as a tool in teacher education, non-directive teaching behaviors tend to support increased student participation and improved attitudes towards the matter at hand. An excellent exposition of work in progress is the article of Dr. Gertrude Moskowitz of Temple University which appeared in the March, 1968 issue of Foreign Language Annals. The work of Dr. Moskowitz seems to point the way to solving a major problem in the pre-service and in-service education of the modern foreign language teacher. The problem is, of course, how to establish teaching behaviors that will adapt to both the necessarily mechanistic habituating practices of the very early levels and the open-ended, interactive practices we aim for in the long run.

As reported by Dr. Moskowitz, the investigation of actual classroom performances has thus far been limited to grammar and conversation lessons. Much of the poetry which is linguistically accessible to the American student of French provides multiple possibilities for student interpretation and seems particularly appropriate for the use of teaching strategies of a liberating nature. The teacher must, however, be willing to accept the consequences of such strategies which may be disconcerting and will, by definition, be unexpected because unstructured.

An example of such an experience raises the valid question: How much non-directive teaching can be used in the foreign language classroom where the objective is the increasing use of the target language?
The corpus of the lesson was the poem, "Le Message", which appears on page 184 of the pocket edition of PAROLES by Jacques Prévert.

**LE MESSAGE**

La porte que quelqu'un a ouverte  
La porte que quelqu'un a refermée  
La chaise où quelqu'un s'est assis  
Le chat que quelqu'un a caressé  
Le fruit que quelqu'un a mordu  
La lettre que quelqu'un a lue  
La chaise que quelqu'un a renversée  
La porte que quelqu'un a ouverte  
La route où quelqu'un court encore  
Le bois que quelqu'un traverse  
La rivière où quelqu'un se jette  
L'hôpital où quelqu'un est mort.

Having planned the presentation and exploitation of this poem with a fourth year class I decided to open the door to individual interpretations. The poem was seen to be completely accessible as to vocabulary with a single unknown word for that class, the past participle of mordre. The structural transformation from passive voice to active was seen as an excellent and appropriate review. The movement of the twelve lines leaves no room for ambiguity. Each action is stated succinctly and leads into the next almost as a Gouin series. The presentation was accomplished rapidly as was the question-response exercise which served as confirmation of meaning and practice in
transformation.

The anonymity of the principal character, "quelqu'un", was accepted by the students as a justifiable poetic act. No decision was reached as to the sex of "quelqu'un" though several students favored a feminine theory on the grounds that women more often keep cats.

At this point, wishing to get at the question of artistic truth, I began to explore what seemed to me a thorny issue:

Teacher: On ne sait pas qui est mort. On ne sait pas, à vrai dire, comment le poète a découvert tous ces détails. Nous acceptons quand même ce qu'il nous dit. Est-ce que vous acceptez tout ce poème sans réserve?

The expected answer never came. Instead of a response justifying the details on the basis of l'imagination which had often served as a sufficient explanation, the first two students offered a theory that had not occurred to me.

Student: Le poète a lu cela dans un journal.

Student: Non, le poète est journaliste!

The rest of the class immediately supported these hypotheses as often happens when an unexpected interpretation arises, either because the student mind tends to run in the same shallow channels or because the students recognize a good idea when they hear it. At any rate I attempted to clarify the analysis by a question referring back to the text:

Teacher: Où voyez-vous cela?
The response was confused. Some saw it in the style—brevity, lack of specific detail, the classic who-what-when-where of their scholastic journalism texts. Other students simply relied on their experience of the kind of article common to the daily newspapers, the *fait divers*.

A kind of frustration became apparent as the students tried within the limits of their command of French to convince me. Finally one of the first students to offer the idea, intrepid, requested permission to speak in English. I was sufficiently intrigued to discover his reasoning that I gave this rare permission. As a result this student and another went to the front of the classroom and without a moment's preparation assigned themselves the roles of a neighbor of the victim and an inquiring reporter. It must be noted that they had not previously discussed a word of the poem in English. The role-play lasted less than five minutes, but the dramatized theory of a journalistic notation based on a neighbor's brief witness was absolutely convincing. The neighbor only knew that the victim lived alone, owned a cat, had received a letter in the morning mail. The overturned chair and the apple from which a bite had been taken were found by the police who had traced the suicide victim by the classic procedures. The journalist noted only so much of the interview as was necessary for the reconstruction of the events for a short article.

Five minutes of English had not destroyed the foreign language atmosphere and had, as a matter of fact, made possible the exposition by students of an interpretation of the poem as well as a response to my original question of perspective. To have denied this opportunity to
the students would, it seems, have closed the door to further participation in the cooperative experiencing of poetry.

By a reflex action my response to the performance was a return to French:

Teacher: Excellent! C'est une interprétation que je n'avais pas imaginée moi-même. Mais, vous auriez pu faire tout cela en français, n'est-ce pas?

Two other students volunteered to replay the interview in French after which the entire class recited the poem which was after all the focal point of the lesson.

Now, as a true believer in method as a necessary pre-formant in the total approach to foreign language instruction, I had thoroughly prepared the lesson with the background of the students in mind. I knew what they knew. For example, they had previously studied two poems of Prevert, "Chez la Fleuriste," and "Barbara," in which the influence of cinematography is to be felt. For that reason I felt secure in planning to retrieve this earlier reaction during the course of our discussion of the new poem. My own response to the repeated use of a "stenographic" structure was predicated on my awareness of the work of Prevert as a scenarist. The resonance of the poem was, for me, incontrovertibly that of a series of notes for the placement of a camera or for the identification of the views taken by such a camera.

Without going so far as the analysis of Gaston Bachelard it seemed to me that the "poetic distance" maintained throughout the poem was not only intended by the poet but felt by him in the process of creation. We were not meant to see the face of the victim, nor the
words of the message which had triggered the suicide, nor any past life of the victim. Indeed we were meant to perceive no true time at all since the peculiar structure only presented the first eight lines in a past tense to establish their anteriority over the acts of the final four lines. I was aware, as my students would not be, of the many unidentified bodies dredged up from the Seine. I felt this poem, therefore, presented a successful example of a type of anonymous "tombstone" set in a Potter's field (originally "pauper's field") to the memory of a Jane Doe or a John Doe. It was thus a dispassionate but not disinterested twentieth century appeal to the "freres humains qui apres nous vivez."

The linguistic investigation did indeed prepare the students for the acceptance of a part of my interpretation of this problem of perspective. They were well prepared to perform the transformation previously mentioned:

Teacher: La porte a été ouverte par quelqu'un.
Student: Quelqu'un a ouvert la porte.

Teacher: La porte a été refermée par quelqu'un.
Student: Quelqu'un a refermé la porte.

Teacher: Le chat a été caressé par quelqu'un.
Student: Quelqu'un a caressé le chat.

The students themselves discovered that the act and not the actor was stressed in each of these originally incomplete formulations. They were also able to discover the poet's effect of reducing the level of sentimentality by impersonalizing the grammatical structure. One student even suggested that the poet might have used the word "voila" as
preface to each of the lines. This was in response to my question: Comment peut-on former de chacun des vers de ce poème une phrase complète?

What I had not been able to anticipate was the strong personal reaction the students were to have. I am indebted to these students for a new insight despite what I believed to have been an adequate response to the poem as I saw it. In summary I may quote a persuasive statement on "The Poem as Defense" from an article so-titled by Professor Wylie Sypher:

Can you see why I say that our only, or our best, defense against technology and human engineering is art? It is a resistance critics can seldom make, since critics often try to exclude the unpredictable in behalf of their explanations. A good many critics and, I fear, teachers are eager to assign official meanings. But the poem, like the first observation of the scientist, opens unexpected possibilities. The poem transcends its own techniques because it is a recognition we could not predict. So the authenticity of a work of art usually can be judged by the unexpectedness of its direction of discovery.
Linguistic Exploitation of Poetry: Dangers and Benefits

As an instructor of methodology I have been struck by an all too frequent reaction of teachers in service as well as pre-teaching language majors. When asked to confront a poem for linguistic exploitation most teachers choose the first transformation that comes to mind, a change in person or number. A possible reason for this apparently automatic reaction is the frequency and early use of such drills in beginning audio-lingual materials. A primary and even intuitive appreciation of the nature of poetry would, it seems, signal the danger of using person-number substitution as an appropriate exploitation of the structure of most poems since to do so would contravene the point of view of the poet and the organic structure of the poem. This would work against the objective of allowing the student to work his way into the poem.

An example of a poem for which person-number substitution is the least appropriate transformation is "Chez la fleuriste" of Prevert. The only conceivable situation in which the third person narrative could be expressed in first person would be a report to Saint Peter since the subject of the poem is a dying man! Nevertheless there is an attractive and immensely useful language exploitation available to the teacher and students using this poem.
CHEZ LA FLEURISTE

Un homme entre chez une fleuriste et choisit des fleurs.
La fleuriste enveloppe les fleurs.
L'homme met la main à sa poche pour chercher l'argent
l'argent pour payer les fleurs mais il met en même temps subitement
la main sur son cœur et il tombe

En même temps qu'il tombe l'argent roule à terre et puis les fleurs tombent en même temps que l'homme en même temps que l'argent et la fleuriste reste là avec l'argent qui roule avec les fleurs qui s'abîment avec l'homme qui meurt évidemment tout cela est très triste et il faut qu'elle fasse quelque chose la fleuriste mais elle ne sait pas comment s'y prendre elle ne sait pas par quel bout commencer

Il y a tant de choses à faire avec cet homme qui meurt ces fleurs qui s'abîment et cet argent cet argent qui roule qui n'arrête pas de rouler.17

The poem is experienced—in the manner of a great many of Prévert's poems—as a scenario. It is written entirely in the present tense and would serve admirably as directions to actors and to the camaramen following the action. The actions are both simultaneous—continuing and serial—completed. The French language makes no distinction in the present tense for these two verbal aspects. However, and here one arrives at the pedagogically interesting point, the past
The tenses used to convey these aspects in French are dual. Either the past definite or the past indefinite will be used to present individual, completed, non-repeated, non-habitual action in the past. The imperfect will be used to express continuing, habitual, incompletely situated action or actions occurring simultaneously in the past.

The American student traditionally finds these two verbal aspects a formidable metaphysical hurdle though he may readily form the verbs correctly and recognize them when reading. It is the active, functional use of the past indefinite (or past definite) as opposed to the imperfect that must be taught and retaught using a variety of situations. The perfectly dichotomized picture of events in this poem makes a transformation of tense the most logical and useful exercise and in no way destroys the point of view or the essential structure of the poem. In fact, by requiring the student to view the poem, and experience the events from the vantage of past time several of the relationships become clearer. The man is dying rather than suddenly dead, therefore the reaction of the florist is reprehensible. She is seen to have more concern for the money and for her flowers than for a human being who is still possibly within reach of her aid, or at least deserving of her single-minded compassion. The fraternal implication of the poem is therefore made more evident, or at least the underlying semantic field is enhanced by a reference to a more revealing structural pattern. In this case the past indefinite correctly reveals the pizzacato rhythm of the first stanza; each action is discrete, a separate unit though sequential. The second and third stanzas, if we may maintain the musical metaphor, are contrapuntal, the falling, the
dying, the rolling are separate strands of action the simultaneity of which is expressed in the stationary personnage of the florist:

"et la fleuriste reste là"

In order to establish this dual aspect the questions of the teacher should be given in the tense required in the answer. Normally one does ask "What happened?" rather than "What happens?" Like the poem, "Un message", this poem is also a slice-of-life, a fait divers, and one is justified in asking a first series of questions the answers to which come directly from the text. A second set of questions we may call contextual, questions related to but not directly answerable from the text. An example of contextual questions follows:

1. Pourquoi l'homme a-t-il mis la main sur son coeur?
   Est-ce un jeune homme ou un homme d'un certain âge?

   The term, "une crise cardiaque" will be easily substituted for the student's probable response "une attaque du coeur". I have actually been given the response, "C'est un homme d'un certain âge ou même un vieillard parce que rarement un jeune homme a une crise cardiaque." This response presented a splendid opportunity for the correction: "parce qu'il est rare qu'un jeune homme ait une crise cardiaque." This was reinforced by une crise de rhumatismes, une crise de foie, and une crise de nerfs. The reinforcements were then prefaced by: "Il est possible que. . . ."

2. Est-ce que l'homme est mort tout de suite?
   Comment savez-vous? (This is an appeal to the transformation: il meurt--il mourait.)
3. Pourquoi le poète change-t-il l’ordre du récit dans les deux dernières strophes?

Here the interest is in the order of the movement of the florist’s eyes. She first notices the money, then the flowers fallen on the floor, then the man. The final stanza shows clearly her ultimate concern as she looks from the man, to the flowers to the money which keeps rolling about on the floor.

4. Est-ce que le poète exprime un avis (une opinion) dans ce poème? Quels sentiments éprouvez-vous à la fin du récit? Comment est-ce que vous auriez agi dans la même situation? Est-ce qu’on fait toujours ce qu’on devrait faire? Pourquoi?

In addition to the contextual questions the poem lends itself to oral and written composition. Many teachers would favor the type of directed composition that makes no appeal to English. The directions for such a composition might be phrased in this way:

Directions: Racontez les événements de ce poème comme si vous en aviez été témoin et en y ajoutant des détails: le temps qu'il faisait, l'âge de l'homme et sa tenue (la manière dont il était habillé), l'âge de la fleuriste, le décor du magasin de fleurs, etc. Est-ce que les détails ajoutent quelque chose à l'impression? Voyez-vous comment le poète a réussi à évoquer l’universalité de son thème en gardant une certaine impersonnalité, une distance dans son récit?

The final questions require the student to return to the poem.
and to look at it again as a work of art. We have avoided having him substitute his paraphrase for the original creation. A valuable statement on the virtue and danger of paraphrase is made by Professor Darrel Mansell who distinguishes the several schools of "meaning" in modern criticism and concludes that:

Paraphrasing the temporarily isolated core of argument always takes the student closer to the total meaning of the poem, rather than away from it, so long as he has clearly in mind that it is a heresy to think he has paraphrased the total meaning itself.18

Additional useful exploitations of the structures of the poem may be rapidly performed to vary the activities of the several class periods devoted to the study of the poem. Examples follow:

Phrase modèle: Un homme entre chez une fleuriste

pour acheter des fleurs.

Cues: un libraire . . . . . . . . les livres

un boulanger . . . . . . . . le pain

les petits gâteaux

la pâtisserie

un épiciер . . . . . . . . la confiture

les boîtes de sardines

un crémier . . . . . . . . le lait

le fromage

le beurre

les œufs

un marchand de poissons . . . les moules

le poisson
un marchand de tabac . . . . le tabac
les cigarettes
les timbres
les cartes postales

Phrase modèle: Il met la main à sa poche pour chercher son portefeuille.

Cues: la montre, les lunettes, les allumettes, la pipe, la carte d'identité, le mouchoir

Phrase modèle: Il faut qu'elle fasse quelque chose.

Cues: trouver, vendre, montrer, chercher, dire, prendre

For an advanced level class the verb "falloir" might be given in the imperfect thus requiring the transformation of the cues to the imperfect subjunctive. In the spoken language the formula "Il fallait qu'elle fasse . . ." is acceptable and would have been maintained during the original transformation of the poem's events into the two past tenses.

Phrase modèle: Il y a tant de choses à faire.

Translation drill: There's so much to see.

" " " " tell.
" " " " explain.
" " " " buy.
" " " " do.

Here the advanced level class might be asked to perform a negative transformation so as to supply "ne . . . rien" in the proper slot. The same type of translation drill using the same verb cues would be presented:
Translation drill: There was nothing to see.

" " " " tell.

In summary, the linguistic exploitation of a poem should 1) serve to confirm and clarify its essential meaning, 2) review structures lying dormant, 3) reinforce the active command of the structures and vocabulary of the poem and 4) provide for variety in the lesson.
The Poet and the News of the Day

On page 31 of the New York Times of March 9, 1969 the following article appeared:

Nobel Prize Winner Sees Nuclear War by 2000 A.D.

Cambridge, Mass., March 5 (UPI)—Dr. George Wald, a 1967 winner of the Nobel Prize in medicine says technological advances pose the threat of nuclear war by the year 2000.

'I think what we're up against—they, we, all of us—is the threat of this being a generation of the apocalypse,' Dr. Wald told a gathering of students and faculty this week at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

A "research strike" was conducted Tuesday to demonstrate concern for the peaceful uses of science and to protest the increasing dominance of military research on college campuses.

On page 88 of the same newspaper a three-column article under the headline "Lack of Ethics in Science is Feared" reported the discussion of a group of "distinguished thinkers" during a forum at the Harvard Club on "the gap between science and ethics". Such articles and discussions could have been collected since the explosion of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima. The teacher of poetry will see that, however voluminous the journalistic documentation might be, the following poem has far more power to evoke thought and discussion on this theme:
IL NE FAUT PAS...

Il ne faut pas laisser les intellectuels jouer avec les allumettes
Parce que Messieurs quand on les laisse seul
Le monde mental Messssieurs
N'est pas du tout brillant
Et sitôt qu'il est seul
Travaille arbitrairement
S'érigéant pour soi-même
Et soi-disant généreusement en l'honneur des travailleurs du bâtiment
Un auto-monument
Rèpétions-le Messssssseurs
Quand on le laisse seul
Le monde mental
Ment
Monumentalement

This poem, appearing on page 212 in the Livre de poche edition
of Paroles (1949) has a twenty-year advance on the newspaper articles quoted. It is an indictment in typically Prévertian popular humoristic
terms of a serious threat to modern man. Its very form as printed in
the collection can easily be seen as an image of the mushroom-shaped
cloud which would, in the 1940's, have been so familiar to newspaper
readers and viewers of film documentaries. The movement from image to
symbol to argument seems dictated by the poem itself. There arises
the legitimate question whether the power of the image we claim to see
would not be diminished for a generation of students less conscious of
the shadow of the atomic bomb. The immediate perception of the por-
tentous mass will undoubtedly fade thus obliging a teacher to place the
poem in its historical perspective. Despite this inevitable weakening
of its immediate effect the unusual format should continue to all atten-
tion to itself and cause the perceptive student to wonder.
This brief but pithy poem of Prévert is a powerful argument for the relevancy of poetry to questions of the day. It is not only the poet—contemporary of the reader who has maintained such ties with his times. As our students advance in their study of the language they will meet Rutebeuf and Villon for whom poverty, hunger, désœuvrement and isolation were poignant and present themes. Prévert has the advantage of speaking to them at a relatively early level.
A teacher-participant in an N.D.E.A. Institute brought to my attention the poem "Nature Morte" by Emile Henriot which is found in Tome I of the Cours de Langue et de civilisation française of G. Mauger. This was a poem which the teacher liked but found "impossible to teach" despite the simple structures and vocabulary which she declared to be well within the range of her first year students who used the text. She had attempted to teach the poem to several classes with unsatisfactory results. The discussion that followed made her decide to try again.

In principle I found the poem to be imminently teachable, preferably somewhere near the end of the first year. It is written completely in the present tense and is made up of seven statements the first of which is the single word Midi and the last of which is a listing of things seen by the narrator. A rapid glance indicated fifteen words or word combinations, including the title, that I would consider required...
careful presentation for students at this level. The form, sixteen lines of rhymed couplets, is readily scannable. Only two of the sixteen lines must not be forced into the twelve syllable pattern of the rest of the poem. The poem would seem to have been well chosen by the authors, but authors of textbooks cannot account for every teacher and every class who will use the materials.

My opening gambit, then, was to discover why the poem so appealed to the teacher that she would continue to teach it without success. The answer was: "It's a lovely poem. It's calm and simple. It's like a picture." This was exactly the response one might have expected from this teacher who was, herself, a calm, genteel and conscientious person. One could imagine her beautifully cadenced recitation in excellent French flowing gently over the heads of her students year after year. The second move was to inquire whether this poem which is very like a painting really is so lacking in energy that it must inevitably put students to sleep. The answer: "Well, no. There isn't much happening, but there's a lot to see." My move: "What is there to see?" Her move: "Everything the narrator sees." Question: "Can your students see through the eyes of the narrator? Can they see at all?"

From that point on, this intelligent and enthusiastic teacher asked and answered her own questions. The poem is a visual experience and had been so declared by the poet when he gave it the title, "Nature Morte". Her students, beginning to study French in the ninth grade, had no experience of the genres of painting although there was a museum nearby. The foreign language classroom contained much realia of the
map and photograph variety but no paintings. An obvious first step would be to prepare the environment. Before leaving France the teacher purchased a number of reproductions of the still life genre including post card sized reproductions of several of the Chardin paintings from the Louvre. These she planned to use with the opaque projector. Before attempting again to put life into "Nature Morte" she would see that the students were acquainted with the source of the title.

Since there was no teaching matter included in the text the next step was to consider the kinds of presentation, recitation and culmination to be used with the poem. There is a strong regional identification in the poem that should be drawn upon. Urban youngsters have difficulty identifying with a rural setting. The poem needs to be personalized. Since the poem is so visual why might not the students produce their own visual interpretations? The poem is brief enough to serve as a memorization assignment. This had been tried. Why had it not succeeded? The students were being asked to memorize a poem which did not interest them, to put their precious time and energy to an unacceptable use. Involvement, discussion for brief periods over a longer period than two days, relating the poem to the visual art, perhaps these techniques would provide the necessary motivation.

Two levels of questions were suggested. The first type of question should lead to the immediate apprehension of the text of the poem. Examples follow:

1. Quelle heure est-il?
2. Que fait le personnage principal, le narrateur?
3. Qu'est-ce qu'il va faire?
1. Quel temps fait-il?

2. Qu’est-ce qu’il voit d’abord?

3. De quoi est-ce que la maison est couverte?

4. Quel petit animal voit-il? Que fait-il?

5. Par où est-ce que le narrateur passe?

A second series of questions would follow the twenty or so composing the textual questionnaire. These questions would require a judgment or a conclusion based upon the presentation of cultural import and upon the literal statements of the poem.

1. Dans quelle province ou quelle région de la France est-ce que la scène se passe? Comment savez-vous? (Probablement la Normandie à cause des pommes et du cidre.)

2. Quel est le métier de l'homme?

3. Quel âge lui donnez-vous?

4. Que vient-il de faire?

5. Est-ce une maison neuve? Comment savez-vous?

6. Est-ce qu’il y a une autre personne dans la maison? Qui est-ce?

7. Pourquoi le poète ne met-il pas cette autre personne dans le poème?

8. Quelles sont les couleurs indiquées ou suggérées?

9. Comment le poète suggère-t-il le calme, la qualité régulière et ordonnée de cette vie?

10. Est-ce que l'homme est content, triste, fatigué?

11. Le poème fait-il appel aux yeux, aux oreilles?
Having in the first set of questions identified the scene as rural, the teacher might interpose some personalizing questions before entering upon further analysis:

1. Habitez-vous la campagne ou la ville?
2. Qu'est-ce qu'on voit à la campagne qu'on ne voit pas en ville?
3. Est-ce que vous rentrez à midi pour le déjeuner?
4. Où prenez-vous le déjeuner? Tous les jours?
5. Est-ce que vous déjeunez dans une atmosphère de tranquillité?
6. Combien de temps est-ce qu'on vous permet pour prendre le déjeuner à l'école? Est-ce assez?
7. Qu'est-ce qu'il y a sur la table?
8. Qu'est-ce que vous mangez d'habitude? Que buvez-vous?

Finally the lesson might return to the works of art already made a part of the classroom scene with the aim of relating the two art forms, painting and poetry:

1. Quels peintres ont fait du genre "nature morte" leur spécialité? Que voit-on dans leurs tableaux? Est-ce que ce sont toujours des objets sans vie?
2. Le titre du poème est-il bien choisi?

By the time the students had used and re-used the language of the poem in this way the final recitation from memory would be literally child's play. Individual drawings or a joint class project in the form of collage could also serve the students and the poetry.
Two Levels of Composition

Beyond its use in stimulating discussion, the poem, "Nature Morte," is exploitable on several levels for developing careful, exact written composition in French. The obvious culmination of the oral phase is the dictation of the sixteen lines of poetry. Containing fewer than one hundred fifty words, the poem nonetheless presents the kind of morpho-graphemic interest that we seek in any dictation. The post-dictation review will bring to light disappearing final consonants, unheard plurals, adjective agreement. Dictation, however, while a useful and perhaps even necessary activity, is not composition. The following examples suggest two ways in which controlled composition might be developed beginning with a second level class.

Level Two

Directions: Remplissez les blancs en employant le vocabulaire du poème, "Nature Morte." Remarquez qu’il faudra parfois changer le temps du verbe ou la personne et faire accorder l’adjectif avec le nom.

1. Il était _______ et l’air était _______.

2. Un fermier _______ des champs et regardait sa maison qui _______ presque sous son manteau de _______ vert.

3. Deux lézards _______ au bord de la _______.

4. La fenêtre du _______ était _______ et l’homme a aperçu la table _______ avec une nappe à croisillons.

5. La nappe était _______ et _______. (deux couleurs)

6. Il y avait des _______ des champs dans un vase à côté de la _______ d’un pain rustique et _______.
7. Le pain craquait et ______ bon le four et le ______.
8. Il y avait des assiettes de bois ______ naïvement.
9. Dans une ______ il y avait des ______ qu'on avait cueillis dans son ______.
10. Le cidre était ______ et ______ à la fois et ______ la pomme et pétillait.
11. Le lait était ______ et ______.
12. L'omelette fumante et ______ était dans un plat ______.
13. Le poète a donné le titre ______ ______ à son poème pour souligner les qualités picturales et la tranquillité de la scène.
14. La perspective, les dimensions et le cadre de ce poème-tableau sont formés par la ______ entr'ouverte.

Level Three
Directions: Le poème d'Henriot est écrit en couplets rimes. Écrivez à la forme narrative au passé tout ce qui se passe et se voit dans le poème. Changez le point de vue. Le poème est écrit à la première personne. Vous écrirez votre composition à la troisième personne en donnant une personnalité au personnage dont vous parlez. Divisez votre composition en deux paragraphes.

Example:

Voici ce qu'il aperçut lorsqu'il passait devant la fenêtre entr'ouverte du salon. Il y avait la table mise avec sa nappe à croisillons. Sur la table sa femme avait mis un pot de fleurs des champs à côté de la mie d'un pain rustique et rond qui craquait et sentait bon le four et le froment. Le soleil vernissait le pain. Il vit aussi des assiettes de bois peintes naïvement, des fruits dans une coupe et des pichets d'un cidre fait un an auparavant dans son verger. Il savait que ce cidre était doux et acide à la fois et qu'il fleurait la pomme et pétillait. Enfin il vit le sel et le vin, du lait crémeux et blanc. Pour lui, le complément frugal de ce spectacle honnête était l'omelette fumante et jaune, dans un plat bleu.

When I had become acquainted with the poem it occurred to me that it would form a fitting introduction to a discussion of the relationships between painting and literature at a more advanced level. Advanced level four students are capable of preparing and presenting brief oral talks and should be given practice in doing so. The work of the teacher is limited to giving guidance in the research and in monitoring the final form of the presentation. The students do the real work. Assignments were chosen from a prepared list. Two students chose to present "l'histoire de la nature morte depuis le dix-septième siècle". They found slides and reproductions in the library and contrasted the genre bourgeois of the Flemish and Dutch with their emphasis on household equipment and utilitarian objects as against the emphasis on composition and color among the French and ultimately the
surrealistic juxtaposition of unexpected objects and the cubistic distortions. Another student prepared and presented the poem "Nature Morte" which at this level presented no problems of form or content. The entire class then studied in detail a long paragraph from Proust which can be found on page 869 of Volume I in the Pléiade edition of A la Recherche du temps perdu. The paragraph describes Marcel's growing awareness of the beauty in humble things after having been awakened by the paintings of the artist Elstir. The paragraph terminates a train of thought set in motion by the receipt of a letter from Saint-Loup. It is sufficient to mention the friendship of the two young men and the character of Marcel so sensitive to his surroundings and so readily influenced by the tastes and accomplishments of those he admires. The students are called upon to notice the vitality of the objects on the table as observed by Marcel. Here there is changing of colors, movement, "la promenade des chaises vieillottes qui deux fois par jour viennent s'installer autour de la nappe." They contrast the calm acceptance of the farmer returning to his home for the mid-day meal and the final voluntary movement of the prose passage:

... j'essayais de trouver la beauté là où je ne m'étais jamais figuré qu'elle fût, dans les choses les plus usuelles, dans la vie profonde des "natures mortes".20

One poem, one prose passage, two distinct points of view built upon the visual art of representing beauty through the selection and juxtaposition of things we see every day without really registering them upon the inner eye.
Poetry and Painting: A Long-Term View

The three poems of Jacques Prévert with which this discussion will be concerned are: "Pour faire le portrait d'un oiseau", "Promenade de Picasso", and "Lanterne magique de Picasso", all of which are from the collection, Paroles. The first two have been anthologized in a number of readers for school and college use. The third is six and one half pages long in the Livre de poche edition of Paroles. Since all three are easily available to the American teacher of French they will not be quoted at length in this study.

Briefly, the three poems elaborate a view of art that is shared by Prévert and a wide spectrum of contemporary artists imbued as he has been with the Surrealist movement. The function of the artist as revealer of truth, as dynamiter of accepted verities is linked with the theme of liberty. The liberated artist serves to emancipate his audience, that vast, non-participating mass of humanity, the consumers of art. But this emancipation is not painless. We resist, fortified against this invasion of our perspective by all of our comfortable, traditional acceptances. Prévert has seen Picasso as the very type of the contemporary artist, breaker-of-chains, and though he does not name Picasso in the first poem we can readily trace the point of view as we proceed to study the latter poems, more profuse, dense and specific in their statement.

Because of the development to be seen from the first to the last of the poems it seems logical to consider their use at three levels of language learning. "Pour faire le portrait d'un oiseau" with its direct
statement, limited vocabulary and obvious imagery can be taught at level one to students who begin their study of French in junior high school and who would therefore be eighth graders at the end of level one. There is a recurrent formula of the infinitive used in the sense of the imperative:

Peindre d'abord une cage

....

placer ensuite la toile contre un arbre

....

se cacher derrière l'arbre

....

Ne pas se décourager

Obviously this syntactic and stylistic convention reminds one of the directions for preparing a gourmet meal. It is cookbook style. The teacher will help the students to feel this style by presenting a recipe from a French cookbook. In addition he may propose to the students the prefacing of each infinitive phrase with the locution "il faut" which is implicit in the structure. Beyond the syntax, then, which presents no unsurmountable difficulty, we find that the vocabulary conforms almost entirely to that of the first level of "Le Français fondamental" and that the half dozen words not included therein are either concrete, or abstractions related to known roots.

The bird, l'oiseau, is an ever-recurring image in the work of Prévert. Here the caged bird becomes a symbol of unfreedom or artistic enslavement to convention. The liberated artist must "effacer un à un tous les barreaux" if he is to truly succeed in capturing l'oiseau-
The gentle paradox, a frequent Prévertian touch, does not escape the student. One cannot paint the portrait of a bird, nor expect the bird to sing, behind bars. Prévert allows his reader to arrive at the judgment, without coercion, that an absolute requirement for the artist as well as his subject is liberty of movement. It is worth noting that neither of the sources on established or fixed symbols that I have consulted lists the bird as having specific reference to freedom. We may say that Prévert has adopted a type of natural symbolism immediately recognizable to us in the context of occidental cultures.

For students nearing the end of level one the simple exploration of the poem by means of rapidly moving questions based on the text will suffice. A possible culmination would be the student’s own illustration of the "portrait d'un oiseau" which would certainly bring to light the paradox of the following lines:

...peindre aussi le vert feuillage et la fraîcheur du vent
la poussière du soleil
et le bruit des bêtes de l'herbe dans la chaleur de l'été... .

Having been exposed to the paradoxes and the point of view expressed in "Pour faire le portrait d'un oiseau" the second-level student will have no difficulty comprehending "Promenade de Picasso" despite its heavy load of new vocabulary and contre-petterie. This latter formula, so frequent in Prévert, is likely to be a true revelation to the American student since the word "spoonerism" is no longer a part of our everyday vocabulary. The teacher would be well advised to treat the contre-petterie as an item apart because of its importance
in the "dream" segment which is the second scene of the poem.

Since Picasso figures in the title a first step would seem to be the acquainting of the students with some of the work of the artist. Post-card reproductions from local museums, art books and slides from the art department of the school system may be used. Contrast may be shown by exposing representational paintings or photographs of fruit side by side with the Picasso paintings. The first scene depicted in the poem would then be taught. These twenty-four lines in which the apple is the unwilling and capricious model of the "peintre de la réalité" contain little in the way of difficult vocabulary but at the very least the following phrases of double entendre must be considered:

"elle ne se laisse pas faire"

"elle a son mot à dire"

"et plusieurs tours dans son sac de pomme"

"et la voilà qui tourne... doucement sans bouger"

"... toutes les apparences de la pomme sont contre lui"

We see that Prévert has taken advantage of the grammatical gender of the word "pomme" to create a truly feminine starring role, a vedette, who makes life difficult... on purpose.

The second scene of twenty-two lines is a delightful evocation of the "associations d'idées" we may all have been subject to while awake but that are more characteristic of the bizarre dream sequences brought on by a heavy dinner. Prévert, with his unique insight, describes a dream-awake that brings on sleep:

et le peintre étourdi perd de vue son modèle et s'endort.
The third and final scene introduces Picasso "qui passait par la comme il passe partout" and contains the seed of the argument, "les terrifiants pépins de la réalité." Students who have seen reproductions of Picasso works will not need additional interpretation of the disconcerting, shocking and even insulting effect of the early Picasso on an unsuspecting public. It is true, of course, that a generation born since the Second World War has been exposed to visions of even greater cruelty and obscenity through the eye of the camera and from the real world. Picasso in his wildest moments did not imagine the mountains of unclothed bones from Buchenwald or Auschwitz.

An excellent, brief statement on the development of Picasso and on the fundamental psychology of the artist is to be found in Jean Cassou's Panorama des Arts plastiques contemporains. Jean Cassou sees as the final and sufficient defense of this revolutionary life-work: "Seules la puissance et la liberté, la Poesie en un mot."

M. Cassou has included a long extract from the Prévert poem "Lanterne Magique de Picasso" along with other documentation from friends of the artist such as Gertrude Stein and Paul Eluard. He has thus recognized the poem as a valid description of the work of art in another medium. The poem is too long for presentation in its entirety even at level four. The teacher who wishes to round out the experience of students who have previously studied the first two poems would do well to make a selection among the vivid and accurate descriptions of specific paintings and to present no more than one third of the poem being careful to include the final segment of twenty-two lines which form the denouement.
At level four the poem might serve as the cap-stone of a unit on "Le poète et le peintre". It is unlikely, except in a very small high school, that a single teacher would teach the same students from level one through level four. A unit, developed over a period of two to three weeks would permit the teacher to present all three poems. A valuable comparison can be made with the poems and a prose statement by the poet-philosopher, Jacques Maritain. Despite their being worlds apart, Maritain, the celebrated Catholic philosopher, and Prévert, the epitome of anti-clericalism, have seen Picasso through the same lens. The teacher of this unit to advanced students might allow the comparison of three paragraphs from Frontières de la Poesie by Maritain.

The three paragraphs describe in lucid prose the revolution in which Picasso has been a leading figure, the revolution in the world of the plastic arts. Jacques Maritain, whose statement was first published in 1920, has used in this final paragraph the same imagery we find in the poem, "Promenade de Picasso":

La poésie, c'est parce qu'il est purement peintre que Picasso la rencontre: en quoi il est dans la ligne des maîtres, et nous rappelle un de leurs plus utiles enseignements. Cocteau l'a noté avec raison, ses œuvres ne méprisent pas la réalité, elles ressemblent, de cette ressemblance spirituelle—surréaliste pour employer un mot très vrai en lui-même—dont j'ai déjà parlé. Dictée par un démon ou par un bon ange, à certains moments on hésite à le décider. Mais non seulement les choses se transfigurent en passant de son œil à sa main; en même temps se devine un autre mystère: c'est l'âme et la chair du peintre qui font effort pour se substituer aux objets qu'il peint, en chasser la substance, entrer et se donner sous les apparences de ces choses de rien figurées sur un tableau, et qui vivent là d'une autre vie que la leur.21

We have, thus, a judgment of the painter by two poets, judgments separated by more than twenty years in time and stylistically at opposite
poles. The Prévert poems are themselves word paintings. Maritain speaks to the intelligence, as a philosopher. Advanced level students would benefit from the opportunity to compare the poetic statement and the prose statement as well as from the encounter with an important contemporary theme, the unity of the arts.
Visualization in Teaching Poetry: How Valid Is It?

Having studied several poems of Prevert and the varied approaches to presentation and exploitation, pre-teaching French majors at the Ohio State University were presented the following problem for discussion. They were shown free-hand copies of visualizations of three poems from Paroles the originals of which had been drawn by high school students.

Discussion Problem
1. Can you identify the three poems of Prévert from the accompanying visualizations? If so, name them.
2. Comment on the principle of visualization by students as an assignment in the study of poetry.
3. Should visualization be used by the teacher in the presentation phase?
4. What advantages and dangers are there in using a visual adjunct in the interpretation of literature?
5. What oral language development might result from the use of student-produced visuals?
6. Apply your conclusions to a lesson plan for the poem, "Le Cancre" (page 63, Paroles).

The students of the Methods course were not informed of the opinions of the instructor prior to the discussion. The problem is a thorny one and deserving of debate rather than the pronouncement of an established orthodox line. Typical of the vigorous and well-worded responses to the discussion problem are the remarks of student Nancy Fromson which deserve being quoted at some length:
In the classroom, the student should be encouraged to display his emotional reaction to a poem; however, he may be too embarrassed to speak openly in front of his classmates, or he may not be able to put his feelings into words. Thus, the principle of visualization as an assignment in the study of poetry can provide an excellent means of communication. The words of the poet are filtered through the mind of the reader and are colored by the reader's own interpretation and feeling about the poet's words. Any attempt by the teacher to direct the mind of the student kills the attempt of that student to establish a personal "relationship" with that poem and the poet. The poem then becomes a sterile experience. What the student is trying to say in his visual may not be crystal clear to an observer, but if the student has been able to make himself understood to himself, then he feels as if he has gained something. Also students are usually very ready to talk about something which they have made and are proud of.

Other reactions to the several questions supported the use of visualization by the students as a means of revealing to the teacher without the use of English just what the students had seen in the poem; providing for the individualization of instruction; substituting for the spoken analysis of the poem at early levels; allowing the student with less control of language to participate in discussion based on concrete rather than abstract terminology.

Dangers and disadvantages in the use of visualization by the student were also noted. The student who feels he has no artistic ability may feel discouraged by the assignment. The suggestion was made that collage techniques or non-representational forms might be used by such students. Other disadvantages noted were the possibility of incorrect cultural perceptions such as the American idea of bread and wine which have little visual relationship to the long, crusty French bread or the casually served table wine from a pitcher. In the lesson plan for "Le Cancre" one student made clear the distinction between the
American dunce cap and the French *bonnet d'âne* with its ear-like projections. The conclusion of the students was that even where incorrect visualizations were produced they could lead to a correction by the teacher.

Another student recognized the danger of substituting a concrete image for the poetic language and the impossibility of picturing the complete meaning of a poem. I agreed that we run a constant risk in juxtaposing the overly-concrete visual against the frequently nebulous poetic imagery. We must take care not to substitute a diamond-hard symbol for a cloud.

As for the use of visualization by the teacher the practice was almost unanimously condemned except for the use of what we might call contact visuals used to make the simple meaning of a word clear without translation. The intellectual task of organizing discrete words into images had best be left to the poet and ultimately to the reader.

The most frequently suggested oral development from student visualizations was the resume or paraphrased restatement. Lacking experience, the students of Methods were unable to envision the kind of student response that would be a defense of the illustration and lead to further participation by other students. In the presentation of Figure 14 the student-artist was challenged concerning the absence of the old man so distinctly portrayed in the poem, "Le Désespoir est assis sur un banc." The artist defended himself by showing that the *personnification* of despair had already been established by the poet whereas the trap represented the *effect* of despair on the unwary
passerby. The student-artist of Figure 13 was able to show very little of the many concrete images in the poem, "Promenade de Picasso" but chose to include what he considered the essential images, the apple reduced to its core and a few seeds, the broken plate and a palette representing both artists, the painter of reality and Picasso.

Figure 13.—Promenade de Picasso
Figure 14.—Le Desespoir est assis sur un banc

Figure 15 will be expanded to show the actual response from the classmates of the student-artist. When he had presented his well-considered image of the poem, "Familiale," his classmates initially approved. One student asked permission to amend the image as in Figure 16 in order to indicate the lack of unity in the family. Another student amended the original image as in Figure 17 to show that the son was much less important in the family scheme:
The conclusion of our problem would seem to be that visualization by the students is a valid technique for individualizing the study of poetry and for developing oral response based on the students' personal reactions. Great care must be taken to see that culturally authentic visual images come out of the classroom discussions even if incorrect images are produced by the students. The visualization must not be seen as a substitute for the poem. Teacher-produced visualizations as a part of the presentation of the poem should be limited to the brief contact with individual words, and the student visualization assignment should come only after the poem has been listened to, studied and discussed in its own medium. Visualization as an adjunct to the study of poetry should be used sparingly and with full awareness of its limitations.
This discussion must begin with a caveat. In two previous discussions possible correlations between painting and poetry have been suggested. Now it is necessary to say that with many poems, those of fixed form, the form may demand prior consideration over the statement.

A formation in the Humanities may engender in the teacher a dangerous tendency to polysynthesize, to translate a work of art from its proper medium into the multiple experiences of art with which he is familiar. Whereas this "corrected vision" may heighten his own perception and enjoyment, it must be neutralized in the process of developing perception on the part of his students. If the formation of the teacher, developed over a long period of contact with the plastic arts, music and literature, is considered an a priori condition for the correct experiencing of a poem we may properly ask whether any student can truly experience poetry below the level of the graduate studies in literature. The secondary school teacher should be on guard to hold foremost the objective of establishing primary and not secondary contact with poetry.

I have needed to keep this warning in mind when planning to teach "Le Dormeur du val" of Rimbaud. This sonnet has always had for me resonances outside the world of words, resonances which are almost certain not to have been in the consciousness of the poet. The first of these extra-linguistic perceptions is evoked by the first stanza of the poem:
C'est un trou de verdure ou chante une rivière
Accrochant follement aux herbes des haillons
D'argent; où le soleil, de la montagne fière,
Luit: c'est un petit val qui mousse de rayons.

The obviously pictoral setting of "un trou de verdure" framed by "la montagne fière" might send one's memory scanning many experiences of mountains and valleys but to me the identification was immediate and final, the 1876 water color of Mont Sainte-Victoire by Cézanne, one of many sketches and paintings of this scene by the artist. The softness and ambiguity of the blue-green-yellow tones seem echoed in the poem. The poet and the artist seem to require the viewer to select the proper colors from the palette. Both works of art are impressionistic. One returns to them as one would not return to a photograph of the same setting.

The facts of the poem's creation and the painting's origin would lead one to an intellectual rejection of any correspondance whatsoever. The valley and hills of Rimbaud's Ardennes in northern France have no resemblance to the site of Cézanne's valley, village and lone mountain of the south.

The second quatraine and the first tercet have also produced their own unlikely reference to a painting, the "Echo and Narcissus" of Poussin. In the painting, Poussin, the strangely sensitive, robust Norman peasant, has placed in the very center foreground of the composition a barely draped Narcissus. Lying facing the viewer, the sleeping demi-god has his right arm rather brutally twisted backward along the rocky ledge of a pool while his left arm is thrown lightly across his body. The legs are separated and one has the feeling of
discomfort in noticing that the left ankle is lying bone against rock. Because we know the myth, Poussin has no need to document further the impending death of Narcissus who sleeps his final sleep as Echo disappears into the background rock formation.

Un soldat jeune, bouche ouverte, tête nue,
Et la nuque baignant dans le frais cresson bleu,
Dort; il est étendu dans l'herbe, sous la nue,
Pale dans son lit vert où la lumière pleut.

Les pieds dans les glaieuls, il dort. Souriant comme
Sourirait un enfant malade, il fait un somme.
Nature, berce-le chaudement: il a froid.

"Le Dormeur du val" has for me the effect of a carefully arranged painting, a composition in which the background is impressionistic while a strangely anachronistic human figure occupies the foreground. Rather than a recounting of something seen and felt deeply it has seemed artificial, somehow contrived.

Because of this uneasiness I have done what was proposed in the theoretical framework of this study. I have had recourse to the scholar-critics. Suzanne Bernard, whose annotated edition of the Oeuvres of Rimbaud for Garnier is outstanding in its completeness and scholarship, recognizes the impressionistic quality of the sonnet. She states that Rimbaud has made use of a "tableau" but makes no effort to further identify the visual component beyond specific notations from the text. Commentators and explicators such as Jean Thoraval in his booklet on the explication de texte, Albert Sonnenfeld in an article in the French Review, Henry A. Grubbs and J. W. Kneller, authors of the excellent Introduction à la poésie française all note the pictoral values so evident in the poem but none seems to have been disturbed by any such
impression of artifice. Enid Starkie in her biography of Rimbaud gives brief mention of the poem as one of those "inspired by the political situation" and rather oddly describes the sleeper as "lying dead under the trees in the valley" and as an experience that "Rimbaud must have seen in his wanderings." Despite the absence of trees in the text of the poem, the chapter Professor Starkie devotes to the repeated escapes of Rimbaud from Charleville is engrossing. John Porter Houston devotes only a note to the poem in his The Design of Rimbaud's Poetry while Professor Frohock does note the painting-like qualities, the colors and the effect of pointillage. None of the scholar-critics support my intuition. Since many of them accept the hypothesis that the poem represents a real experience and since they all are concerned with the poem as an example of the sonnet, this seems the proper direction to follow in presenting the poem to students.

More than fifteen pages are devoted to the history, development and decline of the sonnet in Morier's Dictionnaire de poétique et de rhétorique. The essential features of the definition are 1) fixed form of fourteen lines 2) composed of two quatrains followed by two tercets 3) since the revival of interest by the poets of the Parnasse and Baudelaire the rhyme scheme is extremely variable. Morier would classify the sonnet of Rimbaud as a false sonnet as most of the users of the form from the seventeenth century on have contributed to liberating the rhyme scheme. The irregularity of the rhythms, the en-jambements appearing in all four stanzas, the paradox withheld until the very last line mark the poem as the nineteenth century product that it is while at the same time serving the poet's vision of the
unexpected juxtaposition of tranquillity and violence, or the result of violence. The poem has, therefore, in its form, a key to its statement. The fixed form would lead us to accept the first quatrain as the full framework. We are lulled into a comfortable wide-screen contemplation of a lovely natural setting. The second quatrain gives the merest hint of something out of the ordinary, the presence of "un soldat jeune, bouche ouverte, tête nue," but the continued emphasis on the environment serves to lead us back into the erroneous assumption. It is not until the first tercet that the alert reader fully senses the import of this alien presence and the poet never releases the final word mort though it is three times echoed in the word dort. Rimbaud, when scarcely sixteen years old, knew how to take advantage of the quasi-independence, the unity and completeness of each of the stanzas of the sonnet as well as the compactness of the poetic form as a whole.

The use of the sonnet form is also related to the curiously impassive, unemotional quality of the poem. The sonnet was originally the form of lyrical, romance-oriented or nostalgic themes. One did not howl or grind one's teeth in the sonnet. Because of this identification with equilibrium and symmetry and a kind of perfumed atmosphere the sonnet suffered decline when the poetic statement required more vitality, more dynamism. Morier finds that the modern sonnet is most readily identifiable by the treatment of the final line, the ouverture which, as in the poem under consideration, is often a paradox. Rimbaud did not invent the paradoxal sonnet ending, but he made a nearly unique use of it by making it follow a final enjambement. Neither a judgment nor a summation, the final statement is simply another observation. Its
shock value lies in the simplicity and noncommittal character of the
line punctuated by the only violent spots of color used:

... Il a deux trous rouges au côté droit.

Professor Sonnenfeld has given close attention to the final
line justifying the use of "deux trous rouges" rather than "un trou
rouge" in an article that is very convincing to a modern reader.23
Whether Rimbaud indeed considered the hiatus or the possible reflection
of the one nostril and one bullet hole will never be known. As teachers
we will, however, have to be prepared to explain the apparent contra-
diction in the use of "la nuque", "les pieds", "la main sur la poitrine",
and "sa narine" to students who have been taught to use the definite
article with parts of the body. Professor Sonnenfeld's article suggests
one explanation. Another is the structure of the line: "Les parfums
ne font pas frissonner sa narine." We have no mention of the soldier
in the line thus we must specify the possessive adjective to avoid
ambiguity.

The vocabulary of the poem while not difficult is not consis-
tent with the vocabularies of most of our language learning materials.
It is poetic language and as such must be presented before the poem.
The word "un trou" in the very first line must not be felt as the kind
of hole into which one might pour water or stumble accidentally. Such
is likely to be the primary identification of the word to even a third
level student. It must be made to approach the sense of a hollow and
to be related to the "petit val" of the last line of the first quatrain.
The word "mousse" must be seen structurally as the action which pro-
duces the effect of bubbling, of frothiness and not as the substantive
with which the student may be familiar from situations in which someone shaves or washes himself. The imagery of Mother nature must be made clear from the use of the words "berce-le". The presentation of the vocabulary need include only the picture words of the first three stanzas and the verb "frissonner" of the last tercet thus preserving the surprise ending.

Each of the four stanzas of the sonnet has, as we have seen, its own unity. This unity gives us the clue to the presentation of the poem after the word study. The taped recording made by the teacher or by a native speaker should have each stanza recorded twice, the second recording allowing pauses for repetition. The final recording of the poem as a whole would be presented only after the individual stanzas had been listened to, repeated and discussed. By the time of the final listening experience there would be no revelation in the final tercet but a feeling of expectation and release from tension. The poem will now belong to the students. The broken rhythms of the poem, the significant pauses will have penetrated the inner ear in support of the sense of the poem.

Responding to the textual questions following each stanza will prepare the students for the later discussion of the correspondance between form and subject, and the writing assignment. An example of a writing assignment based on a third year examination of the poem follows this discussion. Suggestions for relating the theme and treatment of it by poets writing in English are also given:

For the teacher who would prefer to relate "Le Dormeur du val" to another poem in French an appropriate choice is to be found in the
collection Histoires of Prévert:

LE FUSILLÉ

Les fleurs les jardins les jets d'eau les sourires
Et la douceur de vivre
Un homme est là par terre et baigne dans son sang
Les souvenirs les fleurs les jets d'eau les jardins
Les rêves enfantins
Un homme est là par terre comme un paquet sanglant
Les fleurs les jets d'eau les jardins les souvenirs
Et la douceur de vivre
Un homme est là par terre comme un enfant dormant.2

The image of the sleeping child is not new with Rimbaud nor can we charge Prévert with plagiarism for having used it. The listing, so typical of Prévert, should be noted as a kind of textured strand threading in and out of the central image and given variety by the changed order of each re-statement. Finally the title "Le Fusillé" should be shown to have a particular resonance for the French who lived through the Occupation and the constant threat of the official murder in public of hostages or captured members of the Resistance. This kind of war was not known to Rimbaud. The students can be helped to discover how the form of the Prévert poem serves to heighten the pathos, how the choice of vocabulary and the use of repetition combine to give it a more personal stamp.

Controlled Composition: Level Three

Presentation: Completez les paragraphes suivants d'après notre étude du poème, "Le Dormeur du val". Faites bien attention aux indications données, c'est-à-dire, le singulier ou le pluriel du verbe, le genre de l'article, etc. Il y aura parfois plus d'une possibilité. Tâchez d'en choisir la meilleure pour le sens de la phrase.
Le poème, "Le Dormeur du val", est un faux (1) dans lequel le poète n'observe qu'une partie de la forme (2) du genre. C'est-à-dire que les deux premières (3) ont (4) vers chacune et les deux dernières ont (5) vers. La succession des (6) dans les quatrains est: (7) / / / / et / / / / tandis que les (8) montrent le schéma (9) / / / et / / /. L'irregularité du poème est aussi signalée par les (10) et les (11) qui coupent les vers de (12) syllabes d'une façon parfois brutale. C'est ainsi que le poète, (13), a souligné le thème d'un jeune (14) mort à la guerre sans provoquer le moindre (15) dans la nature.

Le premier quatraine dépeint un (16) paisible où il n'y a que la (17) qui court (18) entre les herbes dans un petit (19). L'effet de (la) (20) est dû au soleil qu'on voit audessus d'une (21) à l'horizon. Dans le deuxième quatraine le poète met en scène un jeune militaire qui (22) dans l'herbe et qui a perdu sa (23). Il a la (24) ouverte et semble (25) dans un (26) vert.
Ensuite on remarque que l'attitude du soldat est bizarre:

Il a les (27)_______________ dans les glaïeuls. Il a l'air d'un (28)_______________ malade. Ce n'est qu'au dernier tercet qu'on se rend compte de l'étrangeté de ces faits. On voit que le soleil doit lui donner en plein sur sa tête (29)_______________.

On se dit, alors, que même en dormant il y a un mouvement de la (30)_______________ qui indique la respiration. Le dernier vers révèle la vérité: C'est pour ce jeune soldat son dernier (31)___________. Il est (32)_______________ avec deux (33)_______________ rouges à la (34)_______________.

(Le poème aurait pu être tout à fait (35)_______________ si le poète avait péroré contre (36)_______________. Lorsqu'on le compare avec le poème, (37)_______________, de John McRae on voit combien le didactique est absent du poème écrit en français.)

ACCEPTABLE ANSWERS FOR THE ANALYSIS OF "Le Dormeur du val"

| 1. sonnet | 19. val |
| 2. classique, traditionnelle | 20. lumière, brillance |
| 3. strophes | 21. montagne |
| 4. quatre | 22. est étendu, se repose |
| 5. trois | 23. casquette |
| 6. rimes | 24. bouche |
| 7. a/b/a/b c/d/c/d | 25. dormir |
| 8. e/e/f f/g/g/f | 26. lit |
| 9. tercets | 27. pieds |
| 10. enjambements, rejets | 28. enfant |
| 11. césures | 29. nue, découverte |
| 12. douze | 30. narine |
| 13. Arthur Rimbaud | 31. sommeil |
| 14. soldat, homme, militaire | 32. mort |
| 15. changement, dérangement, choc | 33. trous |
| 16. val, trou, endroit, paysage | 34. poitrine |
| 17. rivière | 35. banal, ordinaire, sentimental |
| 18. follement, rapidement | 36. la guerre |
| | 37. "In Flanders' Fields" |
The final paragraph of the composition would only be used in a class where the teacher had used the poem in English, with its sentimental hortatory tone, as a contrast to the restrained formal qualities of the poem in French. In addition to McRae's "In Flanders Fields" one might also use a well known poem of the first World War, Alan Seeger's "I Have a Rendezvous with Death". The violence and realism of "Dulce et Decorum est" by Wilfred Owen, who died fighting in World War I, would provide evidence of the truly seen, truly lived war experience in contrast to the somewhat artificial creation of Rimbaud. Rupert Brooke's "The Dead", Julian Grenfell's "Into Battle" and Isaac Rosenberg's "Break of Day in the Trenches" also come out of the experience of this century's first international conflagration. The brief and exquisite poem of Randall Jarrell, "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner" documents the perfection to which the technology of World War II had brought us. Young men could now lose their lives far above Mother earth. The teacher of French who wishes to provide a poetic pendant in English would do well to consult some of the excellently constructed anthologies such as Introducing Poetry in which these latter poems are to be found.25

The discussion of the poem in English need not be done in the French class. We have many more opportunities for cross-disciplinary effort than we take advantage of. The teacher of English might be pleased to include one of the poems in his program at the same time the students are engaged in studying the Rimbaud poem in French.
The reflections and conclusions of this segment cannot be justified or supported by actual classroom experiences. They are, however, the result of a remark made by a student. The concepts involved are based upon principles of the teaching-learning dialogue rather than upon principles of literary criticism.

A third-year student, apparently suffering from a surfeit of sweetness and light in the dialogues we were using, once asked on his way out of the classroom: "Mademoiselle, don't the French ever swear?" There was no time to prepare an adequate response. The truth burst forth spontaneously: "You bet they do!" The youngster smiled and went along to his next class. As often happens in our too tightly scheduled work day and school year, the subject never came up again. We continued with the mixture as before. The student who posed the question will never know the effect of the chain reaction for which his question was the catalyst.

I.

Swearing, strong, socially unacceptable language, linguistic aggression must belong somewhere in the nature of things human. In Man in Process Ashley Montagu has devoted a complete chapter to the "physiology and psychology of swearing." Whether or not one is in complete agreement with the anthropology and sociology of Professor Montagu unscientific experience seems to bear out his conclusion:

There is good reason to believe that swearing is a form of behavior coeval with the origin of man and the birth of language. There is also good reason to believe that swearing, in one form or another, occurs among every group of human beings
of whom there is knowledge. It is, therefore, likely that
swearing constitutes a basic response to some fundamental urge
deeply woven into the fabric of man's being. This likelihood
seems to have been recognized by almost everyone who has ever
devoted any thought to the matter, and with ready insight most
people have unambiguously understood the function of swearing
to be a sort of safety device for letting off excess steam.26

Among the "authorities" in literature cited by Professor
Montagu we find Laurence Stern in *Tristam Shandy*, Robert Graves,
Coleridge, Shakespeare and Rabelais. Rabelais, indeed! Who can
resist the rolling, cadenced, even mellifluous oaths disguised as
prayers in the episode of the Picrocholine War? By what misguided
prudishness have we purged the hearty Rabelais of his beautiful
gauloiseries and the gaillardise which etymologically is related to
force and energy, to life. Yes, Rabelais recognized the "easement"
function of swearing.

Swearing as blasphemy has such a long history for the Western
world that we have been enjoined against it in the Commandments. And
the response in all of our languages has been to invent softened forms
which fool no one.

Exploding through words is so universal and appears so early
in the life of the human being that parents spend a good deal of time
working against the tendency in the very young. Speaking of the
ontogenetic development of swearing, Professor Montagu finds its begin­
ning in the tears of frustrated rage of the pre-speech infant and the
subsequent striking out at the inanimate cause of pain. The well-bred
child says, "That mean old chair!"

In the epilogue to his *Language and the Discovery of Reality*
Joseph Church contrasts the behavior of the child and the adult in stress
situations. The particularly acute observation seems to be the relation between strong feeling and cognition:

It should be apparent that the development of consciousness and of ideation amounts to an elaboration of feeling states into a body of knowledge. Feelings are the substrate and the raw material of cognition as opposed to reflexive action, and our human capacities for thought are no greater than our human capacities for feeling. It may well be that capacity for feeling, whether innate or generated out of early parent-child relations, is the essential variable in intellectual differences. It is only those with strong feelings who can resist the secondhand formulations of experience handed down from their progenitors and can work to thematize reality afresh for themselves. Certainly it is possible to be retentive without great feeling, but learning without the understanding that emotion gives is barren and perhaps even dangerous.27

II.

Several speculative considerations now crowd in upon one another. We have recognized strong language as natural, perhaps instinctive and universal. It would be peculiar indeed if the French were to prove to be the only people who had no strong language. Professor Church strongly suggests that cognition may result more readily from the reaction to the emotive character of experience. Our own stated objectives in the teaching of language stress the interiorization of language as Jean Piaget has described it in The Language and thought of the child. Thomas E. Clayton in Teaching and Learning: A Psychological Perspective concludes that "Some degree of stress, tension and anxiety facilitate learning." Emeritus Professor of English, Wilson O. Clough, takes us further along the road to synthesizing these speculations with his rapprochement of literature and the aims of mental health:

Let us define literature, then, for the psychologist as an attempt, through words and associated effects, to give, arouse, recall, re-enact, bring to life, awaken to conscious recognition,
elements of experience such as are possible to the individual human organism; and to do so by such linguistic devices as will, by vivid association, suggest or stimulate imaginal recreation, awareness, intellectual or emotional response, and, in short, the illusion of reality; thus shedding light for the reader on the nature and richness of the individual human experience, and the human potential for experience.²⁸

We must agree with Professor Clough that the definition is "cumbersome" but it has said what we have needed to bring together. A perceptive student was aware that he was being cheated of the opportunity to "feel" French though he did not state his uneasiness in those terms. Somewhere in the process of preparing the ideal text and the ideal language learning sequences we had forgotten the ultimate aim of "awakening to conscious recognition".

But swearing is anti-social and neither Professor Clayton nor anyone else would recommend a course based on the most violent expressions of language that we could find. The limitations are self-evident. One could not recommend Celine to the secondary school teacher of French. Rabelais in the editions available to us has been bowdlerized beyond the possibility of giving offense. The Villon of "L'Epitaphe" is a Villon de-fanged. We have as teachers and writers of textbooks a responsibility not to offend nor to release uncontrollable emotion in our students. The dilemma seems impossible to solve.

III.

The danger of triggering unfortunate behavior has long been recognized in the courses in educational psychology. The teacher of a modern foreign language has probably the least need to fear such a response since his materials are frequently so insipid that they evoke no response at all. We have finally come to the potential solution of
our stated dilemma. We are in search of a corpus that has the sound
of life, a creation that is mordant, that will awaken our most slumbering
student. But we must avoid mere vulgarity, poor taste or the crudely
solecistic. Does such a corpus exist? Can it be brought within the
range of our students imperfectly provided with even the basic elements
of the French language? Can it serve our true objectives?

Yes, this creation does exist. It is in the work of Henri
Michaux. This isolated and self-isolating phenomenon of modern letters
who refused the Grand Prix National des Lettres in 1965 has described
his creation as "social", as "hygienic." Philippe de Coulon chooses to
let Michaux speak for himself:

... j'irais bien jusqu'à dire qu'elle est sociale,
tant voilà une opération à la portée de tout le monde et
qui semble devoir être si profitable aux faibles, aux
malades et maladifs, aux enfants, aux opprimés et inadaptés
de toute sorte. Ces imaginatifs souffrants, involontaires,
perpétuels, je voudrais de cette façon au moins leur avoir
été utile. 29

If Michaux himself sees his work as accessible to children
we may look more closely at it. There are the poems in prose, there
are the episodes of which the Chaplinesque "Plume" is the anti-hero.
They do not seem to provide the answer to our search. If we work our
way backwards to one of his earliest publications, the collection Qui
je fus of 1927 we are suddenly illuminated. Here is the strong, agonized,
clinging language that will not be shaken off. This is the Michaux who
seems to truly reflect our world. Pierre de Boisdeffre finds in this
function of the poet as tuning-fork, sympathetically vibrating to the
discordant music of his times perhaps Michaux's most valuable contribution:
Si notre monde était un paradis de calme, de bonheur stable et de justice, nous pourrions tenir pour fou cet obsédé, mais on sait qu'il n'en est rien. Sur cette planète qu'emporte une sorte de folie tourbillonnante, ce fou, qui refuse de se comporter comme les autres hommes, pourrait bien être un des derniers sages de ce temps. Recueillons donc ses messages, même si nous ne parvenons pas toujours à les déchiffrer. 30

Professor Church, who is not a literary critic, has given us the key to the strangeness of Michaux noticed by Gide early in the career of the younger poet. There is no wish to classify Michaux with a psychological label but his own accounts of his states of mind closely parallel this statement of Professor Church:

The manic patient, too, in the course of a "flight of ideas" may produce neologisms and odd phrasings, but these often have a creative ring quite lacking in schizophrenic language. The problem of the manic seems to be neither that of a reality shot through with baffling or malevolent forces nor of an unstable cognitive organization. Rather, the manic feels possessed by unmanageable rage or elation—or sometimes both. He may be swept into violent action, or his feelings may come out as speech. It is reported that some periodically manic individuals have learned to turn their manic episodes to good account, accomplishing prodigies of work while possessed. 31

Michaux would not deny being possessed. Indeed he has written of his work Mes Propriétés that it was created for his "health" and all of his critics have felt bound to include the word "exorcisme" in their analysis since this is Michaux's own identification of the primary characteristic of his work. Finally, a sensitive translator, Richard Ellmann, leads us directly to the poem we will use to bring our students to a no-holds-barred experience of the language of man struggling against disintegration. Mr. Ellmann says of the poems translated in his collection:

Their posture is nearly always one of attack. In some of the poems the attack is directed, as Michaux says, against all that is "congealed and established"—the Parthenons, the Arabian
arts, the Mings, the multimillennial order and the acceptance of it. In others the attack is directed against words themselves. It is not waged in behalf of chaos, but of something beyond man which the present setup of things does not make room for. Somewhere there is a "Big Secret," somewhere the millennium is waiting which will be the epoch of the visionaries, the moment when the Jack Pot in the heavens will erect "in an instant upon my diarrhea" His "straight and insurmountable cathedral."32

The word is out. The poem we have been seeking is "Le Grand combat" through which we and our students can embark upon an attack upon language using language as our weapon!

IV.

Because we have no choice but to look upon the poem as a teaching corpus we must initially do it some damage. We will, of course, have our students listen to it first. The recording accompanying the analysis of Michaux in the series "Poètes d'aujourd'hui" will be available to American teachers. An alternative is to have the poem recorded on tape by a competent native speaker. The travelling modern troubadour, Pierre Viala, has often included the poem in his programs for secondary schools as well as for college and adult audiences. Unfortunately it was not included in the Film-Recital of Poetry cited in the first chapter of this study. Having seen Mr. Viala perform the poem on several occasions I am aware that the first reaction of the hearer is likely to be an uneasy but uncontrollable burst of laughter. We have Professor Montagu's assurance that laughter is a social phenomenon one function of which is aggressiveness. The humour of Michaux reveals as frequently as it conceals a blow to the body.
Il l'emparouille et l'endosque contre terre;
Il le rague et le roupète jusqu'a son drâle;
Il le pratâle et le libucque et lui barufle les ouillais;
Il le tocarde et le marmine,
Le manage rape à ri et ripe à ra.
Enfin il l'écocrobálisse.
L'autre hésite, s'espudrine, se défaisse, se torse et se ruine.
C'en sera bientôt fini de lui;
Il se reprise et s'emmargine... mais en vain.
Le cerceau tombe qui a tant roulé.
Abrah! Abrah! Abrah!
Le pied a failli!
Le bras a cassé!
Le sang a coulé!
Fouille, fouille, fouille,
Dans la marmite de son ventre est un grand secret
Mégères alentour qui pleurez dans vos mouchoirs;
On s'étonne, on s'étonne, on s'étonne
Et vous regarde
On cherche aussi, nous autres, le Grand Secret.

We have finally drawn blood. There will be an intake of breath, then our advanced level students will roar with laughter. They will be responding to an unconscious revelation. This is not French! And they will be right. A good deal of the language of this poem exists nowhere else outside of the mind of its creator. It is invented language because the language as it exists is insufficient, boxes the poet in, refuses the challenge to the duel. And we have a duel. The antagonists are "Il" and "le". In order to participate in this duel we too must shake language in our teeth, line by line.

Here we enter upon the procedure which we claim is pedagogically sound though even the structuralists might hesitate to use it as an approach to literary criticism. We will ask our students to interrogate the French language as it is found in dictionaries in order to discover which of Michaux's words are indeed "langue" and which are in the most
acute sense of the Saussurian terminology "parole".

Because this is a duel, hand to hand combat, our lexicon is almost exclusively composed of verbs. True to the generative genius of the French language they are also characterized by the morphological base of the first conjugation, the only "growing" conjugation that remains.34

Line 1: "emparouiller" and "endosquer" do not exist but we find possible sources for the first in the following: emparer—se saisir de, se rendre maître de; empâter—rendre pâteux; enrouiller—rendre rouillé; enrouler—rouler quelque chose sur elle-même. What magnificent images we have already conjured up! Seizing, and grasping, covering with a thick coating, making rusty, rolling up. The second verb is very close to endosser—mettre quelqu'un sur son dos, labourer la terre, relever les sillons, mettre sa signature au dos. We feel we need look no further. The victim has been flattened and we have put our sign upon him!

Line 2: Raguer does exist. It means to wear out or tear up by rubbing. But we hear a small voice that says we must associate it with the noun rage which we find no reason to reject. Roupéter is not to be found but we learn that rouspéter in popular language means to protest. Since we are in the area we cannot help but add to our store of possibilities the noun
une roupie—une humeur qui décole des fosses nasales et qui pend au nez par gouttes. A lovely, disgusting image that seems altogether appropriate. The noun drâle may come from le râle de la mort, un bruit qu'on fait par la difficulté de la respiration. Popular language again finds a use for râler as synonyms for protester, grogner.

Line 3: Pratéler is nowhere to be found but we now know how to look and we find praliner—faire risoler dans le sucre: pratiquer—pratiquer un trou and atteler--attacher un animal de trait a une charrue, par extension—soumettre. They fulfill the image.

Line 3: Libucquer may be compounded of lubrifier—rendre glissant and lubrique—brutalement bestial, charnel. It would not surprise us. Barufier seems easily accommodated by barrer—faire des lignes sur un mot pour l'annuler, baratter—agiter du lait pour faire du beurre and mufle—individu stupide et grossier.

We are going to make apple-butter out of the muzzle of this cad!

The plural noun ouillais makes us pause. It may be related to the interjection indicating extreme pain, ouille or the verb ouiller from an older word meaning to fill up to the eyes which now simply serves the wine industry as the word designating
filling up of the wine cask to replace leakage.
We like the imagery "filled to the brim (to the eyes) with pain."

Having established our modus operandi we can schematicize the remaining investigations and reserve editorial comment. The asterisk will indicate invented words or forms we have only been able to discover in Michaux's world.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Possible associations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*tocarder</td>
<td>toc—onomatopée d'un choc sourd, un bruit de frapper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*marminer</td>
<td>une marmite—un récipient dans lequel on fait bouillir l'eau, argot militaire—obus de gros calibre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mariner—tremper de la viande dans la marinade, familièrement, rester dans un endroit désagréable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manager</td>
<td>manager—du mot anglais, s'occuper de la vie d'un artiste ou d'un champion; le manège—l'exercice qu'on fait faire à un cheval pour le dresser, le dompter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*rape à ri</td>
<td>râper—mettre en poudre, user la surface avec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*ripe à ra</td>
<td>une râpe; riper—ratisser avec la ripe, gratter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*écorcobilisser</td>
<td>encorner—frapper, percer avec les cornes;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ecraser—aplatis et déformer un corps par une forte compression, par un choc violent;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>écorner; écorcher; écorcer; écouterter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>*s'espudriner</td>
<td>esbroufer—bluffer, essayer de s'imposer par un air important.</td>
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</table>
With our faith in the dictionary's power to reveal meaning somewhat shaken we can now accept the fact that Michaux has rejected all but two of the thousands of words available to him. Instead he has forged his own weapon, sharpened its edges and plunged it home. We do not yet know the "grand secret" and indeed we may never know since like the watching and weeping old termagants we may continually stand on the sidelines while the poet wages this war with language. It is astounding, amazing, astonishing how language protects itself. But it is also astonishing how the poetic genius can help us to at least a fair chance in unequal struggle.

The teacher planning to use such an approach to this poem will have assured himself that the proper dictionaries to be used are contemporary ones. He will first have wanted to be sure that his intuitions about the poem were correct, that Michaux had not simply revived words already
existing in a previous age of the language. The Larousse Dictionnaire d'ancien français (1947) reveals that at least through the Renaissance none of the words compounded by Michaux were recorded. A second possible source of the poem's language might be the argot or underworld slang which we know to be rich in terms for violent action. Had this been so there would be the danger that sexual implications would make the poem inappropriate for our use in the classroom. A close check of Albert Simonin's dictionary of argot Le Petit Simonin Illustre (1959) shows that Michaux did not use this source either. Michaux had truly created a language to fit the needs of his tortured vision. Whether we have indeed found the key to his creation we are justified in using the same generative source as did the poet, the language as it now exists. For our research we have had recourse to dictionaries available to all classrooms: Le Petit Larousse, Le Robert (en un volume) and Le Dictionnaire du Français contemporain.

When we return to the poem in its original form we should not be surprised if our students mimic the gestures and twist and beat and roll up imaginary adversaries. They will be living the language.
Cross-Cultural Relatedness: Poetry in Translation

In this study poetry has been described as culturally authentic, thematic and universal. Seeing these qualities as fundamental to all poetry, a teacher of French may think worthy of consideration the work of an American poet much admired by the French. Two such poets bearing strong American cultural identification are Robert Frost and Langston Hughes. Consider for a moment the questions raised by a decision to include a poem of Frost or Hughes in the French program:

1. What contribution would such a poem make to the cultural objective of the program?
2. What problems of methodology arise from the necessity to include the poem in English as well as in translation?
3. What readily available sources can be used by the teacher?

The last question is the one most frequently asked by teacher-participants in Methods courses at the institute level. Every teacher of French should be aware of the series "Poètes d'aujourd'hui" edited and published by Pierre Seghers in Paris. By 1966 more than 150 of these generally excellent combinations of analysis and anthology had been published. Among the titles we find Walt Whitman (No. 9), Edgar Poe (No. 39), Emily Dickinson (No. 55), Langston Hughes (No. 114), Robert Frost (No. 122), and E. E. Cummings (No. 142) to name only the American poets represented. Regional identification or a special interest of the teacher would justify the use of any of these American poets as the source of a lesson of poetry in translation. I have chosen to use a poem of Langston Hughes because of my own interest in the work of this poet and because of the interest it has aroused among the French.
In *Les Langues Modernes*, the journal of the teachers of modern languages in France, one finds a long review article recommending to these teachers a doctoral dissertation presented in Paris in 1963. The dissertation of Jean Wagner, "Les poètes nègres des États-Unis," traced the development of racial and religious themes in the poetry of Negro writers from Paul L. Dunbar to Langston Hughes. The reviewer, Professor Robert Mane, praised the scholarship and sensitivity of the thesis in tracing the "painful, heroic and even tragic quest" of black American poets facing the duality and contradictions of their existence. Professor Mane concludes that the work of Wagner is valuable for teachers at two levels:

Etudier dans d'aussi passionnantes conditions sera un plaisir non seulement pour les étudiants de Littérature et Civilisation américaines dans les facultés où l'ouvrage de M. Wagner devrait devenir lecture requise, mais tout aussi bien pour les élèves des classes terminales dans les lycées. Nul livre ne mérite mieux de figurer dans leurs bibliothèques, ne serait-ce qu'à cause de la précision et de l'élegance avec lesquelles les poèmes, heureusement cités dans leur texte original, sont ensuite traduits.35

We would not, of course, use the dissertation as a primary source for our students but the teacher as road-builder might well go to such a source for his own background. As for Langston Hughes, in addition to the Seghers booklet there is a selection of the poetry of Hughes translated by François Dodat for the same publisher. It is from this book, *Poèmes*, that I have chosen the poem to be discussed.

Responding to the second question we must note that the quality of the translations is uneven. Certain of the idiomatic expressions used by Hughes represent a culture within a culture and presented unsurmountable obstacles to the translator. At a very advanced level it would be
interesting to present some of the poems as problems in translations. This requires a degree of skill on the part of teacher and students that we cannot expect on the typical third or fourth year level. For that reason I have chosen one of the more adequately translated poems to be examined for its contribution to the cross-cultural appreciations of the students.

The poem, "Mother to Son," first appeared in the earliest collection of Hughes' poems, Weary Blues in 1926. It has been described as a tender and stoical folk-portrait. Margaret J. Butcher places it among the "unsurpassed genre pictures of Negro woman, mothers whose fortitude is typical of countless Negro mothers responsible for second and third-generation progress."36

Dr. Butcher finds a significant contrast to the generally accepted view of the Negro in Hughes' poems whose primary characters are "stoic, ironic, often pessimistic, but never self-deluded." We may, therefore, answer the first question of cultural import by saying that to use a poem by Hughes fills the gap most of our students will have in appreciation of a part of their own American culture and brings to them an aspect of that culture that has been discovered, explored and found worthy of a place in the study of America by the French themselves. This is a strong recommendation by any standards.

The poem in English and the translation appear side by side in the book by M. Dodat. They can be projected using an opaque projector. My own approach would be to cover the translation while the students listened to the poem of Hughes, then to expose the translation while concealing the original. The students must be aware that we are
dealing with two poems. Our purpose will be to investigate the manner in which a competent and sympathetic translator has rendered the sense and the sub-semantic field from one language into another. The students will discover that he has been less successful with the rhythms, a particularly difficult problem when dealing with English and French so radically different in this element of prosody.

The poem provides a first cross-cultural problem in the imitation of speech patterns common to the characterization Hughes seeks. Dropped final consonants, the use of generally unacceptable English verb forms have been reflected in the translation by the dropping of the ne of negation, and the disappearance of the impersonal il. The translator has resisted the temptation to exaggerate the syntactic color of Hughes' language by using a variety of pidgin French or a creolized grammatical structure. In this way he has been true to the subtle poetry expressed in the English original. This is, after all, not a burlesque portrait but a grave-toned stoicism.

The imagery of life as a difficult progression from step to step which is maintained throughout the poem would be as vivid to the French as to the tenement dwellers actually described by Hughes. The translator finds no difficulty in providing adequate equivalents for the unlighted, twisting staircase. Any American tourist who has lived in the older French hotels lacking elevators and provided with the capricious, seemingly malevolent lighting device called the minuterie will fully appreciate the content of "And sometimes goin' in the dark, where there ain't been no light."
The translation provides a wealth of opportunities for noting the impossibility of constructing word-for-word strings. We note the need for a complement in the first line of the French poem; the disappearance of the complement in the third line; the prepositional phrase used to replace the simple adjective in line seven; the use of the imperfect to translate a present progressive; the use of toujours as the only adequate rendering of still.

By the third or fourth level at which this poem would be appropriate, students can be called upon to note such distinctions for themselves.

MOTHER TO SON

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—
Bare.
But all the time
I've been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's.
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.
So, boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps
'Cause you finds it kinder hard.
Don't you fall now--
For I'se still goin', honey,
I'se still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
LA MERE A SON FILS

En bien mon fils, je vais te dire quelque chose:
La vie ça a pas été pour moi un escalier de verre.
Il y a eu des clous,
Des écharpes,
Et des planches défoncées,
Et des endroits sans moquettes,
A nu.
Mais quand même,
Je grimpais toujours,
Je passais les paliers,
Je prenais les tournants,
Et quelquefois j’allais dans le noir
Quand y avait pas de lumière.
Alors mon garçon faut pas retourner en arrière.
Faut pas t’asseoir sur les marches
Parque que tu trouves que c’est un peu dur.
Et ne va pas tomber maintenant...
Parque que, mon fils, moi je vais toujours,
Je grimpe toujours,
Et la vie ça a pas été pour moi un escalier de verre.37

The understated American sound of a Hughes or a Robert Frost presents a lesser challenge to the translator than do the strongly marked rhythms of Poe, the lyricism of Dickinson or the insistant, recurring patterns of Whitman. For this reason either Hughes or Frost would be better choices for lessons of poetry in translation at the secondary school level.

The phrase d’expression française is widely used to describe the writer whose birth outside of France and whose use of another mother tongue lend a special flavor to his writing in French. This is true of writers from such diverse backgrounds and cultures as the Egyptian, Lebanese, Algerian, Roumanian, Russian and Canadian francophone milieux. While not strictly speaking poetry-in-translation there are frequent enough cross-cultural references in the work of the Martiniquan poet, Aimé Césaire, and the Senegalese, Léopold Sedar Senghor, to
qualify their poems for the broadening poetic experience we have described. Césaire, whose first collection *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (1939) was warmly received by André Breton, was one of the early proponents of "négritude," the search for authenticity for Black writers using the French language. His early poetry was strongly influenced by surrealism, particularly in its revolutionary sense. President Senghor since his accession to leadership of the Republic of Senegal has continued to drink deeply at the source of his marvelous imagery. His integration of African words into the body of his poetry would make many of his poems hazardous journeys into the unknown unless approached from the point of view expressed by Jean Rousselot:

Ce retour à la source africaine s'accentue dans *Nocturnes* (1961); il n'obère pourtant la poésie de Senghor d'aucun particularisme syntaxique et formel; ce n'est pas de la poésie noire traduite en langue française, mais une poésie française qui élargit sa thématique aux dimensions d'un univers mental à la fois plus vaste et plus concret. 38

If we aim to give our students a complete experience of the breadth and depth of the French cultural expression we should look forward to including such poets as Césaire, Senghor or the younger Algerian, Jean Sénac, whom the French of France recognize as contemporary manifestations of an embracing culture.

An article by François Hoffman in *Yale French Studies* defines and defends the literary and social qualities of poetry written by contemporary Black poets from the former African territories, the Antilles and the Republic of Haiti. The central tendency of this poetry is to be "engagée" while its imagery and rhythms are embued with the diverse cultural and historical influences of black lands. 39 In the same issue,
an interesting pendant to the article on Black poets writing in French, is Micheline Herz's review of the work of a poet deeply committed to his religion but thoroughly contemporary in form. "A Prophet of Israel: Edmond Fleg" contains tantalizing excerpts from a poetic creation that one would like to know more fully. By the time our students have invested five or six years of their lives in the study of French they should begin to be aware of the expanding horizons available to them as a result of the use of French as the adopted language of men throughout the world.

For additional sources of poetry in translation the American teacher may refer to volumes of the UNESCO literature translations program which has been a part of the work of this organization since 1948. Among the languages and language families represented in the anthologies are Italian, Russian, Swedish, Mexican, Arabic, Chinese, Korean, various languages of India, Persian, Japanese, Black African languages and Indonesian. Much of the literature of Asia and Africa is poetic and retains the primary aspects of oral traditions. The preservation of these literatures has been one of the most valuable contributions of UNESCO and their translation into French another sign of the vitality of that language in the modern world. The annual publication beginning in 1956 is available from the UNESCO Publications Center at 317 East 34th Street, New York, 10016 under the series title, *Anthologie permanente de la poésie mondiale.*
The Language of Analysis: A Useful Vocabulary

The excellent Reports of the Northeast Conference of 1967 discussed in the first chapter of this study contain among the Key Propositions this statement:

7. We should not demand of our students a degree of explicitness in definition and linguistic analysis that exceeds what they ever do in their English classes.

Despite the fact that the proposition initially seems reasonable it bears some discussion in terms of the assumptions of this study. We might first ask whether we as teachers of French are aware of the depth of analysis required of our students in their English classes. My own experience in many years of public school teaching is that we do very little intervisitation within our own language departments and almost none outside of our departments. Our crowded schedules and the need to use unassigned periods for tutoring and preparation are sufficient reason for this lack of communication among colleagues. We cannot therefore justifiably premise our own work in literature on any hypothetical performance of our students in English. We simply do not know what that performance is. A survey of the journals for teachers of English has given me reason to believe that the approach to teaching literature in English is far in advance of our own in the foreign languages. I would prefer to believe that some teachers of English read their journals. A glance at the readers and anthologies of poetry in English would also support the assumption that our colleagues in English are using a variety of techniques to elicit reaction to literature from students.
Our second response to the Key Proposition cited is to the use of the words "degree of explicitness." Throughout the demonstration units it is obvious that we can require immediate response at all levels, a response to the textual significance of the poem. Beyond that immediate response it seems obvious that the students themselves are predisposed to respond to the contextual matter if the poem has been well chosen. The power of the poem to break the language barrier is our primary consideration. Too lyrical, the poem will appeal only to the romantics among our adolescents. Too literal, the poem will raise no gleam beyond that of the prosaic paraphrase.

If the student is to be enabled to say what he wishes to say, right or wrong, about the poem or any work of literature he must be given some rudimentary tools of language. In his own language he is capable of satisfying his needs and the requirements of his teacher. In the foreign language he must proceed from the merest approximation of his thought to more and more precise statements with the same gradual steps as he is taken through in his non-literary performance.

The list of useful critical vocabulary which follows is developed from the Vocabulaire d'Initiation à la critique et à l'explication littéraire published in 1960 by Didier and compiled by a team from the Centre de Recherches et d'études pour la diffusion du français at Saint-Cloud. Another useful source is the booklet of Henri Bénac published by Hachette and titled Vocabulaire de la Dissertation (1949). The one obvious disadvantage of both of these compilations is the lack of gender indications for substantives. The Bénac volume has the advantage of concise definitions while the Saint-Cloud vocabulary is simply a listing.
The list compiled for this study is not limited to the suggested vocabulary of Saint-Cloud and includes many words found to be necessary for American students at Level II and beyond while neglecting a great many words that have never in my experience posed a problem for those same students.

Students have used correctly such words as adverbs from known adjectives. They will use many function words correctly though they continue to have trouble with the prepositions à and de. Cognates such as une chronologie have been included only because of the need to provide gender which is a constant problem with our students. Very often the student will use the vocabulary of the poem itself in his commentary. For example, in discussing the poem "Le Désespoir est assis sur un banc" the students have spontaneously used l'espoir and un sourire atroce as developments of the actual words le désespoir and atrocement.

When a student has offered the observation: "Le poète désire que nous regardions le vieillard avec ses yeux.", we are at first delighted by his recognition of the subjunctive. We can then work backwards into his thought to provide a clear and unequivocal statement. The French speaker hearing avec ses yeux would have difficulty unraveling the thought. By offering several alternatives we find that the student really means: "Le poète veut que nous observions le vieillard de la même perspective. . . Il faut que nous ayons le même point de vue que le poète." Now we have added to his vocabulary some more precise terminology without going to the extreme of using an overly sophisticated l'optique.
When the student has progressed to the written commentary we have two stages. His draft copy is returned with suggestions for correction. He then adds to his own vocabulary in the notebook he keeps for the purpose the new words or expressions suggested as replacements for inexact or unclear formulations. Where such an expanding vocabulary is begun by a student at Level II and continued throughout the years the student eventually commands enough precise references to be able to follow selected critical essays which may form a part of his advanced level studies and which will certainly be a part of his college reading program. The vocabulary of poetry criticism is specialized, but not so limited as to make it inapplicable to other literary genres.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French Word</th>
<th>French Translation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Une absence</td>
<td>une absence</td>
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<td>un manque</td>
<td>annonces</td>
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<td>une anecdote</td>
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<td>un avenir</td>
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<td>une abstraction</td>
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<td>absurde</td>
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<td>un accent</td>
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**UN VOCABULAIRE UTILE**

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UNE ABSENCE ... UN MANQUE

Student paper: "Le Désespoir est assis sur un banc"

...Dans le poème le narrateur est absent. Son absence est signalée deux fois. D'abord par le manque du pronom sujet je et puis par l'emploi des pronoms on et vous.

Teacher's notation for the preceding statement:

Le narrateur est absent du poème. Il n'y apparaît pas. Vous avez bien remarqué les mécanismes par lesquels le poète oblige le lecteur à se mettre à la place de l'observateur...

UNE ALLEGORIE ... ALLEGORIQUE

Student paper: "Le Contrôleur"

...Le personnage du titre est allégorique. En fait tout le poème est une allégorie sur la Mort et la Vie parce que nous sommes tous des voyageurs à Terre et notre voyage est contrôlé par un être supérieur.

Teacher's notation for the preceding statement:

C'est une interprétation possible mais un peu limitée. Si on la poursuit il faudra admettre un "être supérieur" bien cruel et une vie qui ne vaut rien, n'est-ce pas? Ne voyez-vous pas autre chose qu'une simple allégorie? Est-ce que le contrôleur n'est pas lui-même humain? N.B. Employez en effet au lieu de l'expression en fait...sur la Terre au lieu d'à Terre.
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L'explication de Texte A Plusieurs Voix

The following attempt at explication à l'américaine has a multiple origin and has served in the classroom and in teacher education programs. It was first transcribed from notes used during a visit to the French Club of Mayfield Heights High School in Ohio in May of 1964. On the invitation of Miss Doris Biederman, French teacher and club sponsor, I had come to the evening meeting to present taped recitations and commentary on some poems of Jacques Prévert. The introductory statement about the poet accompanied the first poem of the group presented.

The poem, "Barbara", had been taught to a number of classes at my own school with increasing success on the part of each succeeding group of students. As the students reacted to experiments in the ordering and emphasis of the explication and as their questions revealed weaknesses in the presentation, a more effective methodology began to appear. One fact imposed itself. An orthodox explication performed by the teacher simply did not succeed with my students. The students had to be constantly reintegrated into the process.

I addressed certain questions about the poem to M. Prévert himself and received responses which reassured me and reinforced my conviction that American students properly motivated and sufficiently equipped linguistically are capable of a solidly intellectual entry into a poem. Obviously not every poet whose work we use is as accessible or as willing to enter into our concerns as is Jacques Prévert. This is the point at which the teacher must use the published work of the scholar-critic.
The subsequent use of the explication was as a problem in methodology at several National Defense Education Act Institutes in France. The present form of the questions posed to teacher-participants is that of the 1967 summer institute of the Ohio State University held in Lyons. Dr. Edward D. Allen, the director, required that all courses be given in French so that the course in methodology (Pédagogie) should not constitute a daily intrusion of English into the program. The result of the full immersion of teacher-participants into the French culture was a lively response to the problems and their acceptance of the use of French in their own classrooms. Many of the teachers confessed that they had never believed they or their students would be capable of discussing literature entirely in French. Perhaps a prime result of such a course in France, so conceived and so conducted, is its supportive and inspirational function. The teacher-participant learns not so much how to present and exploit a particular poem as how to think about the problems inherent in working with a literary creation.

It is interesting to note that senior year students in a Methods Course at the Ohio State University who had encountered the poem "Barbara" in a phonetics course responded more readily to the phonological component of the explication than did some of the in-service teachers. This suggests that the pre-service education of French teachers should include familiarity with and even memorization of some of the poetry they will later teach. It also suggests the close relationship that should be maintained between the courses in language and literature and the courses in methodology. This observation is
supported by the position of the Modern Foreign Language Teacher Preparation Study of the Modern Language Association as reported in the Modern Language Journal of October, 1966.

Because of its length, the poem "Barbara" will require a full class period for the two complete listening experiences from a taped recording, the presentation and discussion of the vocabulary, composition, theme, imagery and sounds, and a final choral or individual reading of the poem by the students. It is not recommended that study of the poem be attempted before the students have a firm control of the listening-speaking band and a sufficient vocabulary so that the first auditory experience may be done without the presentation of specific words.

When the explication begins the students should have the text on their desks face down. The distribution of the texts is made prior to the explication simply in order to save time. A transparency of the text would be equally effective since it would be projected at the will of the teacher. The transparency has the additional advantage over printed texts of permitting the pointing to or the underscoring of specific portions of text. The projected text also insures that the full attention of every student will be directed to the matter at hand. There need be nothing on the desks to distract the students.
Rappelle-toi Barbara
Il pleuvait sans cesse sur Brest ce jour-là
Et tu marchais souriante
Epanouie ravie ruisselante

Sous la pluie
Rappelle-toi Barbara
Il pleuvait sans cesse sur Brest
Et je t'ai croisée rue de Siam
Tu souriais.

Et moi je souriais de même
Rappelle-toi Barbara
Toi que je ne connaissais pas
Toi qui ne me connaissais pas
Rappelle-toi

Rappelle-toi quand même ce jour-là
N'oublie pas
Un homme sous un porche s'abritait
Et il a crié ton nom
Barbara

Et tu as couru vers lui sous la pluie
Ruisselante ravie épanouie
Et tu t'es jetée dans ses bras
Rappelle-toi cela Barbara
Et ne m'en veux pas si je te tutoie

Je dis tu à tous ceux que j'aime
Même si je ne les ai vus qu'une seule fois
Je dis tu à tous ceux qui s'aiment
Même si je ne les connais pas
Rappelle-toi Barbara

N'oublie pas
Cette pluie sage et heureuse
Sur ton visage heureux
Sur cette ville heureuse
Cette pluie sur la mer

Sur l'arsenal
Sur le bateau d'Ouessant
Oh Barbara
Quelle connerie la guerre
Qu'es-tu devenue maintenant

Sous cette pluie de fer
De feu d'acier de sang
Et celui qui te serrait dans ses bras
Amoureusement
Est-il mort disparu ou bien encore vivant

Oh Barbara
Il pleut sans cesse sur Brest
Comme il pleuvait avant
Mais ce n'est plus pareil et tout est abîmé
C'est une pluie de deuil terrible et désolée
It may be noted that in this rather long poem there are relatively few words that do not appear in some form in the list of the first level of Le Française fondamental. We note the absence of cesse used adverbially in sans cesse, the adjectives, épanouie, ravie, ruisselante, disparu and désolée; the verbs, croiser, s'abriter, tutoyer, crever, disparaître and pourrir; the substantives, un porche, l'arsenal, l'acier, le deuil and the idiom, au fil de l'eau. We would not expect to find the vulgar une connerie in the list.

The presence or absence of a word in the list would not establish the need for the explanation of it for a particular class. Only the teacher can judge from his own basic program materials whether a word or expression will present an obstacle to comprehension for his students. It will be seen in the following explication that some of the words listed can be worked into the discussion without the specific use of definition.

**Professeur:**

Nous connaissons déjà quelques poèmes du poète Jacques Prévert, n'est-ce pas? Si on vous parlait d'une tragédie domestique, un poème dans lequel une femme se plaint de son sort, deux personnes qui habitent la même maison mais qui n'ont plus aucun rapport d'amitié... seriez-vous capable de donner le titre du poème?
Etudiant:

Est-ce "Déjeuner du matin?"

Professeur:

C'est juste. Et si je vous parlais d'une femme qui s'intéresse plus à de l'argent qui roule par terre qu'à la vie d'un homme, que diriez-vous?

Etudiant:

C'est "Chez la fleuriste."

Professeur:

Voilà. On a aussi étudié "Le Désespoir est assis sur un banc" et "Le Cancre" qui viennent du même recueil. Apropos qu'est-ce qu'un recueil?

Etudiant:

Une collection.

Professeur:

Oui. C'est une collection de poésie. Je vous ai dit le titre de ce recueil de poèmes. Comment s'appelle-t-il?

Etudiant:

Il s'appelle Paroles.

Professeur:

C'est le titre de la première collection de poèmes qu'on a publiés de ce poète contemporain. Il y en a trois autres, Spectacle, Histoires et La Pluie et le beau temps. Vous remarquez que ce sont toutes des choses qu'on peut voir ou qui sont des sujets de conversation. Nous avons déjà noté l'importance de la conversation chez M. Prévert. Son vocabulaire, n'est-ce pas, est souvent celui de tous les jours, de

Je ne sais pas si je vous ai déjà dit que M. Prévert avant d'être célèbre comme poète faisait du cinéma. Avec son frère et des amis qui étaient des pionniers dans l'art du cinéma il a créé des films qu'on peut toujours voir aux musées cinématographiques. Beaucoup de ses poèmes ont été mis à musique, surtout par un excellent compositeur, Joseph Kosma. A la fin de l'heure vous allez entendre un poème chanté par Yves Montand sur une musique de M. Kosma. Savez-vous le mot pour celui qui écrit pour le cinéma? C'est un scénariste. Prononcez, s'il vous plaît.

Étudiants:

Un homme qui écrit pour le cinéma est un scénariste.

Professeur:

Et un homme qui écrit les paroles d'une chanson est un librettiste.

Voulez-vous prononcer cette phrase?

Étudiants:

Un homme qui écrit les paroles d'une chanson est un librettiste.

Professeur:

Alors, M. Prévert, dont vous allez étudier encore un poème n'est pas seulement un poète. Il est aussi scénariste, librettiste, et il a même pris des rôles dans certains de ses films! On verra si ces intérêts, ces préoccupations diverses vont se refléter dans le poème que nous allons écouter maintenant. Il faut faire très attention parce qu'ensuite on fera ensemble l'effort de découvrir par l'analyse un peu
détailée les valeurs poétiques qui sont peut-être cachées à une première audition.

(The poem is played in its entirety.)

Professeur:

Bon. Maintenant vous pouvez retourner le texte qui est devant vous. Quel est le titre du poème?

Etudiant:

Le titre est "Barbara."

Professeur:

En voyant le titre du poème on pourrait avoir l'impression qu'il s'agit de la description d’une jeune femme nommée Barbara, n'est-ce pas?

Mais est-ce vrai? Voyons. Qu'est-ce que nous savons de cette jeune femme à part son nom? Pas grand-chose, n'est-ce pas? Cherchons les mots qui la décrivent...

Etudiants:

Souriante... épanouie... ravie... ruiselante... visage heureux.

Professeur:

Excellent. Ce sont des adjectifs qui font partie d'un portrait pour ainsi dire. Cherchons maintenant les mots qui expriment ce qu'elle fait, les verbes...

Etudiants:

Tu souriais... tu as couru vers lui... tu t'es jetée dans ses bras... tu marchais souriante...

Professeur:

Très bien. Remarquez que le poète n'a jamais employé le mot jeune.
Moi, j'ai suggéré ce mot et vous l'avez accepté. Pourquoi? Qu'est-ce qui nous a fait penser à la jeunesse? Oui. Évidemment il y a la situation, un rendez-vous dans la rue, deux personnes qui se comportent peut-être avec un certain sans-gêne, qui ne font pas attention aux autres gens. N'y a-t-il pas quelque chose dans la vitalité de l'expression elle-même? "Tu t'es jetée dans ses bras... celui qui te serrait dans ses bras amoureusement. Et puis elle courait. Est-ce que je peux courir moi? Mais vous, vous courrez toujours.

Voilà. On accepte l'impression de jeunesse. Mais est-ce que cette description télégraphique est vraiment assez pour constituer le thème central du poème? Je ne peux pas le croire. Il y a dans ce poème beaucoup d'images à part celles d'une jeune femme amoureuse qui court sous la pluie, n'est-ce pas? Si ce n'était que l'histoire d'un rendez-vous de jeunes amoureux où est-ce que le poète aurait pu s'arrêter? Regardez bien le texte. Vous dites la ligne 37? Et vous, la ligne 45? Regardons bien. Est-ce qu'il ne continue plus à parler de Barbara et de son amour après la ligne 37? Oui, n'est-ce pas? Jusqu'à la ligne 44 il s'agit des deux personnes, Barbara et le jeune homme. Alors qui a raison? Oui, moi, je vois une division très nette après le dernier appel, "Oh, Barbara." Il me semble que le poète réserve pour cette dernière partie du poème ce qu'on devra garder à l'esprit—l'horreur et la cruauté au lieu de l'amour. Et cette horreur d'où vient-elle?

Etudiant:

De la guerre...
Professeur:

C'est exact. C'est la guerre qui efface tout, qui détruit tout, même le souvenir de l'amour. Attention! En même temps que nous saisissons cette idée nous devons monter au début du poème qui n'est pas sans espoir. C'est sous cette "pluie de deuil terrible et désolée" que le poète demande à Barbara de se rappeler le temps heureux ou sous une autre pluie "sage et heureuse" elle courait joyeusement rejoindre un jeune homme. Alors on trouve des thèmes contrastés, n'est-ce pas? Qu'est-ce qui fait le contraste avec l'amour, la beauté, la jeunesse, la tendresse, la joie?

Etudiants:

La violence. . la haine. . l'horreur. . la destruction. . . le désespoir. .

Professeur:

Excellent! Et puis il y a une petite pluie fine et même délicieuse contrastée avec une pluie "de fer, d'acier, de sang" contre laquelle on ne peut pas s'abriter sous un porche, une pluie qui abîme tout. . . Parlons quelques instants du jeune homme. On sait qu'il a serré la jeune femme dans ses bras. Mais on ne voit pas la figure de ce jeune homme comme on voit celle de Barbara? Pourquoi?

Etudiant:

Il s'est abrité sous un porche. Il est presque caché.

Professeur:

C'est parfait. Remarquez que le poète voit Barbara de face parce qu'ils se sont croisés. Elle court vers le jeune homme et le narrateur va dans le sens opposé. Alors il a dû se retourner pour voir
le jeune homme. Mais le jeune homme est toujours anonyme, à l'ombre, sans traits distincts. Est-ce un fantôme? Peut-être. Le poète ne veut pas l'identifier davantage parce qu'il veut en lui représenter tous les jeunes hommes disparus ou morts à la guerre. C'est possible, n'est-ce pas? Avons-nous quelque chose d'à peu près pareil? Pres de notre capitale?

**Etudiant:**

Le tombeau du soldat inconnu?

**Professeur:**

C'est cela. En France on a aussi, comme vous le savez, une flamme éternelle qui brûle au-dessus de la tombe d'un soldat mort à la guerre de 1914-1918. Où se trouve cette tombe?

**Etudiant:**

Sous l'Arc de Triomphe à Paris.

**Professeur:**

Exactement. Je crois qu'on pourrait voir dans l'anonymité de ce jeune homme une sorte de symbole de tous les jeunes gens détruits dans une guerre horrible. . .Maintenant qu'on a précisé le thème du poème, parlons brièvement des mécanismes par lesquels le poète réussit a nous révéler sa pensée. Il y a la question des temps verbaux. On commence par un appel--à l'imperatif, c'est-à-dire au présent, qui va être répété huit fois et qui sert à séparer les diverses images. Mais je crois qu'il y a un autre emploi très important de cet imperatif. Je vous ai dit que M. Prévert écrit des scénarios. Nous avons alors un film où les événements du passé servent d'arrière-plan à un présent qui se déroule sous nos yeux. Comment est-ce que nous voyons ces actions du
passé? Par moyen de l'imparfait et du passé composé. Qui peut nous expliquer la différence entre les valeurs des deux temps?

**Etudiant:**

L'imparfait pour les actions qui se passaient...

**Professeur:**

Bien. Les actions qui étaient en train de se faire, comme on dit. L'imparfait montre aussi la condition, l'état n'est-ce pas? Et le passé composé?

**Etudiant:**

C'est pour les actions d'un moment.

**Professeur:**

Voilà. Ce sont des clichés, des photographies prises à l'instant. C'est comme les photos dans un album de famille. L'œil s'arrête un instant sur ces actions: je t'ai croisée, il a crié ton nom, tu as couru vers lui, etc.

Et puis nous retournons au présent, ce présent de la réalité dans les treize derniers vers. Et nous terminons le film, ou le poème par un vers d'une force et une distinction uniques: Dont il ne reste rien. C'est un peu le son du glas--les cloches de l'église qui annoncent la mort. Prononçons ce vers.

**Etudiant:**

Dont il ne reste rien.

**Professeur:**

Parmi tous les noms de jeunes filles pourquoi le poète a-t-il choisi le nom de Barbara? Une étudiante m'a posé cette question. Eh bien, moi, je ne sais pas du tout mais j'ai une théorie. D'abord ce n'est
pas un nom qu'on donnait couramment aux jeunes Françaises. Alors, il y a quelque chose d'exotique, de rare, de saisissant dans le nom. Si le narrateur avait entendu crier par exemple le nom Jeanne ou Jacqueline ou Françoise il n'aurait pas fait attention. Et puis il y a dans le nom Barbara un écho sonore avec les trois syllabes ouvertes qui retentissent dans l'air. Essayons. Jeanne! . . . .Jacqueline! . . . Françoise! . . Barbara! . . Voyez-vous comme ce dernier nom chante plus longtemps? Ecoutez! Ce n'est qu'une idée à moi. Il ne faut pas dire que c'est la bonne. Et puis le poète m'a écrit un mot à ce sujet que je vais vous lire tout à l'heure.42

On dit qu'il n'y a pas de rime dans la poésie de M. Prevert. Il est vrai qu'on ne trouve pas la rime à la fin des vers comme dans la poésie classique mais il y en a tout de même. Voyons comment le poète les groupe, ses rimes, pour mettre en valeur certaines idées, certaines images.

(The students read aloud in imitation of the teacher.)

Professeur:

Enfin il y a la question du vocabulaire. Ce poète se sert toujours d'un vocabulaire contemporain, de la vie quotidienne. C'est pourquoi beaucoup de ses poèmes sont à la portée des lecteurs étrangers. Mais il emploie les mots très savamment. Par exemple, savez-vous le sens du mot épanouie? C'est un peu le sens du mot ouvert, ouvert comme une belle fleur prête à recevoir la pluie, ou comme les rayons du soleil brillant de l'été. Regardons aussi le mot ruisselante? Pourquoi Barbara est-elle ruisselante?
Etudiant:

A cause de la pluie.

Professeur:

Bien sûr. A cause de la pluie. Elle est si heureuse de revoir son ami qu'elle a oublié son parapluie, alors elle court toute mouillée sous la pluie. Comme toutes les femmes elle est en retard, alors le pauvre jeune homme a dû s'abriter sous un porche, n'est-ce pas? Voilà encore un mot qu'il faut regarder de près. Il nous rappelle un mot anglais mais n'a pas le même sens. Qu'est-ce qu'il y a très souvent au centre d'une ville ou d'un village en France? Quelle sorte de bâtiment?

Etudiant:

Une école... un hôtel de ville... une église... une cathédrale...

Professeur:

C'est exact. Le porche, c'est la partie de la façade devant le portail d'une cathédrale ou d'un bâtiment de ce genre. On ne trouve pas de porche devant une maison particulière... Un peu plus loin on voit le verbe tutoyer qui a un sens culturel qu'on ne doit pas négliger. On ne se tutoie pas en France sauf entre amis ou entre les membres d'une même famille. Alors ce serait très mal-vu qu'un homme tutoie une jeune femme qu'il ne connaît pas et qui ne le connaît pas. Que fait le narrateur dans ce poème?

Etudiant:

Il demande pardon à la jeune femme.

Professeur:

Oui, il sait qu'il a commis une gaffe, un faux pas. Je dois vous
dire qu'il commet un autre faux-pas du langage sans s'excuser. Il
emploie un mot assez vulgaire que vous n'allez pas mettre dans votre
vocabulaire. Il lui fallait un mot pour exprimer son dégoût, combien il
a la guerre en abomination. Trouvez le vers où il dit que la guerre est
plus qu'une bêtise, une chose stupide.

Étudiants:

Quelle connerie la guerre!

Professeur:

Voilà. C'est un mot qu'on n'emploie pas sauf dans le langage
populaire mais il lui fallait un mot très fort. Ainsi pour exprimer le
verbe mourir il s'est servi encore du langage populaire avec une excel-
lente image des nuages "qui crèvent comme des chiens." Regardez maintenant
Cette photo faite pendant la guerre, la deuxième guerre mondiale. C'est
la ville de Brest, un port militaire avec son arsenal pour la construc-
tion navale. . . Vous avez raison. Il n'y a rien à voir. C'est le
résultat des bombardements, de cette "pluie de fer, d'acier, de sang"
dont parle le poète. Nous autres, gens heureux, qui n'avons jamais
connu cette pluie de deuil n'y a-t-il pas pour nous un message dans ce
poème? Il faut résister, n'est-ce pas, en gardant quelque part le
souvenir fragile du bonheur. Sinon on risque de tout perdre.

Écoutons maintenant la chanson "Barbara" chantée par Yves
Montand.
That part of the explication which is related to prosody, the study of the metrical and phonological composition of the poem, is the most often neglected in the collections and textbooks for American students. We might say that those who have sought to simplify the explication for home consumption have gone to the opposite end of the spectrum having decided that the French explicator often overemphasizes this aspect finding sensory perceptions in all the possible sound combinations of the poem.\footnote{There must be a middle road. Professor Pierre Clarac has clearly stated the common-sense position that for the French themselves the real value in a somewhat detailed study of prosody is in the improvement of the recitation or reading of the poem by the student himself. If the student has not at least learned to be aware of syllable count it is impossible for him to reproduce a line of French poetry without committing an act of sacrilege. If he has no knowledge of the use of the pause he will read nonsense into "Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit. . . ." Unless he has been taught to respect enjambement even the most normal syntax will become gibberish.}

Yet the finely tuned study of the music of French poetry in the Hatzfeld tradition can only be done under the guidance of a teacher who himself has studied versification. Unfortunately not many American teachers have had this training. Sources for the teacher who must undertake this study on his own are limited to the still excellent and available works of Maurice Grammont and a very few American texts containing introductory chapters on versification. Among those listed in the bibliography of this study by far the most valuable is the *Introduction à la poésie française* by Grubbs and Kneller. Three full chapters of
discussion illustrated by poems and fragments of poems indicate the importance the authors give to the problems of rhyme and rhyme scheme, rhythms, and harmony. An additional chapter traces the development of French verse from fixed forms to liberated verse. The study of these four chapters would prepare a teacher to find his way in the more concise text of Grammont. Brief statements on versification are to be found in the texts of Louise Bégué, Choix de Poésies, Benamou and Calin, Aux Portes du Poème, and Elliott M. Grant, French Poetry of the Nineteenth Century.

An example is given here of a continuation of the explication of "Barbara" for the purpose of improving the diction of students when reciting the poem and for calling attention to a few of the stylistic effects produced by the sounds and the rhythms. Even more than in the explication of content we are faced with a problem of technical vocabulary when discussing versification. This is one area which the secondary school teacher may, with a clear conscience, pass along to his colleague at the college level for more precise definition. I have purposely used an unsophisticated vocabulary in this portion of the explication.
"BARBARA": LES SONS ET LES RYTHMES

Professeur:

Un aspect très important et parfois très difficile à saisir c'est le mécanisme des sons d'un poème. Évidemment un poème est le résultat de certaines combinaisons de mots, de paroles, comme dirait M. Prévert. Et les paroles? Ce sont les sons, les tonalités qui les distinguent, n'est-ce pas? Eh bien, cette partie de notre recherche sera un peu plus difficile, mais je ferai de mon mieux pour vous guider un peu plus étroitement. N'oubliez pas d'ailleurs que ce qu'on dit ici est très particulier à notre situation. Un Français n'aurait pas toujours les mêmes impressions.

D'abord je vous demande de trouver le son le plus utilisé dans le poème. Est-ce un son ouvert ou un son fermé? Est-ce qu'il y a un son qui se répète? Est-ce qu'on trouve le plus souvent les voyelles /u/, /i/, /e/, ou les voyelles /a/, /oi/, /ou/ surtout à la fin des vers? Non... Il ne faut pas les compter. Il faut écouter.

(The first 19 lines of the poem are replayed from the taped recording.)

Qu'est-ce que vous entendez? Oui. L'ensemble des vers donne impression d'une insistance sur les sons /ã/, /oi/ dans ces premiers vers, n'est-ce pas? J'aurais pu continuer jusqu'au vers trente-sept et vous auriez eu la même impression. Or, nous avons déjà trouvé que le thème de cette partie du poème est le souvenir du bonheur. Les sons reflètent, il me semble, ce thème. Le bonheur est ouvert. Le bonheur se dit à gorge déployée, comme on dit. Ce n'est pas avec des sons
produits du bout des lèvres, avec les lèvres serrées, qu'on parle du
bonheur, n'est-ce pas? On est très heureux. On ouvre la bouche.

C'est vrai qu'il y a des sons fermés dans cette partie du
poème. Regardez les vers 3, 4 et 5. Prononcez-les:

Étudiants:

Et tu marchais souriante
Epanouie ravie ruisselante
Sous la pluie

Professeur:

Attention à la présence de ces sons fermés. A-t-on un peu
l'impression du son de la pluie, une petite pluie douce et heureuse?

. . . Maintenant écoutons la dernière partie du poème où il y a un
changement de ton. J'ai peut-être tort, mais il me semble qu'on y
entend plutôt le martèlement des consonnes dures, surtout les consonnes
qu'on forme en mettant la langue contre l'intérieur de la bouche
derrière les dents, le /t/, le /d/. Il y a aussi pas mal de consonnes
sifflées, le son /s/. . . Est-ce qu'il y a dans l'emploi de ces sons un
effet de brutalité? Répétez après moi:

Il pleut sans cesse sur Brest
tout est abîmé. . . terrible et désolée
de fer d'acier de sang
Qui crévent comme des chiens

Pour ma part je trouve que le poète a réussi à transmettre le dégoût
qu'il ressent et la violence de son thème. . . Remarquez encore le tout
dernier vers où il y a une combinaison de deux effets, l'effet de la
résonance et du rythme. Le vers commence et se termine par un son
nasal. Il a six syllabes et cinq mots, c'est-à-dire que chaque mot résonne presque indépendamment. C'est pour cette raison que j'y trouve un peu la réflexion du son des cloches d'une église, le son du glas qui annonce la mort. Prononcez ce vers et battez le rythme en même temps. Voyez-vous ce que je veux dire?

Étudiants:

Dont il ne reste rien.

Professeur:

Quant aux rythmes il est inutile de chercher une formule régulière dans un poème de ce genre, un poème aux vers libres. Il n'y en a pas. Mais il y a quand même des remarques à faire. Le poète a préféré une alternance de vers longs et de vers courts jusqu'au vers 50 où il commence à terminer le poème par des vers de la même longueur. Combien de syllabes y a-t-il dans ces huit derniers vers? Comptons-les ... Bien. Chacun des vers comprend six syllabes. Si on remonte un peu plus haut à la fin du dernier appel à Barbara on voit que ce groupe-ment commence là. C'est à partir du vers 46 que le poète a commencé ses vers de six et puis de douze syllabes. Je crois qu'il n'a pas pu résister à une force dans la poésie classique française, c'est-à-dire, l'alexandrin, le vers de douze syllabes coupé en deux hemistiches de six syllabes. Si nous regardons et prononçons bien cette dernière partie du poème nous verrons que le sens de ces vers continue sur deux vers de suite. On pourrait les lire alors comme des alexandrins tout comme ces deux vers:

Mais ce n'est plus pareil et tout est abîmé

C'est une pluie de deuil terrible et désolée
Le poème a une fin très "classique" malgré la variété de rythmes employée dans le reste du poème.

Pourquoi avons-nous mis le temps à regarder les sons et les rythmes? C'est pour vous aider à mieux réciter le poème et à mieux apprécier le talent de ce monsieur qui récite pour nous sur la bande. Ça valait la peine, je crois.

The following questionnaire has served as the basis for discussion of the problem of explication following the presentation of "Barbara". In the course in methodology it is presented to the teachers or pre-teachers in advance of the explication in order to focus their attention on the several steps.

Questionnaire

1. Commenter les quelques étapes de l'explication. Pourquoi et comment cette explication diffère-t-elle d'une explication "classique"?

2. Pourquoi a-t-on mis l'explication du vocabulaire après la recherche du thème? Etes-vous d'accord? Doit-on faire cela pour toute explication aux étudiants américains? S'agit-il du poème choisi et non pas d'une méthode rigoureuse?

3. A-t-on omis des renseignements essentiels?

4. Quels suppléments visuels (cartes, realia, etc.) pourrait-on utiliser?

5. Combien faut-il demander aux élèves de participer à l'explication? Combien faut-il rappeler aux élèves d'autres poèmes déjà étudiés?

6. Combien faut-il parler de la versification, de la forme, des sons? Que faut-il faire pour que les élèves comprennent de telles idées?
7. La méthode de l'explication suggère-t-elle des travaux pratiques, des devoirs, des exercices oraux ou écrits?
8. Peut-on faire l'explication au laboratoire? Comment?
9. A quel niveau d'études peut-on commencer à utiliser l'explication?

QUESTION SEVEN: A RESPONSE

The only structural element of the poem that needs review or reinforcement for the students at this level is the verbe se rappeler. Since it is frequently taught in conjunction with se souvenir de students (and the French themselves) sometimes confuse the two. A brief conversation-type drill, outside the framework of the poem, would be a useful and appropriate change of pace:

I. Répétez la phrase modèle.
   P.M. Est-ce que vous vous rappelez le nom de votre ancien professeur d'anglais?

II. Employez la structure de la phrase modèle pour poser une question à un (e) de vos camarades. Attention!
   Employez la forme "tu" dans votre question.
   Cues: . . . le nom de ce morceau de musique
   . . . l'adresse de Roger Ellington
   . . . la page où se trouve le poème
   . . . le livre dans lequel on a vu la photo de Jacques Prévert
   . . . la règle de l'accord du participe passéconjugué avec être
le jour où nous sommes allés voir
"Le Bourgeois gentilhomme"

III. Directed dialogue

Cues: Demandez à votre camarade s'il se rappelle le jour où on a cassé la fenêtre du voisin. Dites à votre camarade de se rappeler le jour où on a cassé la fenêtre.

Est-ce que nous nous rappelons le plus souvent le bien qu'on nous a fait ou le mal? Nous rappelons-nous le plus facilement une dette que nous devons à quelqu'un ou une dette que quelqu'un nous doit?

Dites à votre camarade de se rappeler les cinquante cents qu'il vous doit. Répondez-lui que vous ne vous rappelez pas lui avoir emprunté de l'argent.

Dites que vous essayez de vous rappeler cet emprunt mais que vous n'y arrivez pas. Dites que vous vous rappelez très bien le jour où vous lui avez prêté cet argent.

Demandez-moi si je me rappelle l'examen que vous avez passé la semaine passée. Dites-moi de me rappeler que je vous ai promis un film pour cette semaine.
Present and Participating: Jacques Prévert

For a study in which the emphasis is placed on the selection and teaching of poetry rather than the critical analysis of particular poets it seems necessary to justify the presence of so many poems by a single author. The justification is a simple one. The work of Jacques Prévert is the richest source presently available to the teacher of French. The four volumes of poems written by Prévert through his years of apprenticeship to the poetic vocation, the results of his wandering minstrelsy, are available in paperback editions published by the house of Gallimard. Additional poems and commentary are in a collection appropriately titled Fatras illustrated with collages created by the author. A number of poems appear in anthologies published in France and in readers of contemporary literature published for American schools and colleges. In the latter category one can find a collection of eighteen poems with questionnaires, vocabulary development and phonetic exploitation. A valuable critical investigation of Prévert and his work was done by Jean Queval in 1955. Pierre de Boisdeffre, Jean Rousselot, Jean-Louis Bedouin and Gaëtan Picon have seen one or more facets of the Prévert phenomenon clearly and the chapters devoted to him in their volumes are valuable background for the teacher. The most sympathetic, perhaps the most intuitive, chapter is to be found in the essays of Raymond Queneau published under the title, Batons, chiffres et lettres. Queneau, himself a poet, participated in the early activities of the sub-group of young men on the edges of the surrealist movement of the 1920's. While recognizing the influence of this youthful association on the work of Prévert,
Queneau also sees the individuality of the work, its contribution to the unmasking of the Untouchables, all those who are introduced in capital letters. Queneau finds in the authenticity of Prévert an explanation of the effect he and Jean-Paul Sartre had on the post-war youth of France. Jean Rousselot explains the unusual popularity of the poetry in a sentence that must appeal to us as teachers of French as a foreign language:

Le talent—et le mérite!—de Jacques Prévert est d'avoir su mettre en état de recevabilité poétique des gens qui n'étaient point disposés à entendre la poésie, qui se raidissaient même contre elle dans la mesure où elle s'identifiait, à leurs yeux, à une démarche purement esthétique et gratuite.45

The presence, the immediate relevancy of Prévert may indeed be short-lived; the language may already have become dated as has been suggested by Boisdeffre. The fact remains that a significant number of the poems are by way of becoming classics in their own time and one can only compare the voluminous production of a "popular poet" of another age, Victor Hugo, to see that posterity will no doubt select the wheat from among the chaff.

In using the poems of Prévert one becomes aware of recurring themes, images, symbols and syntactic formulas. Despite the frequent recourse to contre-petitierie, the work of Prévert is not lacking in normal grammatical consistency.

Prévert sees directly, speaks directly and makes no attempt to disguise his visions behind esoteric language. Of the poems in the collection Paroles there are thirty-seven that can be used at various levels in the secondary school program. In La Pluie et le beau temps
there are twelve poems, in *Histoires* twenty-two and in *Spectacle* nineteen of the poems can be presented and will serve our objectives. When we can find in the published work of a single contemporary poet ninety useful poems we must concede that the art of poetry is very much alive.

Because the volume *Paroles* is the most fruitful I have prepared a list of the poems from it that I have found accessible, with an indication of the lowest level at which they might serve. Obviously any of the poems might be presented and reviewed at higher levels. The absence of certain poems does not signify that they might not be used, simply that in my experience of the language proficiency of students and their maturity and recognition of universal ideas, the suggested poems are more likely to produce the results of attentiveness to theme, awakened sensitivity and motivation to use the language.

Following the list of poems by levels there is a brief question-aid developed over a number of years work at several levels. This aid has been given to students who are ready to prepare their own analysis but need help in organizing the paper. A brief quiz on twelve poems is also included. The quiz has been used in fourth year high school and in the intermediate course at the college level.

**SELECTED POEMS FROM PAROLES**

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CONSEILS POUR UNE PETITE ANALYSE

Choisir un poème de Prévert parmi ceux qu'on n'a pas étudiés en classe.
Ecrire une petite analyse en utilisant les conseils ci-dessous.
Maximum: Trois pages

A.
1. Ecoutez la bande (le disque).
2. Prononcez le poème en essayant d'imiter le rythme et l'intonation de l'enregistrement.
3. Notez sur votre texte les syllabes dans chaque vers, les liaisons, etc.
4. Faites attention à la continuité de la pensée. Le vers n'est pas toujours l'unité logique.

B.
1. Considérez le titre. Qu'y a-t-il dans le titre qui suggère le thème ou l'idée centrale du poème? Est-ce que le titre est trompeur (vous amène à trouver une fausse idée)? Y a-t-il déjà dans le titre une image à suivre?
2. Considérez l'organisation (la forme, la structure) du poème. Quels vers forment un ensemble (correspondant à une strophe dans la poésie régulière)? Y a-t-il une répétition de vers ou de mots? Est-ce que cette répétition sert à diviser le poème en parties distinctes? Y a-t-il une progression ou un développement dans la composition du poème?
3. Considérez le vocabulaire (le langage). Est-ce que le poète se sert d'un vocabulaire élégant, recherché, peu commun, ou au
contraire, est-ce que son vocabulaire consiste des mots de tous les jours (le langage quotidien) et de tout le monde? Considérez les images évoquées par les mots. Comment le vocabulaire sert-il à définir les images, les symboles? Y a-t-il des expressions figées, des nouveautés?

4. Considérez les temps verbaux utilisés dans le poème? Y a-t-il un changement de temps qui vous semble significatif? Comment est-ce que le temps est lié au sens?

5. Considérez les rythmes apparents. Est-ce que ce poème doit être récité rapidement ou lentement? Y a-t-il des vers qui ont l'effet de produire une lenteur ou une interruption dans le rythme? Pourquoi?

6. Considérez le thème (le fond) du poème. Y a-t-il un sujet apparent? Est-ce que le vrai sujet est plutôt caché? Dans quel(s) vers trouve-t-on le vrai sujet du poème? L'ironie et le paradoxe jouent-ils un rôle dans le poème? Est-ce que le poète dit son attitude ouvertement ou est-ce au lecteur de dégager son attitude?
QUIZ: DOUZE POEMES DE PREVERT

Directions: Trouvez parmi les douze poèmes de Prévert les réponses aux questions suivantes:

a. Pour toi mon amour g. L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts
b. Le Temps perdu h. Le Désespoir est assis sur
c. Familiale un banc
d. Le Cancre i. Page d'écriture
e. Le Contrôleur j. Promenade de Picasso
f. Barbara k. Chez la fleuriste

1. Il ne faut pas...

1. Dans quel poème s'agit-il du "merveilleux" qui, selon les surréalistes, se trouve dans les objets qu'on voit tous les jours? (g) (i) (j)

2. Dans quel titre y a-t-il un exemple de la personnification? (h) (e)

3. La forme typographique (la forme sur la page) de ce poème suggère un des thèmes, l'esclavage de l'être aimé. (a)

4. Si on regarde bien la forme de ce poème sur la page on peut y voir l'image de la bombe atomique, le nuage en forme de champignon. (l)

5. L'ironie se révèle dans le titre de ce poème car les personnages dont il s'agit ne suivent que leurs propres intérêts. (c)

6. Un Français verrait dans le titre de ce poème le nom d'une institution célèbre à Paris. (g)
7. C'est le récit d'un incident tragique. Le poète y dénonce le manque d'amour fraternel entre les hommes lorsqu'il est question de choisir entre la vie d'un frère humain et l'argent. (k)

8. Ces deux poèmes montrent la situation de l'élève qui ne peut pas accepter les règlements de l'école (de l'Établissement)

9. mais qui, enfant-rêveur, serait capable de créer quelque chose de beau. On pourrait y voir le symbole du poète lui-même. (a) (i)

10. Un ouvrier parle au soleil comme avec un camarade de travail. (b)

11. Le poète évoque ici la distinction entre la peinture traditionnelle qui voulait représenter la "réalité" et la peinture moderne qui cherche à découvrir l'essence des choses. La peinture moderne peut choquer les gens qui n'en ont pas l'habitude. (j)

12. La guerre détruit tout; les hommes, les animaux, les villes, même le souvenir du bonheur. Il faut résister en faisant appel à la mémoire pour retrouver les jours heureux. (f)

13. Dans quel poème se trouvent ces deux vers? (e)

"Il faut bien que tout le monde vive

Alors tuez-vous un peu"

14. Quelle formule littéraire est employée dans ces vers?

le paradoxe—la contradiction

15. Dans quel poème est-ce que le dernier vers a la résonance des cloches d'une église, le son du glas? (f)

16. Dans quels poèmes trouve-t-on le symbole prévertien de la liberté? (h) (i) (a)

17. liberté?
18. En France il ne faut pas tutoyer les gens qu'on ne connaît pas.
Dans quel poème Prévert (ou le narrateur) a-t-il commis cette gaffe (ce faux pas)? (f)
The addiction to poetry brings with it the realization that nothing in this world is more contradictory than the ways in which poets themselves see their art, its means, its object, its purposes, its effects. This disparity in viewpoint is not limited to French poets, but they seem for all time, to have a peculiar affinity for verbalizing the *art poétique*, one might almost call it a thirst that can only be quenched in the wellsprings of theory. One wonders whether it may not be some analytical demon haunting the French man of letters that demands this tribute to order and reason, to elegant disputation, to codification. Whatever the cause, the result is a fascinating body of statements in poetry and in prose, statements often contradicted or ignored in the truly poetic creations of the writers. Works of painstaking erudition have been written on the subject of the *art poétique* without exhausting the genre. We may sigh in sympathy with the writer of a study which only claimed to trace the themes and sources of the *art poétique* in France from medieval Latin until 1630. It would have been the work of a lifetime to have carried the thesis through to the twentieth century.

Robert Gibson published in 1961 a well organized compilation of prose and poetry from the romantics to the surrealists which has the particular value of being divided into logical categories, "The Poet as Critic," "Poetic Ends," "Poetic Means," and "The Poet at Work." The disadvantage for the secondary school lacking access to a university library or an excellent municipal library is the fact that many of the citations are truncated though sources are given in all cases.
Evidence that poets writing in English have not been exempt from this compulsion is found in the excellent anthology compiled by Robert Wallace and James G. Taaffe and titled Poems on Poetry: The Mirror’s Garland. The teacher knowing only Boileau and Verlaine might spend some time with this volume and note the frequency of the humorous touch and even the burlesque treatment of what is still to most of the French writers a subject for gravity.

A first step in preparing a unit for the most advanced classes would seem to be comprehension of the nature of the art poétique as a genre. The categorization of Gibson is a useful one though it actually cannot quite so neatly isolate all examples of the genre which frequently cut across the boundaries suggested. Another way of looking at the art poétique is the following:

I. A definition of poetry, of the role of the poet, of the subjects and language appropriate to the various types of poetry. This we might call the encyclopedic didactic art poétique, the basic Horace-Boileau formula.

II. The manifesto or polemical art poétique often the result of or giving rise to controversy among fervent adherents of different schools generally of two proximate generations.

III. The auto-portrait or the poet defining himself and his personal vision without relationship to other concepts of the art.

Quite obviously even here we have some overlap since the first two often share the codification of rules either for a burgeoning school
or a dying one. They also often share a tendency to have recourse to authority, the ancients, the God of Beauty, or posterity. The third category seems to be the only truly distinct one since the liberated poet will not seek to protect himself behind an armor of quotations or the heritage of the past. This will be a purely subjective statement.

In summary, the art poétique is at one and the same time a creation, a commentary and a reflection of its time. Since it may be born as poetry or as prose it must be called a genre unto itself. Because it has found such fertile ground in France one would have almost infinite choice in establishing a program or a unit for the secondary school.

While some of the poems to be cited are accessible at lower levels the unit needs to be built upon a sufficient acquaintance with poems as poems in order to have its greatest value. It is for this reason that the advanced class is suggested as the time and place for the unit. With four to six years background the students would be able to call to mind poems which seem to fit or to contradict poetic theory, to notice how the form and the content of the theoretical statement coincide. When Verlaine commands "préfère l'Impair" the students should not need to be told the meaning of the term. It should also be an easy exercise for them to note that Verlaine regularly causes the cesura in this poem to fall at the fourth syllable while maintaining the nine syllable line.

Unless the students have learned some poetry from each century or have a sufficiently broad view of the varieties of poetry there is no need to maintain a strict chronology in the unit. As a matter of pedagogical interest the placing side by side of widely varying forms
of the art poétique would lead to more fruitful discussion of the contrasts. A unit presented over a period of two weeks and containing half a dozen poems or prose statements would be sufficient when one considers the time to be spent in listening, reciting and discussing. At the end of this segment of the study an example of a culmination activity will be given.

The final justification for the unit will be illustrated by a not particularly flattering anecdote. Like most foreign language teachers I am haunted by an unspoken, somewhat forlorn hope that the work done by students in French will someday, somehow reflect itself in heightened sensibility to all of language, the hard-dying wish for "transfer". Again, like most teachers I have faced the problem of time, the time to do what must be done and the time to give the precious extra touch to the canvas. One student, with a chance remark, helped to keep the forlorn hope alive. After having studied a bit of the Boileau Art Poétique she remarked in innocent wonder that Boileau sounded "a lot like Pope". Had I noticed? No, I had not noticed for the very, good reason that my own hazy memory of Pope's Essay on Criticism had at that moment to be dredged up from my own high school course in English literature and consisted of the embarrassing reminder that "a little learning is a dangerous thing." At that moment I was unable to give more than a noncommittal nod of the head, but when I had had time to repair my ignorance by a visit to the library the student and I were able to talk about dates and "influence" and the probability that both Boileau and Pope sounded "a lot like Horace" in
the last analysis. The unit on the art poétique might be as valuable to the teacher as to the students.

An excellent source for the teacher's own enlightenment is the anthology entitled L'Art poétique edited by Jacques Charpier and Pierre Seghers. Containing examples of the genre from the Bible and ancient literatures outside France through to the first half of the twentieth century, this volume would in itself suffice to provide the materials for a unit. I have preferred, however, to list the sources of the poems and prose selections actually used. Various combinations of half a dozen poems or prose statements have been used at one time or another.

**MATERIALS FOR A UNIT ON THE ART POETIQUE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tr>
<td>Boileau</td>
<td>&quot;Art poétique&quot; Extracts from Chant I and Chant II</td>
<td>Omnibus of French Literature</td>
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<td>Steinhauer &amp; Walter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Claudel</td>
<td>paragraphs from Chapter I</td>
<td>Réflexions sur la poésie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verlaine</td>
<td>&quot;Art poétique&quot;</td>
<td>Jadis et naguère</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apollinaire</td>
<td>&quot;Chant de l'honneur&quot;</td>
<td>Culture et civilisation françaises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocteau</td>
<td>paragraphs from the preface to a bilingual anthology of English and American poetry</td>
<td>Culture et civilisation françaises</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mallarme</td>
<td>&quot;Le Tombeau d'Edgar Poe&quot;</td>
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<td>Ronsard</td>
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<td>Baudelaire</td>
<td>&quot;L'Albatros&quot;</td>
<td>La Poésie française</td>
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Author | Title | Source
--- | --- | ---
Char | "Seuls demeurent" | La Poésie française
Breton | selected paragraphs | Manifestes du surréalisme
Cros | "Heures Sèreines"  "Le Hareng saur"  "Morale" | Charles Cros
Cadou | "Poésie la vie entière" | Poesie la vie entière
Guillevic | "Le Soleil aujourd'hui" | Poesie la vie entière
L. Deharme | "La cage vide" | Poesie la vie entière
Queneau | Il poems under the heading  "Pour un art poétique" | L'Instant fatal
C. Roy | "Le Poète" | Poèmes d'aujourd'hui pour les enfants de maintenant
Cadou | "La Demeure d'un poète" | Poèmes d'aujourd'hui
Apollinaire | "La Chenille" | Poèmes d'aujourd'hui
Guillevic | "J'ai vu le menuisier" | Poèmes d'aujourd'hui

CULMINATION TO THE UNIT ON THE ART POETIQUE

In a fifth year class a week of review of poems already learned in previous semesters was followed by three weeks devoted to the art poétique. Boileau, Verlaine, Apollinaire, Baudelaire, Cros and Queneau were read and discussed. On the final day I dictated to the students the free verse "Le Poète" of Claude Roy. The dictation was counted as one-fifth of the grade but the purpose of the dictation was to require concentrated attention on the poem which was to be used for a brief written analysis. Following the dictation the students were asked to
read aloud from the blackboard the following directions:

Analyser le poème par: 1) sa forme, 2) la pensée ou l'idée centrale, 3) le vocabulaire et les images.

Identifier la période littéraire à laquelle il appartient. Répondre enfin à la question: Y a-t-il du danger dans l'idée exprimée dans ce poème?

LE POETE

Jamais jamais je ne pourrai dormir tranquille aussi longtemps que d'autres n'auront pas le sommeil et l'abri 
ni jamais vivre de bon cœur tant qu'il faudra que d'autres meurent qui ne savent pas pourquoi 
J'ai mal au coeur mal à la terre mal au présent 
Le poète n'est pas celui qui dit Je n'y suis pour personne 
Le poète dit J'y suis pour tout le monde 
Ne frappez pas avant d'entrer 
Vous êtes déjà là 
Qui vous frappe me frappe 
J'en vois de toutes les couleurs 
J'y suis pour tout le monde.

Most of the students expressed the central thought adequately and identified the poem as modern by its form and subject. Though they had met the term "littérature engagée" not one student bridged the gap from the novel to poetry. The vocabulary seemed to them straightforward and projected no images. At the next class session when they reread the poem they were able to take into account the imagery and play on words of the phrases: mal au coeur, mal à la terre, mal au présent. They were able to respond to the direct question concerning who might use the expression, "Je n'y suis pour personne." They saw the contrast in, "J'y suis pour tout le monde."

It was necessary to point to the double meanings of the verb frapper in,
"Ne frappez pas avant d'entrer," and the multiple meanings of "J'en vois de toutes les couleurs."

Despite the limited time for writing and the undeniable superficiality of the analysis asked for, this type of culmination activity seems to justify itself. The students have a feeling of producing a valid statement of their own reaction to the poem. They have some opportunity to show what they have learned from the unit. Increasing the time for writing does not improve the quality noticeably. The limit on time forces the students to come to the point and to use words and structures within their immediate grasp.

The following is a copy of the essay produced by a student who had only one incorrect word in the dictation. It is reproduced as written with all of the grammatical errors, missing accents and the occasional misuse of vocabulary. The word left incompletely on the paper we ultimately decided might have been replaced by révéler or montrer. When the papers were returned, several were read by their writers and suggestions for improvement were made by the members of the class. At this level students correct themselves.
L'idée centrale de ce poème est le devoir du poète envers l'humanité; qu'il doit, par son écriture, faire reconnaître les inégalités et les injustices du monde, et qu'il doit être l'avocat de tout le monde.

La forme, le vers libre, sans ponctuation et dans laquelle les lettres majuscules indiquent le commencement de la phrase, est typique de l'école moderne de la poésie. Elle donne au lecteur l'impression que le poème est seulement une partie d'une pensée entière. Les trois points à la fin vous indiquent que cette pensée est inachevée dans le poème qu'elle continue.

Le danger dans l'idée d'une approche purement humanistique à la poésie est évident. Le poète pourrait facilement oublier la beauté d'expression, l'unité, et la forme entièrement et s'égayer dans la philosophie et le théorie sociale. La poésie cesserait alors à exister comme genre.

Ce poème est typique de notre ère, le milieu du vingtième siècle.

Le vocabulaire n'est pas extraordinaire. Les mots sont simples mais quelque fois ils cachent une idée subtile.
Correction of the Analysis

The analysis was written in approximately twenty-five minutes including the time allowed for producing a "clean copy" to be handed in. Some students do not recopy their papers. When the papers are returned the entire class participates in correcting a few of them. These have been chosen because they illustrate mistakes common to the entire class or because they are especially well written and present interesting problems of re-wording so as to bring about greater precision. The following corrections were made in open class from a mimeographed text in which all the errors of the original were maintained. Where there is access to an opaque projector the paper can be projected and the corrections made on the original copy.

Line 2: replace écriture/ par son œuvre, sa poésie

Lines 2-3: faire remarquer/ révéler/ montrer

Line 4: replace l'avocat/ être le porte-parole/
le défenseur

Line 5: omit sans ponctuation et/ le vers libre dans lequel

Line 8: replace elle/ cette forme

Line 10: replace subject/ les points de suspension

Line 11: comma after le poème

Line 13: correct spelling/ humaniste/ sociale

Line 15: omit entièrement

Line 16: correct gender/ la théorie
   correct preposition used with cesser/ d'exister

Line 18: replace ère/ nos jours/ notre époque
It is evident that at this level students are capable of using the French language to express their own thoughts to a considerable degree. We continue to support their fundamental skills by including even in writing lessons some elements of aural and oral practice. In this case the dictation of the poem served the listening skill and provided a copy of the text for each student. The correcting of the selected compositions in open class served the speaking skill and the review of grammar. Regarding the suggested replacements for lexical items the student-writer was always able to paraphrase his thought and often supplied a new word which had simply not come to mind at the time of writing. This was the case with the word *avocat*. While correct as used, *avocat* seemed to the student-writer to be less precise than *porte-parole* because "un poète parle; il emploie les paroles."
The Defense of the Analysis

Having corrected the draft (brouillon) of a written analysis the student may be permitted to defend his interpretation before his classmates. This activity serves several ends. The corrected written composition is not used as lecture notes but must have been so well assimilated that the student reproduces his previous thoughts nearly spontaneously. He may be shown how to use the projector as the teacher has done in order to have the text before his eyes and those of his audience.

Obviously the principal value of the defense, as of any oral resume, is the opportunity given to the student to use the French language beyond the momentary responses of the drill or daily recitation. Here he is on his own for perhaps ten minutes at a time. He will make mistakes, but his own interest will carry him safely past many of the hidden traps of language. The teacher should respect the implied security of the invitation to proceed and keep careful notes to be discussed after the presentation. Even then the discussion should be limited to ambiguities and anglicisms that obscure the student's meaning. Where gross errors of pronunciation and grammar occur the student can be told privately that improvement will be imperative in his next talk. At this level, when the student has just begun to be released to express his own thoughts, detailed criticism can only inhibit the desire to communicate. We can also begin to rely on the adolescent's strong need to perform well before his peers. Sparing use may be made of correction by other members of the class.
When several students have chosen the same poem the oral presentation may become a panel with each student becoming responsible for a portion of the analysis. The panel presentation requires a conference with the teacher. At this time the merits of the particular papers can be discussed and the students guided in selecting the part each will play in the presentation. One type of summation which will bring the audience back into the operation is the questionnaire. The student prepares a number of questions, both textual and contextual, and calls upon his classmates to respond. This is more effective, and safer, than the usual: "Avez-vous des questions?" This question is often the final word rather than the overture to further comment.

It is possible to encourage students to adopt a less subjective style. This will require the use of a variety of sentence patterns, but the teacher should be wary of imposing upon the student at this level an undigested and falsely pretentious form of statement. The students can accept the point of view that the reiteration of "je pense" or "à mon avis" serves to alienate the audience of fellow students rather than to support one's interpretation. The following introductory phrases have the value of incorporating into the defending student's own insights an invitation to participate by the other students:

Il paraît que. . .
On voit. . .
N'est-il pas possible que. . .
N'est-il pas évident que. . .
N'y a-t-il pas. . .
Voyez-vous. . .
On dirait. . .
The teacher should not be passive though he will intervene rarely. He should be alert to the opportunities presented. In the case of an entirely erroneous statement his question may still be phrased kindly:

Où avez-vous vu cela dans le texte?

If the point is worth pursuing he should use encouraging language:

C'est très intéressant. Voulez-vous nous indiquer plus précisément comment vous arrivez à cette conclusion?

Cette observation est un peu paradoxale. Il se peut que je n'aie pas tout à fait suivi votre pensée.

In schools that are large enough to have several French teachers the oral defense can be made a part of the terminal examination for the advanced classes with all of the teachers sitting in as jury. Students often rise to such a challenge surprisingly well.
Notes for Chapter IV

5. Prévert, op. cit., p. 144.
6. See Appendix B.
12. Ibid., p. 2194.


40. See Appendix B.


42. See Appendixes C and D.


CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY FOR IN-SERVICE AND PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

The excitement, concentration, involvement and diversity that poetry can bring to our secondary school French programs are not by-products. It has been shown that the contribution to be made by the addition of poetry as a supplementary corpus is consistent with the recognized objectives of the curriculum. Poetry is, by its very nature, an excellent highway to that often quoted but infrequently practised goal of providing the student with a new language through which to experience his world.

The attractiveness of poetry is the least valid of the arguments for its use. The dialogue has proven value in supporting foreign language learning at the early levels. Fables and fairy tales have long been used in FLES programs to the delight of younger learners. However, in addition to immediate interest the well-chosen poem has long-range utility and cultural authenticity as pedagogical supports. We can attribute the following long-range objectives to the use of poetry in the program:

1. It provides a vital atmosphere for the personalized, individualized use of the language by students.

2. It provides culturally authentic images beyond the immediately practical themes of everyday living.
3. It provides an introduction to literary appreciation and the fifth skill, analysis.

4. It contributes through its affective content to the acquisition of abstract vocabulary.

But inherent in the multiform, idiosyncratic, pulsating nature of the poetic act are the pitfalls we have noted, pitfalls lying principally in the path of the teacher. Poetry cannot and should not be programmed so finely that it becomes merely another exercise in follow-my-leader. Even when judiciously selected for specific classes, poetry retains mysteries and surprises and those purely personal resonances we have noted. In fairness, therefore, to the advocates of a strictly controlled first level language experience it must be admitted that an extensive poetry supplement is unlikely in the first few months of study when the primitive leap into the land of Oz is being made.

Despite this reservation it is not unreasonable to suggest that a perfectly appropriate time to illustrate an already established pattern of phonology is after the first few months. No artificial defense need be made for the use of such a poem as "Le Capitaine Jonathan" or any of the brief bestiaires of Desnos, Claude Roy or Maurice Fombeure. A first level course that does not provide the student with the past indefinite structure is difficult to imagine. At this point such a poem as "Déjeuner du matin" is perfectly justified. Comptines and poems that have been set to music find a place in the program even at this level.

In summary, even the first year of a first level program can gain depth and strength by the addition of carefully selected poetry.
At the second level and beyond we find poetry useful in the development of writing skills. It is important to note that whereas most of the artificial texts restrict the student response to questions of the order who-what-when-where, poetry more often permits us to ask the question, why. We need, in our programs, the opportunity to respond to a question requiring the bringing together of the observed facts and the integration and interpretation of these facts. This synthesizing behavior is the ultimate test of cognition.

If we have made poetry a part of the total language program we have the wonderful advantage of setting the student free, face to face with a work of his own choice. But such an emancipation cannot be valid unless the student is also provided the proper quality of instrument with which to demonstrate his findings. If the basic tenets of this study be accepted it is apparent that the instrument of analysis is double-edged. It consists of a method of attack and the proper vocabulary. At first this tool will be gross and incapable of producing a very sharply defined outline. It will, in fact, correspond to the blunt-end scissors used by the kindergarten pupil whose muscles are not yet under sufficient control to permit his handling a more precise instrument. He soon demands a proper set of scissors to correspond to his own growing standards of accuracy.

Our work with the foreign language student seems analogous. At level one he is responding globally to the sounds and the more obvious mechanisms and images of the poetry. He is satisfied to memorize a verse or two without questioning the effect produced. By level two we will have chosen poetry of somewhat less evident ease of access, still
within his linguistic competency. He will need a few words not yet a part of his active vocabulary. These are easily seeded into the questionnaire and the presentation by the teacher. No more is required than that the student make the effort to interiorize the poetic experience following rather closely upon his teacher's guidance. By level three we have poetry whose text and context must be considered. The student now is permitted to choose among poems not studied in class, to make his personal selection based upon an affinity only he can justify.

We have seen that the traditional or even the modern French modification of the explication de texte is still far more sophisticated than our student at this level. It requires a cultural and educational commitment that our society simply does not have. We must adapt our method of attack to our courses of study and to the other calls on the time and interests of our students. A much respected French Inspecteur Général, Pierre Clarac, has indicated that even in France much time is wasted in the traditional situating of the text. We can feel secure in eliminating this step from our approach if we incorporate the necessary information into other steps. What we do need to provide is a series of sensitizing recommendations applicable to the poetry we have selected:

1. A consideration of the title. Most poems have a clue quite openly given in the title. When this is a false clue we may say that the title is ironic, paradoxal or equivocal.

2. A consideration of the structure as the ordering of the images or the events. Where the poem makes use of the formal concept of stanzas the student should become accustomed to noting the progression from one part to the next. Where there are no stanzas he should learn to become aware of the use of repetition or restatement of certain verses.
3. A consideration of the language of the poem. The prosaic and poetic use of language can serve the poet equally. The student becomes aware that certain language appears almost exclusively in poetry. The shock value of ordinary words used in poetic context is a useful revelation.

4. A consideration of the grammatical structure, particularly the verb tenses. The student needs to note the insistent use of certain tenses or the significant use of one tense at a particular stage in the poem.

5. A consideration of the rhythms and the sound patterns. This will begin with the first listening experience whether done viva voce by the teacher or from a recording.

6. A consideration of the images, symbolism and ultimately the central themes of the poem.

The other edge of our tool of analysis is the appropriate vocabulary. For the French program we have sources in the vocabulary compiled by the team at Saint-Cloud and in examples of the explication prepared by the French for their own students or by American textbook writers. The ultimate vocabulary is one that each teacher and each class will compile in the process of learning to experience poetry. When the student has failed to communicate his thought because of an ambiguity in the words chosen he is at that moment ready to be given the exact word needed. His earliest attempts at analytical composition will be so guided that he reuses the new words semi-actively. Later he is given questions as a guide to composition and these questions become progressively less structured.

The defense of the student's analysis is the final step in the road to poetic awareness. Here the student will be open to the questions and contrary opinions of his peers. He becomes, in a sense, the teacher for a brief period. Teachers who have arrived at this step have reported it to be the most exciting kind of class period. The give
and take among the members of the class releases language the students have not before used outside of the guided recitation. Students address one another without raising their hands for permission to speak. They go to the chalkboard to display a concept diagramatically. In short, if sufficiently caught up in the defense of a point of view our students muster all of the foreign language they have learned, to support themselves.

The question remains whether the teacher can be expected to have the necessary formation to build the additional skills called for by the use of poetry. If the current undergraduate requirements of most colleges for the prospective teaching major in French are to be considered unchallengeable the answer must be given that the typical beginning teacher will not have had the requisite formation. As the very minimal consideration there should be an introduction to the traditional explication in a course where the student is required to perform this very exacting task as well as to observe it being performed by a competent professor. There needs be at least one course concentrating on poetry, preferably poetry of the twentieth century. A course in the history and civilization of France as well as its contemporary culture should be a requirement for the teaching major. A methods course is needed concerned entirely with the selection, organization, and presentation of representative examples of prose and poetry with the support of the audio-visual equipment commonly available to the classroom teacher. Such a course should be taught in French to support the use of French in the prospective teacher's classroom and to give additional active practice in his use of the
language in preparation for teaching it. As more and more colleges provide a junior year abroad the returnees will be capable of performing acceptably in such a challenging course and should bring valuable personal insights from the reality of contemporary France.

The contributions of filmed teaching sequences of the pre-student-teaching period are now financially within the reach of most schools preparing teachers. The lack of a laboratory school can be overcome by the use of mobile units of video-taping equipment transportable to nearby schools. The presentation of a single lesson on poetry by a pre-service teacher could be a valuable addition to the program of a school where the in-service teachers had not tried the experiment. The discussion of the lesson with experienced teachers could develop improved lesson plans and opportunities for in-service teachers to aid the Methods instructor and the pre-service teaching majors.

Examples of the unstructured teaching of poetry at advanced high school levels and the more carefully structured techniques of the early levels would be important additions to filmed teaching libraries already available for the teaching of dialogue and drills. Because of the inconvenience involved, instructors of Methods at the college level do not make enough use of filmed materials that must be borrowed. Videotaped teaching segments are inexpensive enough to be maintained for a considerable period of time at the institution where they are made. They ought also to be available regionally through the services of the state departments of education and the state language supervisors.
More experimentation is needed with the filming of poetry recited by professionals as in the work of the team at the University of Washington under the supervision of Professor Nostrand. Pre-service teacher education programs should be using this material even in its present stage. Researchers such as Professor Nostrand welcome the comments of those who have used their instructional materials. Pre-service teaching majors need to learn to compose the kind of observational records that are useful to researchers and that will ultimately be useful as reports of experiments with diverse teaching practices in the classroom.

Professors of French literature who have little contact with undergraduates have a contribution to make to teacher education. They cannot be expected to give the courses in methodology but their presence on film can be among the most valuable of documentation for styles of teaching and approaches to criticism. This is a project that cries out for the professional cooperation of methodologists, teachers of literature and audio-visual experts. Some of the films might be tailored to the secondary school advanced level student for individual study with taped questionnaires and recommendations for composition based on viewing the films and reading the poetry discussed in the films. As the secondary school program reaches the six-year sequence there will be need of such self-study aids for the final year when the students may be too few in number to constitute a class or when other demands on their time do not permit a five-day program in French.

We see the inter-locking aspects of the original question. The pre-teaching major in French is the key to the quality of the next generation of language students at the college level. We serve both by
improving the quality of the undergraduate program. Can time and place be found for the additional courses in the already crowded undergraduate programs? We might better ask whether language departments can afford not to rethink their present offerings to determine if they truly serve the needs of the teaching major and their own requirements. The college professor seeks a student better able to face with concentration and enthusiasm the extensive readings of the survey courses, the extensive and intensive readings of the genre and century courses, including poetry. The professor who has contemplated the hopeful and innocent faces of the high-scoring freshmen who "understand every word" but have their tongues securely locked against imprudent lapses into personal reaction would surely welcome one or two courageous neophytes per class who had been released from the terror of the lurking image. The place and time for the rendezvous with poetry is the place and time of the adolescent.

The secondary school teacher, properly initiated, can begin and learn along with his students to savour a poem or two as the program progresses. The teacher is not encouraged to select a multi-coursed menu drawn from all the centuries and selected by an anthologist, a forced feeding of undigested poetry for poetry's sake. The too rich diet kills just as surely as undernourishment. The three or four years of the typical curriculum or the six years of the ideal curriculum could provide a comfortable repertory of two to four dozen poems changing in details of presentation and exploitation to suit particular classes. The teacher will have compiled his own anthology adding to it throughout his career. By sharing with colleagues and careful observation of the
acceptance of various kinds of poetry by students he will have always available the right poem to suit the program.

A final statement concerning the sharing of professional information. Too often the secondary school foreign language teacher isolated within his school and failing to benefit from professional colloquia even at the local level spends inordinate amounts of time re-inventing the wheel. The national meetings when held at a distance require too extensive financial outlay for the individual or his school system. Local and regional meetings of AATF or of the state federations of foreign language teachers should be the answer. If the school system can afford to send only one delegate the reports should be shared widely and the opportunity to attend rotated among the teachers. The teacher who does not belong to at least one professional association representing his primary discipline and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages can only blame himself for his failure to enrich his experience of the living language and the techniques of teaching it.

Ultimately any improvement in the teaching of French can only come from the dedication of teachers at all levels and their commitment to intelligent reevaluation of their performance in the light of new developments. This study has been an attempt to describe the contributions of poetry to improved teaching and learning of French based on the concept of the teacher as the builder of a road rather than as the driver of a vehicle in which the students ride passively toward their destination.
APPENDIX A

Acknowledgement: I am infinitely grateful to Professor André Castagna of the Ecole Normale Supérieure de St. Cloud for the following documentation. With the permission of his daughter, Anne, Professor Castagna forwarded to me the cahier of "Récitations" which she had completed as a nine-year old at l'Ecole Marcel Cachin. The fifteen poems, representing the work of a school year, were beautifully written and each was illustrated in colored crayon. Her teacher had indicated in red pencil appropriate intervals, linkings and pronunciation problems necessary to the correct oral rendition of the poem. One or two of the poems had been rewritten to satisfy the exigencies of the teacher who required absolute accuracy. Unfortunately the ink and colored crayon do not reproduce sufficiently well to have allowed the original to be included in the study. The following list, in the order of their appearance in the cahier will give some idea of the variety and difficulty of the poems taught to a nine-year old French pupil in France:

1. Sensation d'automne A. de Noailles
2. Les éléphants Leconte de Lisle
3. L'heure du berger P. Verlaine
4. Une heure s'achève E. Ducoté
5. Le rat de ville et le rat des champs La Fontaine
6. Premier Janvier A. Rimbaud
7. Le léopard R. Desnos
8. Le départ M. Jacob
In connection with this single example of the cahier written and maintained by a pupil it seems appropriate to cite the following statement from a bulletin, Récitations, provided the teachers of the "cours élémentaire" for the 1962-1963 school year:

Il n'est, pour le maître, de meilleur choix de poèmes que le sien. Ce sont ses poèmes préférés qu'il dira le mieux, qu'il saura le mieux communiquer.

Mais nous devions aussi choisir et nous l'avons fait sans aucun souci de justification, seulement avec l'espoir de ne retenir aucun texte que des maîtres expérimentés de D. E. se voient contraints de proscrire.

It is obvious from this statement of those charged with the selection of the year's program on the national level that each teacher is considered a free agent with respect to the final choice of poems to be taught and the letters from teachers are witness to the independence exercised by them. Thus it is unlikely that all fifteen of the poems previously cited would have appeared in the notebooks of students at the same level in other parts of the country, or perhaps even within the same school.

From among thirty-three copies of the bulletin Récitations dated from 15 December, 1959 through 2 April, 1968 and from the September,
1967 number of the Bulletin de la Radio-Télévision Scolaire, all kindly provided me by Professor Castagna, I have been able to draw the following conclusions:

1. Poetry, including "contes et comptines en musique," has a continuing and important place in the school program of the French child through what we term the junior high school years.

2. The variety and depth of the poetry chosen is astonishing at first view. When one considers the role of the development of individual responsiveness to works of literature which plays so prominent a part at the upper levels we see the necessity for the early groundwork.

3. The quality of the documentation provided the teacher at the lower levels, including those teaching the "écoles maternelles," is uniformly excellent. The teacher who uses the information, techniques and illustrations provided should have no problem in presenting a successful lesson.

4. The recordings used in the broadcasts of "la radio scolaire," the slides provided for the system called "radiovision" and the later development of "la radio-télévision" show that the French have, at least since 1959, made use of increasingly sophisticated technological aids to the teaching of poetry. Reference is made in the bulletins to materials on
the use of tape recorders available to all teachers from "L'Institut Pédagogique National" located at rue d'Ulm in Paris. Articles in "Les Langues modernes", the journal of modern language teachers in the public schools confirm this observation of the liveliness of audio-visual teaching in France.

5. While Villon was included (a modernized spelling of the text of "La Ballade des Pendus") and a number of the fables of La Fontaine, the overwhelming majority of the poems in the bulletins cited were from the 19th and 20th centuries; quite heavy emphasis on the romantics and the poets of the Parnasse, but a significant representation of contemporary poets such as Maurice Carême, Maurice Fombeurre, Francis Carco, Paul Fort, Louis Aragon, Robert Desnos and Jacques Prévert.

6. Included in the materials for each poem were recommendations for the correct recitation of the poem by the students; the "conseils pour la diction" included rhythms, intonation and "expression" aimed at revealing the evocative elements of the poetry. It is evident that the French pupil is expected to recite the living poem and not simply the words of which it is composed.
7. While the information "Pour un commentaire du texte..." contains biographical notes, notes on the place of the particular poem in the entire work of the poet, and occasionally reference to other poems or similar treatments of the theme, the emphasis is on the mechanisms used by the poet, the composition or structure of the poem, symbolism and original use of language. The recommendations seem to be directed toward increased participation by the pupils while maintaining, for the teacher's use, something of the traditional format of the explication. Frequent notations of the type, "Have the students note....", "Call to the students' attention....", are to be found throughout the bulletins.

8. The French teacher is not expected to assume knowledge on the part of his students. Five poems on the general theme of "l'escargot" were accompanied by four color photographs of admirable clarity and of a size to be mounted and displayed or projected. One would certainly assume that the snail was in the vocabulary of every right-thinking French child!
Aux élèves de French 3 Collinwood High School

Mademoiselle June Gilliam, votre professeur, me dit que vous avez récrit mon petit récit du "point de vue masculin".
Moi, je l'avais écrit du point de vue féminin - masculin - pluriel.
C'est le mien.
J'ignore votre âge exact, mais quand j'étais moi aussi très jeune, si j'avais écrit alors - ce qui n'est pas le cas, j'ai écrit bien plus tard - je l'aurais écrit tout pareil ou alors peut-être que c'est le garçon qui aurait pleuré.
Dans votre version, c'est une femme ou plutôt une fille qui parle, parle, parle, parle trop.
Les filles sont peut-être très bavardes dans l'Ohio, mais croyez-vous que là, comme n'importe où ailleurs, les garçons savent tellement mieux se taire ou garder un secret.
Et si l'une d'elles parle à l'un d'eux en particulier, tristement peut-être mais amoureusement, en est-il tellement mécontent?
Enfin, c'est bien marrant tout de même et vous m'avez fait plaisir.

Bien à vous

(Signature) Jacques Prévert

Paris, le 29 Avril 1964.
Paris, le 10 Novembre 1964

Madame June GILLIAM
Collinwood High School
15210 St. Clair Avenue
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44110
U. S. A.

Chère Madame,

Jacques PREVERT, dont je suis l'éditeur et l'ami, me charge de vous remercier de votre aimable lettre ainsi que du texte de votre conférence sur son poème "Barbara". Le tout l'a beaucoup touché et il me charge de vous dire à quel point il est sensible à l'intérêt que vous et vos élèves vous voulez bien lui porter.

Nous avons lu ensemble votre texte et, dans l'ensemble, nous l'avons trouvé parfait; c'est-à-dire que votre analyse rend très bien compte de tous les éléments de ce texte et, en général, de la poésie de Prévert. Celui-ci me charge de vous envoyer cette petite note complémentaire qu'il a écrite pour vous, et qu'il peut être intéressant d'ajouter à vos explications.

Je vous adresse, chère Madame, avec tous les compliments de Jacques Prévert, mes salutations les meilleures.

René BERTELÉ

(Signature)
En Bretagne, surtout dans le Finistère, j'ai connu beaucoup de Barbara.

Entre les deux grandes-dernières-guerres, je séjournais souvent à Ouessant.

C'est une île sauvage, belle, intacte: des rochers, un peu d'herbe pour les moutons, des genêts, des ajoncs, la lavande et la corne de brume.

Pas l'ombre d'un arbre, sauf celle de quelques rescapés du vent cloîtrés entre les murs du cimetière et du jardin de l'église.

Et à Ouessant, il était fréquent d'entendre dans la rauque et tendre langue des iliens, un appel familier: Barbara!

De même à bord de l'Ennez-Eussa qui assurait le service entre l'île et Brest, sur le continent.

Pourtant, en France et à ma connaissance, ce nom ne figure pas sur le calendrier des saintes et saints estampillés par la religion catholique, apostolique et romaine. C'est un nom libre, de là son charme.

Il est vrai qu'en Ohio, vous n'avez pas de Saint Cinnati, mais—si mes souvenirs sont exacts — je crois qu'il y a quelque part, en Californie, un petit pays, une plage, ou tout au moins une cafétaria à l'enseigne de Sancta Barbara.
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