

OBJECTIVES IN DRAMATICS

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study had its beginning in speculation concerning the nature of the dramatics programs in Virginia high schools. Was there a generally accepted over-all purpose of these programs? Was there agreement touching the objectives of the programs among the instructors in different schools? Was there a common point of view among drama teachers with reference to the ends they were attempting to serve? Was there reasonable uniformity of procedure in approaching the problems arising in every dramatics program? Were the solutions of such problems based upon a sound concept of the values inherent in dramatics? These and kindred questions supplied the impetus for the investigation reported in this writing. Moreover, the fact that no thorough-going study of the objectives of dramatics had been found in print seemed added justification for such a study.

As originally planned, the study had three main purposes, namely, (1) to explore the considerations underlying the inclusion of dramatics in the regular curriculum of the public high school; (2) to make a statement of cardinal values to be found in every dramatics program, and (3) to use this statement as a basis for criteria by which to judge the objectives of the dramatics programs in certain Virginia high schools.

The literature of the field was surveyed with a view to

discovering the ideas of the authors respecting the values inhering in high school dramatics. From this survey resulted a statement of values or objectives which was tested by submitting it to authoritative¹ criticism. In connection with the formulation of this statement there emerged an awareness of two categories into which the objectives appeared to fall, namely, process and product. Under the former were those objectives which seemed to be concerned with the instruction and training of the student in the course; under the latter, those related to the end-results of the program, the complete acted play itself.

The emergence of a concept distinguishing between process and product objectives served to direct the course of the entire study. Thus, a statement of objectives was prepared and presented to a group of workers in the field in an attempt to learn if any such distinction between recognized objectives existed in the thinking of those familiar with the work of dramatics education. With their assistance the several objectives were assigned respectively to the two categories.

After the objectives were thus classified, they were used as bases for a questionnaire designed to reveal what ends were avowed in drama programs. Judgment dictated against submitting the

¹ Marius Blesi, professor of English and director of the College Theatre, Emory and Henry College, Emory, Virginia.

objectives as stated to any group in view of the tendency of most people to register agreement with any overt statement of principle whether such agreement is to be seen in practice or not. It was therefore deemed advisable to ask directors and teachers of dramatics to respond to statements of practice stemming from the objectives rather than to the objectives themselves.

Next, the questionnaire was submitted to a jury² of authorities in the field of the educational theatre in order to test the validity of the relationship between its items and the several objectives. After refinement resulting from the comments of these authorities, the questionnaire was sent to a number of Virginia high schools in which dramatics was either a subject in the curriculum or a well-established activity in the co-curriculum. With the questionnaire went a request that the person responsible for the drama program in each school respond to it, and no other.

The resultant data were treated with the intention of finding, if possible, both what is and what ought to be in this field at the high school level and of discovering what points of view regarding the objectives of dramatics were bases of actual procedures in the drama programs of Virginia high schools. The data were tabulated to show (1) whether the direction of emphasis was on process or product objectives among the entire group of schools reporting, and

2 See Appendix D.

(2) in what order individual objectives were ranked by the several schools.

It was hoped that the study would have the following useful results: (1) A statement of values inhering in high school dramatics which might be of use in clarifying the thinking and purposes of both teachers and pupils in Virginia high schools; (2) A questionnaire which might serve as an instrument for studying the objectives of drama programs in other groups of schools not included in the scope of this study; (3) Certain data relating to such objectives which might provide impetus toward improvement of school drama; (4) Certain information concerning the origin and development of dramatic instruction in some American universities and in Group I Virginia high schools which might be of service to other students in the field.

CHAPTER II

THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The acceptance of dramatics as a part of the regular program of studies in American schools, both on the college and secondary levels, appears to be one of the significant developments in education within the first half of the Twentieth Century. Previous to that time the theatre and the school had existed as separate institutions, but only since 1900 have they established a common concern. Before the turn of the century, amateur dramatics was confined largely to the so-called Thespian Societies whose chief purpose was to provide entertainment for the performers and whose product, if one may accept a contemporary professional verdict,¹ was almost uniformly bad. Dramatics activity in the school was generally limited to the class play prepared by the seniors, and even this was viewed askance by the serious minded and regarded by others in much the same light as the annual banquet or the May Day program. By the time of this study, almost all standard colleges² had well organized departments of drama which offered work on both undergraduate and graduate levels,

1 Smith, Sol. Theatrical Management in the South and West. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1868. p. 22

2 See Appendix A for a list of the drama offerings of some American universities.

and many large high schools³ were providing classes in dramatics carrying unit credit toward graduation. That so great a change had come about in so short a time seemed indicative both of the educative value of dramatics and of the enthusiasm of its proponents.

While it is not within the scope of this study to review the development of educational dramatics through the fifty years, subsequent to 1900, it is relevant to note that this development was almost coincident with two other intellectual movements of great importance: (1) the renaissance of the English-speaking theatre which followed hard upon the first playing of "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray"⁴ and which in the United States blossomed as the "art theatre" or "little theatre" movement⁵ and (2) that general ferment in educational thought for which Dewey was largely responsible and which is now generally spoken of as the progressive education movement. The early years of the Twentieth Century were years of change, and it would seem that the revitalization of the professional theatre and the reorientation of basic educational concepts which occurred almost simultaneously during this period provided the opportunity for the theatre to come into the school.

3 See Appendix B for a list of Virginia high schools offering dramatics as a regular course in their curricula.

4 Cheney, Sheldon. The Theatre. Longmans Green and Company, New York, 1935. p. 501.

5 Hume, S. T. and Foster, Lois M. Theater and School. Samuel French New York, 1947. p. 6

However it is not true that dramatics made its entrance into the curriculum unchallenged or that its advocates were not required to make a case for their subject. Indeed, opposition was at first both strenuous and highly vocal. The theatre itself was still widely regarded as the "devil's chapel"⁶ and acting was considered by many a calling only one step above thievery. The early teachers of dramatics found reason to state their claims clearly and in great detail. They did this in a literature which was published largely between the years 1910 and 1930, and it is to this body of writing that the present study is indebted for many of the objectives hereinafter considered. Since it was unthinkable at that time to regard professional acting as a career for which the school should furnish preparation, nearly all the objectives discussed fall in the "personality development" category. These writers were careful to discount any connection between the school theatre and the professional theatre; in fact, they were most emphatic in drawing a sharp line between them, and this position is still maintained by many writers on the educational theatre at the time of this writing.

This attitude toward the objectives of school dramatics was stated in 1914 by Curtis⁷:

6 Curtis, Elnora W. The Dramatic Instinct in Education. Houghton Mifflin and Company, New York, 1914. p. 45

7 Ibid. p. 59

The emphasis should be placed where it belongs - on the educational features of the work rather than upon the public production, however beautiful and inspiring in itself.

In 1917, Hilliard, McCormick and Oglesbay⁸ wrote in the same tone:

The difference lies in the fact that in the professional theatre it is the play itself that is the chief objective while in the school theatre the development of the player is the objective.

Further in the same chapter, they summarized the objectives proper to school dramatics:

The results of educational dramatics may be divided into three parts: first, the results to the player and his growth through character; second, the enlargement of his understanding and his resultant comprehension of the lives of those about him, and third, the physical improvement that takes place in him.

Later the same position was taken by many writers. Writing in 1934, Childs⁹ said:

The most important function of dramatics is not play-making but the opportunity it offers for character building.

In 1946, Weaver and Borchers¹⁰ stated:

As far as the professional theatre is concerned, Hamlet's

8 Hilliard, Evelyne, McCormick, Margaret and Oglesbay, Kate. Amateur and Educational Dramatics. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1917. p. 13

9 Childs, Jessica. Building Character Through Dramatization. Row Peterson and Company, Evanston, Illinois, 1934. p. 30

10 Weaver, A. T. and Borchers, G. L. Speech. Harcourt Brace and Company, New York, 1946. p. 319

observation, "The play's the thing" may be correct, but from the standpoint of the school it is assumed that the playing is the thing. Here (in the school) we are seeking primarily the social values of working with our fellow human beings in a common enterprise.

In the 1947 edition of their book, Theatre and School, Hume and Foster¹¹ drew the same line:

What, then, is the place of the school theatre in the modern curriculum? The answer seems to be that the school theatre is simply one of many subjects and activities like science, art, physical education and music, which modern pedagogy has accepted to supplement the basic three R's.....The educational theatre should not be directed to the business of training actors, as football trains athletes.....The educational theatre is first and foremost an educational medium, and the more thoroughly this fact is recognized, the better for the school theatre.

In the same reference, they continued:

The concern of the school theatre is with the participant not with the empathy or the aesthetic preferences of the audience.....It is apparent that this purpose does not admit of any extensive preoccupation with the perfecting of the techniques of the individual player. Indeed, the business of the school theatre is to educate, not to train actors.

In 1939, Ommanney¹² stated the case:

The work of the dramatics class should never be presented as training for the professional stage, and the most brutal frankness on the part of the instructor is justified in discouraging the average aspirant.

11 Hume, S. J. and Foster, Lois M. Theater and School. Samuel French, New York, 1947. p. 21

12 Ommanney, Katharine A. The Stage and the School. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1939. p. 486

If one were to judge from these authors, and they were but a few of many who maintained the same position, he might conclude that the program of dramatics in the modern American high school was concerned with almost everything except teaching students how to act. However, anyone having acquaintance with the actual program, especially in the large urban high schools, would know that this is seldom the case. The practice in many schools was directed toward the very objectives which these writers decried. Seely and Hackett¹³ recognized this when they said:

The selection of the play should rest upon our needs and interests (those of the students) as well as upon those of the prospective audience.

These authors, while apparently agreeing with the authorities previously quoted, were obviously aware of the trend toward emphasizing the finished product and they warned against it.

In contrast to this attitude, some writers did not object to this trend; they proclaimed and encouraged it. For example, Crafton and Roger,¹⁴ in their 1946 text, The Complete Acted Play, wrote:

The director must say to himself: 'I will have an audience of three hundred people at this play and I will have a cast of twelve students. Some of these students will interpret their parts badly; the presentation may not give the audience very much, but my cast will probably learn a great

13 Seely, H. F. and Hackett, W. A. Experiences in Speaking. Scott Foresman and Company, New York, 1940. p. 386

14 Crafton, A. and Roger, J. The Complete Acted Play. F. S. Crofts and Company, New York, 1946. p. 11

deal. Now, ought I to place the development of my twelve actors above a consideration of my audience? Is a realization of the value of cooperation gained by a few students of more importance than giving my audience the experience which the author has planned for them in this play?' The director must answer these questions honestly before he uses his theatre as a laboratory and asks his audience to pay for it.

In this paragraph it is significant that the person in charge of the drama program no longer appeared as the "teacher" or the "instructor," both scholastic titles; he had become the "director," which term rather relates to the theatre than to the school. Also it seems reasonably clear from the form in which the question was posed how the authors would answer it, and still clearer in light of their text, devoted as it is to a study of those technical skills which go into the production of a play.

Swanson,¹⁵ in an article written in 1948 for distribution to high schools having membership in the National Thespian Society, stated:

It is this sense of obligation to the audience which implements and shapes all the play productions of our group.

It seems hardly necessary to point out that in a dramatics program where obligation to the audience is paramount, the prime objective will be the best possible performance, with character development and personal integration of the student left to take care of themselves.

15 Swanson, Wesley. Rehearsing Techniques. National Thespian Society, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1948.

As prominent an authority as Bavely,¹⁶ secretary of the National Thespian Society, writing in the Quarterly Journal of Speech for February, 1946, seemed to acknowledge the obligation of the school theatre to its audience:

Justification of the teaching of dramatic arts in our secondary schools has been presented on many occasions by writers, teachers, educators and social leaders. The case has often been based upon limited evidence, personal views and half-truths. The popular contention is that participation in dramatics develops poise, ability to speak in public, freedom from inhibitions of one kind or another. No person can deny that these are worthwhile qualities to foster in young people. But this argument alone is not enough to convince this average tax-payer or school administrator that additional teachers should be hired and that courses in dramatics should be added to an already overburdened curriculum. Our case must be argued on the basis of those contributions which an expanded dramatic arts program makes to present day educational and cultural needs.

In a following paragraph he went on to explain the nature of this contribution:

The further abbreviation of the work day and the work week and new periods of unemployment will increase the amount of leisure time among our people. This time will be spent largely in recreational activities of one kind or another. Attending the movies, listening to the radio and participating in dramatic entertainment already constitute national habits.Teaching our citizenry how to employ its leisure is no less essential than teaching it the means of earning its livelihood.The potentialities of the high school dramatics program as a source of entertainment and recreation are tremendous. In scores of communities the high school play is the only "flesh and blood"

16 Bavely, Ernest. "Dramatic Arts in the Secondary School." The Quarterly Journal of Speech, February 1946. p. 43

theatre our people know. It is no mere boast to say that the high school theatre comes nearest being the "people's theatre". Its audiences are larger than those of the college, community and professional theatres combined.

It would be palpably unfair to attempt to read into this statement any idea which it does not explicitly contain. Lest its use here appear to attribute to Bavelly an extreme position to which he would not subscribe, it should be noted that in a personal letter dated February 8, 1949 he said:

The director who stresses the product at the high school level at the expense of the training of his students is frequently the one who (1) is most anxious to establish and maintain his reputation as a "director", and (2) has not had much training in speech and dramatics in recent years.

The fact remains, however, that his published statement seems to imply that the fostering of worthwhile qualities in the student is not sufficient justification for the school theatre and therefore not its sole objective. "The potentialities of the high school theatre as a source of entertainment" is a phrase which suggests a considerable preoccupation with the play itself as a finished product.

Selden,¹⁷ writing in his college-level text, A Player's Handbook, went beyond any authority thus far quoted:

The ultimate value of any sort of study in the techniques of preparing and playing a dramatic role is realized only when it is related to definite problems in an actual play.

17 Selden, Samuel. A Player's Handbook. F. S. Crofts and Company, New York, 1934. p. 218

This appears as forthright a statement as could be made in declaring for the importance of the play itself.

Aside from the opinions of authorities, there was another indication that the finished performance had become the criterion of the dramatics program in many schools. This was the general growth of drama tournaments held under the supervision of school authorities and conducted along lines not greatly different from those of athletic competitions.¹⁸ The Virginia High School League had conducted such a tournament at Charlottesville annually for 14 years, with ratings and awards going to the plays judged best in certain technical respects.¹⁹ One of the scoring points was that of "suitable casting" - i. e., the selection by the director of the student most capable of portraying a given role. This seemed to place a premium upon a practice which was in contrast to the older theory of rotation of roles.

From the foregoing it would appear that there was some discrepancy between the avowed objectives of dramatics, as most commonly urged by the majority of writers on the subject, and the actual objectives which were implicit in the program in being in many schools. To say this is not to infer that these two groups of objectives were

18 American Educational Theatre Association. National Directory of Drama Festivals. The Association, New York, 1947.

19 Virginia High School League Handbook. The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, August 15, 1948. p. 77

contradictory or that the pursuit of one precluded the achieving of the other. It merely indicates that there seemed to be two views which one might take of the purpose of the school drama program, and raises the question whether the acceptance of one or the other view influenced the methods by which the program was administered.

In compiling the list of objectives of school dramatics which follows, it appeared justifiable to recognize this general grouping. Therefore the list was divided into two parts: (1) those objectives which seemed to be related to the growth and development of the student as an educated person, and (2) those related to the creation of a finished performance of the play in the interest of the audience, of the playwright's purpose and of the theatre as an art. For reasons of convenience, the first group was given the category "process objectives" because they seemed to emphasize the process by which the play was produced, and the second group was given the category "product objectives" because they seemed to emphasize the end-result or product created.

Even though this division appeared justified in the light of the literature quoted, it was submitted to the criticism of Marius Blesi, professor of English and director of the College Theatre at Emory and Henry College. He agreed without qualification that the division of objectives into process and product was logically sound

and expressive of a real situation existing both in theory and practice.²⁰

It should be pointed out that no inference was drawn at this point that unique procedures would stem from the process objectives as opposed to product objectives. The division was made here only to permit a classification of objectives which would rest upon logic and fact and to open the way for a study of actual procedures.

20 See Appendix C.

CHAPTER III

OBJECTIVES OF DRAMATICS

The list of objectives which follows was compiled from various readings in the field. In some cases, an objective was found explicitly stated and could be quoted directly from an original context; in others, the objective was implicit in a discussion of, let us say, the principles of acting or the art of make-up. In such instances, in order to make statements of his objectives, it was necessary to judge the author's purposes from what he advocated in the way of procedures. At first a rough list was drawn in which the several objectives were divided under two categories, process and product. After refinement and simplification done in consultation with Blesi, the list was stated in the following form:

A - The Process Objectives

The experience of dramatics¹ serves to promote:

- (1) Speech Improvement, through use of the physical organs of speech in the reproduction of vivid diction.²

1 The phrase experience of dramatics is used here to mean the experience gained by a student who pursues the program of dramatics in the modern American high school.

2 Finlay-Johnson, Harriett. The Dramatic Method of Teaching. Ginn and Company, Boston, 1912. p. 93

- (2) Poise and Grace, through practice in dancing, fencing and pantomime.³
- (3) Understanding of Human Motives and Behavior, as a result of the study of character and motivation required to interpret properly an assigned role.⁴
- (4) Personal Discipline, through participation in an activity of great complexity wherein success depends upon the full cooperation of every individual concerned and his performance of an assigned task in a precise manner and at a given moment.⁵
- (5) Personality Integration, as a result of the opportunity for creative self-expression in an artistic medium, providing that sense of achievement and personal value deemed important to a well integrated personality.⁶

3 Hume, J. T. and Foster, Lois M. Theater and School. Samuel French, New York, 1947. p. 35

4 Hilliard, McCormick and Oglesby. Amateur and Educational Dramatics. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1917. p. 8

5 Ommanney, Katharine A. The Stage and the School. Harper Brothers, New York, 1939. p. 5

6 Ibid. p. xvi
Bavely, Ernest. "Dramatic Art in Secondary School." Quarterly Journal of Speech. February 1946. p. 44

- (6) Inspiration to Nobility, through study of the great plays which compose the literature of the theatre wherein are found many vivid and heroic personalities who may attract the student to behavior that is high-minded and magnanimous.⁷
- (7) Appreciation of the Drama, through training in those techniques of the theatre by which the printed script is transformed into living drama, an acquaintance with which serves to provide a standard of critical judgment and thus qualifies the student as an intelligent member of the audience of the professional theatre.⁸
- (8) A Mastery of Words, through constant use of words as living sounds rather than as printed symbols, by which the student is awakened to the power and beauty of language.⁹
- (9) Spiritual Exaltation, through emotional maturing which results from vicarious experiences in the theatre.¹⁰

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- 7 Childs, Jessica. Building Character Through Dramatization. Row Peterson and Company, Evanston, Illinois, 1934. p. 30
- 8 Ommanney, Katharine A. The Stage and the School. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1939. p. 3
- 9 Shubert, Leland. Oral Communication. Prentice-Hall Company, New York, 1948. p. 8
- 10 Duerr, Edwin. "Theatre in the Academic Gown." Quarterly Journal of Speech, December 1943. p. 441

Regarding this objective, Cheney¹¹ writes:

Dionysus has lived twenty-five hundred years. Today a world that has almost learned to scorn him turns back with the old hunger of soul, the old impulse toward divine living, with not a little of the old wildness. For we later mortals, as we view the decay of moralistic religions, the chaos of conquest-mad civilizations and the spiritual bankruptcy of the prosperous-scientific life, we seek again the roads to emotional-spiritual inundation, to ecstasy, to the experience of God. We turn back confidently. For Dionysus is immortal and the theatre lives always.

Ommanney¹² says the same thing less poetically:

Perhaps the cultivation of the emotions through the loss of self in another individuality which comes when one acts a part or watches a play intensely is one of the chief values of dramatics.

Dolman¹³ summarizes the ideas leading to this objective:

The function of acting in its religious associations has always been to inspire, to elevate, to point a way to the gods; and it seems likely that really great acting will always be that which points up, not down; which elevates, not degrades; which satisfies the craving for spirituality rather than reality. Not that great acting must always be religious in subject matter or purpose; but even when most secular and most realistic it must arouse in the aesthetic imagination something of the same exaltation it once aroused in the religious imagination.

11 Cheney, Sheldon. The Theatre. Longmans Green and Company, New York. p. ix

12 Ommanney, Katharine A. The Stage and the School. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1939. p. 6

13 Dolman, John. The Art of Acting. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1949. p. 4

- (10) Professional Preparation, as a result of the acquisition of the rudiments of those skills upon which the professional theatre depends.¹⁴

B - The Product Objectives

The dramatics performance results in:

- (1) A Good Show, the objective of high school dramatics whereby the audience is provided a good show in return for its investment of time and money. Hunt¹⁵ says:

For all paid performances to the general public, I believe the purpose should be to produce as fine a piece of work as possible.

Snook¹⁶ agrees with this position:

In plays for the general public where an admission fee is charged, I think the best possible cast should be assembled and the public given a performance that is worth the money.

That the objective of the "good show" is tacitly accepted even

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- 14 Bavelly, Ernest. "Occupational Opportunities in the Educational Theatre." Dramatics Magazine, December 1948.
- 15 Hunt, Althea. Associate professor of dramatic art in the College of William and Mary. Personal letter dated at Williamsburg, February 26, 1949.
- 16 Snook, Lee Owen. Playwright and drama editor for Row Peterson and Company. Personal letter dated at Evanston, Illinois, February 23, 1949.

when it is not openly avowed would appear from a study of the play programs of some of the larger high schools. The recurrence of the same names in leading roles indicates that something like a star system is followed in many schools. In one large Virginia high school with an enrollment of over 1200, the same girl played the lead in contest plays sent to the State Drama Festival two years in succession.¹⁷

(2) The Creation of an Audience for the Professional Theatre.

an objective pertaining to the elevation of taste in entertainment on the part of the general public.¹⁸ Since the death of the road, as Beverly points out in the quotation given previously, the American high school has brought the living theatre to more persons than the professional, college and community theatres combined.¹⁹ If this be so, it would follow that the standard of public taste in the drama is largely set by the

17 Virginia High School League Handbook, August 1947 and August 1948. The University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

18 Ommanney, Katharine A. The Stage and the School. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1939. p. 3

19 Although complete statistics are not available, such figures as can be obtained seem to indicate that there are more persons working as drama instructors and directors in the secondary schools of the country than are employed in all branches of the commercial theatre. Vide: Beverly, Ernest. "Occupational Opportunities in the Educational Theatre." Dramatic Magazine, December 1948.

high school theatre. Such a situation places upon the school theatre the responsibility of judging between what is first rate and genuine in its art and what is shoddy and second rate, and the further duty of attempting to offer the public only the former.²⁰

(3) Provision of a Reservoir of New Talent for the Professional Theatre.

Like other people, professional actors must get their formal education when they are young; most of them get it in the public schools. The actors of the next generation are in school somewhere now. For them, the dramatics program of the school is vocational education in the truest sense of the word. Therefore, to set forth this objective as suitable to school dramatics does not mean that the high school drama program shall become a talent-hunt for Broadway and Hollywood. Rather, it means that among broad offerings of the modern high school, intended to lead toward many trades and professions, there may well be included work to fit pupils for the dramatic profession.

Opportunity for employment in the field of public entertainment is wide and expanding; it is by no means confined to the New York stage. Radio and television offer openings each year for large numbers of young people with the talent of showmanship. The Community

20 Cortright, E. S. "Selecting, Casting and Rehearsing the High School Play." Quarterly Journal of Speech, December 1943.

and Little Theatres are in the market for trained directors and technicians. Certain phases of social work and recreation require persons with dramatic training. The colleges and schools themselves demand a constant supply of competent teachers and directors of drama. It would seem a legitimate objective of the school theatre to give the student his first training in preparation to qualify for these positions.²¹

Furthermore, there is evidence that the directors of the drama programs in many secondary schools tacitly accept this objective with the full approval of the school administration. Of course it is true that this position is seldom stated in the official publications of the schools. For example, a Virginia junior college with a high school department states in its catalogue:

The Drama Department at College is not a drama school. The objective of the work is always the personal growth of the student and her integration as an educated person.

However, during the same year in which this statement appeared in its catalogue, the school ran three articles in its biweekly newspaper announcing the appearance of two of its former drama students in Broadway plays and the acceptance of a third by a famous professional school in New York. Thus it would seem that,

21 Bavelly, Ernest. "Dramatic Art in the Secondary School." Quarterly Journal of Speech, February 1946.

while there is some hesitation to avow this objective in advance, there is perfect willingness to acknowledge it once attained. Nor is there any hypocrisy in this attitude; no school can actually prepare a student for success in the professional theatre in the sense that it can prepare him, say, for accounting or retail selling. The most it can do is to teach him some of the things that every actor must know; it is unfortunately the case that a knowledge of those things does not guarantee that he will ever become an actor.

A teacher of drama²² in one of the largest high schools in Virginia, speaking with regard to the career of a man who was her student for three years and later became a recognized writer and director in the motion picture industry, declared that she felt the entire expense of the drama program in her school to have been more than justified if it had done nothing except start this man on the road to success.

(4) A Laboratory of New Ideas.

Ozmanney²³ writes:

Certainly, in the United States, through stimulation of the educational theatre, the legitimate theatre is coming into its own, inspired by fresh ideals and new ideas which lift it to a higher level of usefulness and beauty.

22 Richmond, Virginia, August 1943.

23 Ozmanney, Katharine A. The Stage and the School. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1939. p. 96

And McCandless²⁴ says:

The greatest hope of the modern theatre is in the development of amateur production.

It appears that faith in this objective does not rest on the belief that the school theatre can ever compete with the commercial theatre either in talent or physical equipment. It rests rather upon the one great advantage which the school theatre possesses, namely, it is not concerned primarily with the box office. Whatever else it may aspire to do, the commercial theatre must make money. This makes it cautious, wary of innovations which may fail, fond of the tried and proven way. The school theatre, on the other hand, pays no salaries nor dividends; it can afford to take a chance, to experiment, even to fail. And out of this experimentation of the educational theatre has come much that is best in the modern drama.²⁵

It would seem then that one purpose of the school theatre is to remain open-minded, never content with the old and the conventional, always on the alert for the emergence of the new idea, the better way.

(5) Money for School Activities.

24 McCandless, Stanley. A Method of Lighting the Stage. Theatre Arts Inc., New York, 1932. p. 11

25 Theatre Arts Magazine. "Lazarus Laughed at Fordham." Theatre Arts Inc., New York, Spring 1948

One of the objectives commonly accepted, perhaps regrettably so, is that of earning money to support other projects of the school.²⁶

In order to give the foregoing grouping some further degree of objectivity, it was submitted to 22 students of the drama department of Virginia Intermont College, all of whom had had one year's and some two years' instruction in drama beyond the high school level.

The procedure was as follows: First, the concepts of process and product objectives were explained to them. A question and discussion period followed, lasting until it was apparent that all members of the group understood these concepts. Then the objectives listed were furnished to the group. However, the order and numbering of the objectives were not those used in this writing. Process objectives were numbered 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 15, and product objectives were numbered 3, 5, 8, 9, and 14.

The students working individually were then requested to consider each objective and to indicate by an appropriate symbol to which of the two divisions it belonged. The result of this poll appears in Table I on page 29.

26 The range of projects for which the school theatre is used as a source of revenue is extremely wide. The writer was once asked by his principal to put on a play to raise funds with which to purchase new mirrors for the girls' retiring room!

The agreement of the student group with the classification previously made was computed at 82.7 per cent. This was considered sufficiently high to confirm the original distribution by divisions. Because the students seemed to experience considerable uncertainty concerning Objective A-10 (Professional Preparation), it was deleted. On this basis the agreement of the student poll with the remaining distribution rose to 85 per cent.

Thus the list of objectives, based upon the literature in this field of investigation, refined by consultation with an expert and confirmed by the poll taken among a group of drama students, seemed to furnish suitable bases for use in a study of drama programs in the high schools of the State of Virginia.

Table I

Agreement and Disagreement on Classification of
Objectives Registered in Poll Taken at
Virginia Intermont College

| Objective* | Agreement with Classification | Disagreement with Classification | No Opinion |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Speech Improvement (A) | 21 | 1 | 0 |
| Mastery of Words (A) | 20 | 1 | 1 |
| Creation of Audience (B) | 16 | 6 | 0 |
| Inspiration (A) | 20 | 2 | 0 |
| A Good Show (B) | 21 | 1 | 0 |
| Poise and Grace (A) | 21 | 1 | 0 |
| Personal Discipline (A) | 18 | 4 | 0 |
| Earning Money (B) | 21 | 1 | 0 |
| New Ideas for Theatre (B) | 16 | 4 | 2 |
| Understanding Motives (A) | 20 | 2 | 0 |
| Professional Preparation (A) | 10 | 10 | 2 |
| Personal Integration (A) | 16 | 4 | 2 |
| Appreciation of the Drama (A) | 17 | 4 | 1 |
| New Talent (B) | 19 | 3 | 0 |
| Spiritual Exaltation (A) | <u>16</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>1</u> |
| Total | 272 | 49 | 9 |
| Per cent | <u>82.7</u> 82.7 | <u>14.7</u> 14.7 | <u>2.6</u> 2.6 |

* The letter following each objective indicates the classification given prior to this poll: (A) for a process, (B) for a product objective.

CHAPTER IV

THE INVESTIGATION

A consideration of the objectives listed in the preceding chapter suggested the following questions: Were these objectives equally accepted by all secondary schools in Virginia? Did some schools consider certain objectives of greater importance than others? Did any school stress the importance of the process objectives above the product objectives? And any the product above the process?

Because it was felt that more valid answers to these questions could be obtained by inquiries concerning actual procedures in Virginia schools than would result from asking for statements of points of view, it was deemed advisable to approach dramatics teachers in the high schools with the request that they indicate what techniques they considered best suited to their programs. It appeared that their objectives might be implied from their choice of procedures, if a list of such procedures could be constructed, each having valid connection with one or more of the objectives given in Chapter III.

With the view of making such a list of techniques, ten problems faced in drama programs were set up. Some were long-term and fundamental; others of daily recurrence. These problems related to the following fields; organization of the department, finance, selection of scripts, casting, directing, acting and evaluation.

Then, two different methods of meeting each problem were proposed. In each case, one of the two methods was deemed to serve the process objectives; its alternate the product objectives. The original list of problems follows, together with the alternative methods or techniques, each subsequently marked "A" or "B" respectively according to whether it tended to serve the process or the product objectives.

PROBLEMS AND ALTERNATE SOLUTIONS

- I Problem: Organization of the Department
- Solution 1 Speech and Dramatics organized as a unit course under one departmental head. (A)
- Solution 2 Speech and Dramatics organized as separate departments. (B)
- II Problem: Schedule of Performances
- Solution 1 A few full-length plays produced for a paying public audience. (B)
- Solution 2 A larger number of short plays produced for special and sometimes invited groups. (A)
- III Problem: Selection of Scripts
- Solution 1 Scripts selected on basis of the needs and talent of the students. (A)
- Solution 2 Scripts selected on basis of probable appeal to audience. (B)
- IV Problem: Casting
- Solution 1 Casting done by rotating all types of roles throughout the group - casting against type. (A)

Solution 2 Casting to type or according to talent and ability of the individual student. (B)

V Problem: Directing

Solution 1 Director works out complete stage positions and business for the entire cast. (B)

Solution 2 Director makes a few basic suggestions, leaving much business and detail to players. (A)

VI Problem: Acting

Solution 1 Director assists students by helping them to an understanding of the role to be portrayed and leaves details of characterization to them. (A)

Solution 2 Director suggests to player manner of delivery, gestures, business, etc. (B)

VII Problem: Grading

Solution 1 Grade the student largely on the basis of progress in speech, diction, etc. (A)

Solution 2 Grade largely on performance in complete acted play. (B)

VIII Problem: Stagecraft, etc.

Solution 1 Devote as much time to stagecraft, costumes, make-up, etc., as to interpretation of the script. (B)

Solution 2 Treat these skills as subordinate to the interpretation of the script. (A)

IX Problem: Awarding of Honors

Solution 1 Medals, honors, etc., awarded on the basis of performance in roles. (B)

Solution 2 Medals, etc., awarded on basis of student's personal growth in the course. (A)

X Problem: Finance

Solution 1 Department should be self-supporting like athletics. (B)

Solution 2 Department should be financed by the school authority like any other academic department. (A)

Considered at face value, these alternative techniques might seem to posit an either-or situation. However, there was no such intention in the study, where they were not proposed as absolute opposites but only as tendencies or directions of emphases. They were used in the light of this limitation throughout the study.

To test the significance of these techniques as indicators of underlying objectives in a given program, it was thought expedient to submit the list of problems and alternative procedures to a jury of authorities in the field. With such testing in view, the problems and procedures as they appear on page 31 (but without the classifying symbols "A" and "B" there shown) were submitted to ten persons considered leaders in the educational theatre,¹ together with a statement explaining the point at moot. These persons were requested to classify the techniques as tending to favor process or product objectives. The result of their replies appears as Table II on page 34.

1 See Appendix D for list of authorities addressed.

TABLE II

Agreement and Disagreement concerning
Relation of Certain Techniques to Either
Process or Product Objectives, Obtained
from Committee of Authorities.

| Problem | Agreeing | Disagreeing | No opinion |
|------------------------|----------|-------------|------------|
| 1 Organization | 6 | 1 | 3 |
| 2 Type of plays | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 Selection of scripts | 9 | 1 | 0 |
| 4 Casting | 9 | 1 | 0 |
| 5 Directing | 9 | 1 | 0 |
| 6 Acting | 9 | 1 | 0 |
| 7 Grading | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| 8 Stagecraft | 3 | 5 | 2 |
| 9 Honors | 8 | 2 | 0 |
| 10 Finance | 9 | 1 | 0 |
| | <hr/> | | |
| TOTAL | 82 | 13 | 5 |

The agreement of the Committee with the significance of the several techniques as previously adjudged was 82 percent, as reference to Table II will reveal. Because so large a part of the Committee's dissent was related to Problems No. 1 and 8 it was decided to eliminate these. After this was done, there remained eight problems each with alternative techniques regarding which the Committee registered 91.25 percent agreement with the originally assigned relationships. So high a percent of agreement seemed to warrant the use of the list as an instrument for studying the emphases in high school drama programs.

The next step was to apply the device thus tested to the high schools of Virginia. The list was drawn up in the form of a questionnaire supplemented by two factual questions regarding the actual status of dramatics in the school. A letter was then written explaining the purpose of the questionnaire and the nature of the response desired.²

This questionnaire was mailed to all Group I high schools in Virginia (those having enrollments of 600 or more); to all Group II high schools (those having enrollments from 200 to 599); to the Orange High School and the West Point High School,³ and to Chatham

2 See Appendix E for copy of letter and questionnaire.

3 These two schools were selected for inclusion in the poll because, although Group III schools, they were known for the excellence of their dramatics programs, both having won state honors in the Drama Festival at Charlottesville shortly before this study was undertaken.

Hall.⁴ Thus a total of 107 questionnaires were sent out. It was decided in advance to tabulate whatever returns were received under two classifications, the first for all Group I schools and the second for all others.

Replies were received from 61 schools, 11 Group I schools and 50 others. Tabulation of replies were made in two forms:

(1) The eight problems were listed and the number of schools choosing the respective techniques under each was recorded. This tabulation appears as Tables IIIa, IIIb, IIIc on pages 37-39.

(2) The number of schools making similar choices were listed, beginning with schools selecting eight process or "A" techniques and continuing to the school which chose seven product or "B" techniques and one process technique. This tabulation appears as Table IV on page 40.

⁴ Chatham Hall is a private school for girls at Chatham, Virginia. It is known for its outstanding program.

TABLE IIIa

Choices of Group I Schools Concerning
Problems Indicating Tendencies Toward Process
and Product Objectives Respectively

| Problem | Number of Schools Choosing "A" or Process Procedures | Number of Schools Choosing "B" or Product Procedures | No Choice |
|------------------|--|--|------------------------|
| Choice of Script | 10 | 1 | 0 |
| Type of Play | 9 | 2 | 0 |
| Acting | 9 | 1 | 1 |
| Grading | 8 | 3 | 0 |
| Honers | 7 | 2 | 2 |
| Directing | 6 | 4 | 1 |
| Finance | 6 | 4 | 1 |
| Casting | 5 | 6 | 0 |
| Total | 60 | 23 | 5 |
| Percent | 68.2 .882 | 26.1 .262 | 5.7 .057 |

TABLE IIIb

Choices of Group II Schools Concerning
Problems Indicating Tendencies Toward Process
and Product Objectives Respectively

| Problem | Number of Schools Choosing "A" or Process Procedures | Number of Schools Choosing "B" or Product Procedures | No Choice |
|------------------|--|--|---------------------------------|
| Choice of Script | 42 | 6 | 2 |
| Acting | 36 | 12 | 2 |
| Honors | 34 | 13 | 3 |
| Directing | 32 | 16 | 2 |
| Grading | 30 | 16 | 4 |
| Finance | 30 | 18 | 2 |
| Type of Play | 28 | 21 | 1 |
| Casting | 9 | 40 | 1 |
| Total | 241 | 142 | 17 |
| Percent | 60.25 .6025 | 35.5 .355 | 4.25 .0425 |

TABLE IIIc

Choices of All Schools Concerning
Problems Indicating Tendencies Toward Process
and Product Objectives Respectively

| Problem | Number of Schools Choosing "A" or Process Procedures | Number of Schools Choosing "B" or Product Procedures | No Choice |
|------------------|--|--|--------------------------|
| Choice of Script | 52 | 7 | 2 |
| Acting | 45 | 13 | 3 |
| Honors | 41 | 15 | 5 |
| Grading | 38 | 19 | 4 |
| Directing | 38 | 20 | 3 |
| Type of Play | 37 | 23 | 1 |
| Finance | 36 | 33 | 2 |
| Casting | 14 | 46 | 1 |
| Total | 301 | 165 | 22 |
| Percent | 61.68 .6168 | 33.81 .3381 | 4.51 .0451 |

TABLE IV

Totals of Schools by Totals of
Choices Distributed as to
"A" and "B" Techniques

| Number of Schools | "A" or Process Techniques Chosen | "B" or Product Techniques Chosen | No Choice |
|----------------------|--|--|--------------|
| 5 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| 9 | 7 | 1 | 0 |
| 1 | 6 | 0 | 2 |
| 3 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| 9 | 6 | 2 | 0 |
| 1 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| 6 | 5 | 3 | 0 |
| 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| 8 | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| 2 | 3 | 5 | 0 |
| 2 | 2 | 5 | 1 |
| 6 | 2 | 6 | 0 |
| 1 | 1 | 7 | 0 |

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Inferences Drawn From the Data

In the introductory chapter the problem of this study was set forth in terms of certain questions concerning objectives in dramatics in the high schools of Virginia. The subsequent chapters recorded a search for data which might yield acceptable answers to these questions. Thus, Chapters II and III related the manner in which a list of objectives had been formulated. Chapter IV recorded the development of an instrument for discovering whether the objectives listed were those toward which dramatics activities were being directed in a given group of schools. It also gave the statistical results obtained from its use in 61 Virginia high schools. This chapter is to present an interpretation and summary of these data. Logic would suggest that the interpretation of data begin with a consideration of the questions.

Was there a generally accepted over-all purpose in the dramatics programs of the high schools of Virginia?

In general, the data seemed to indicate that process objectives were emphasized over product objectives in an approximate ratio of two to one. Of the 61 schools reporting, 35 registered choices of procedures indicating trends toward process objectives; 11 schools

toward product objectives; and 16 toward neither, in that their choices were about evenly divided. Five schools chose procedures indicating a total process emphasis; seven schools chose procedures indicating a total product emphasis with but one exception in the case of each. With such marked contrasts existing among the schools studied, it would seem reasonable to infer that there was no agreement among them touching the over-all purpose of their programs.

Was there a common point of view among drama teachers with reference to the ends they were attempting to serve?

Here again the data, viewed statistically, did not reveal an affirmative answer. A substantial majority of the teachers indicated that their drama programs were primarily educational in purpose and that when a conflict arose between the interest of the student and that of the play they tended to put the student first. In comments upon the questionnaire, several teachers defended the general cultural values of dramatics at the high school level in contrast with the specialized vocational values of the subject at the college and university level. However, the number of teachers differing from this position was sufficiently large to make it impossible to assert this as a common point of view.

Was there reasonable uniformity of procedure in approaching the problems in every dramatics program?

Apparently the data give an answer to this question, and the answer is, No. Indeed, if the replies to the questionnaire be accepted at face value, procedures vary widely, not only among the several schools but even within some individual schools. For example, in the matter of choice of scripts, 52 schools reported selections made from the viewpoint of process and only 7 from that of product. In contrast, casting was reported as done from the product viewpoint by 46 schools and from that of process in only 14. In other words, 38 schools indicated that they selected scripts from the process viewpoint but did casting from the product viewpoint. This would seem to indicate inconsistency in procedure and confusion regarding the purpose in view.

Were the solutions of such problems based upon a sound concept of the values inherent in dramatics?

It is obvious that no positive answer to this question could come out of the study unless it be based on subjective judgment upon the soundness or unsoundness of a given concept of the values of dramatics. However it would seem safe to say that the responses reflected the existence of more than one concept of the purpose of the program. Moreover, it was plain that some schools both recognized and accepted the dual purpose of the program. For example, seven teachers stated that their programs consisted of two parts: (1) in-course study and production of short plays with

complete emphasis upon process objectives, and (2) co-curricular production of long plays for the public with complete emphasis upon product objectives. Perhaps this was the most significant finding of the study, and it may offer the solution whereby all objectives of the program can be served.

Aside from answers to the specific questions, there are several other features of the data which seem to require interpretation. One of the most striking of these concerns the responses to the problem relating to casting. These were completely out of relation with the responses to the other problems. The total of the choices made under all problems presented to dramatics teachers indicated a process emphasis of 62 percent compared with a product emphasis of 34 percent.¹ In contrast, if the responses to the problem of casting were accepted as the sole test, the process emphasis would stand at 23 percent and the product at 76 percent. Moreover, of the nine schools selecting but one product procedures, seven made this selection in answer to that problem. In one sense, such responses might appear as a negation of the rest of the questionnaire.

However before accepting such a conclusion, it should be borne in mind that of all process procedures, casting against type or

1 No choices were made in approximately four percent of cases.

rotation of roles² is perhaps the most difficult for the average instructor to handle successfully. Indeed, such technique might be called the Donkey's Bridge in the path to a completely student-centered drama program, if such a thing be desirable. For many instructors, no matter how sincerely committed to the process viewpoint, it would be extremely difficult to use this method in selecting casts for plays to which the public is admitted. Strict adherence to it, save in the hands of a master, would probably result in the loss of all product values in the program.

In light of this, the response to the casting problem might be viewed as confirmation rather than as negation of the general result. First, it could be taken to indicate the honesty of the answers, since so many persons who were inclined toward the process emphasis nevertheless gave a product response to this one problem. Next, it might be interpreted as proof that, in a program largely student-centered, the product values were not completely lost. Further, it might be held that this response was evidence that the majority of teachers of drama in Virginia, though holding to the process viewpoint, nevertheless approached their program as a situation rather than as a theory, realizing that most school administrators and all school patrons tend to judge an activity

2 The phrases casting against type and rotation of roles are used here, as they were used in the Questionnaire, to describe the practice of casting students by turns and without consideration of talent or suitability to a particular role.

by what they can see of it, in this case the completed play; that the drama teacher who concentrates upon the intangibles of character development at the expense of putting on a good play may find himself in the position of the football coach who devotes himself to the welfare of his boys but never wins a ball game.

Another feature of the report perhaps deserving of comment is evidence appearing in the responses of two particular schools which may be interpreted as confirmation of the validity of the Questionnaire. A large Group I school which is known for its opposition to all forms of literary competition, which awards no drama medals and has never taken part in the Virginia Drama Festival, selected eight process responses. Similar confirmation appeared in the selection of seven product responses by a school which has been highly successful in Festival competitions over a number of years.

In view of the foregoing, it may be that the most important single result of the study was the development and the authenticating of the questionnaire itself as an instrument to use in studying objectives in the drama programs of schools. Viewed in this light, the part of the study following the completion of the questionnaire, namely its use among Virginia high schools, is really no more than an illustration of how it may be utilized.

This statement is not meant to suggest that the questionnaire is a perfect instrument. Admittedly it is open to attack on the

ground of irrelevance because it depends on the responses of persons who may quite honestly say one thing and do another. However it is not proposed as a tool to measure with precision the acceptance or rejection of a particular objective in a particular school; the most that is claimed for it was that it would measure the general direction of emphasis in a group of schools. There would seem to be justification for this claim.

Recommendations

One observation arising from a view of the findings of this study is that the situation existing in dramatics teaching varied widely in the different schools throughout the state of Virginia. At one extreme stood a large urban high school having several trained dramatics instructors and offering a full four-year course in drama. In that school a student might major in drama and devote 25 percent of his entire high school time to this field. At the other extreme were the many small schools where dramatics existed only as a minor activity in the co-curriculum, under the direction of a teacher having no great qualifications for the work.

In view of this it seems safe to say that dramatics still had to win official recognition from many school administrators as an academic subject worthy of permanent establishment in the curriculum. Although this recognition would have to be gained

locally, there appeared two steps desirable to be taken on the State-wide level: (1) adoption by the State Department of Education of more specific requirements for certification of teachers of dramatics, and (2) establishment of courses planned to meet such requirements in all State colleges engaged in the preparation of public school teachers.

At the time of this writing the requirement for certification in dramatics in Virginia was twelve semester hours of study in drama, speech and related subjects. Plans were under consideration by the State Department to increase this to eighteen semester hours. Whereas this proposed change would seem a desirable one, the situation revealed by this study appeared to point to the need for specific courses designed to give the teacher a broad understanding of the purposes of the program as an integral part of the whole field of secondary education. Perhaps a workshop course which included intensive study of the objectives inherent in the drama program would go far toward creation of such understanding. A period of observation followed by a definite time spent in the teaching of dramatics under supervision might well be added as a requirement of certification.

The second step, that of having such courses in the teaching of drama available at all State colleges, follows from the first and might create a supply of better qualified teachers. While it is true that such training is available at some

institutions in the State, notably at the University and at the College of William and Mary, it is not being offered at many other State colleges.³

Conclusion

In concluding the report of this study, it may be well to refer to the hope expressed at the end of the introductory chapter. This anticipated the possibility that four useful results might grow out of the undertaking. While it cannot be said that any one of them has been fully achieved, it may be pointed out that all four have been accomplished to some degree:

(1) A statement of values in high school dramatics was formulated.

Because this statement seemed to have a stimulating effect upon the imagination of some workers in the field to whom it was submitted, it bears promise of further usefulness to a wider population.

(2) A questionnaire was created and its validity tested. This instrument differed somewhat from others of its kind in that it undertook to obtain information by indirection rather than risk suggesting replies by moving explicitly to the respective points

³ There were over 700 young women in residence at Radford College during session 1948-49, a majority of whom were preparing for teaching. Not one of these was to be graduated with proper preparation as a teacher of dramatics because the necessary courses were not offered at Radford.

with which it was intended to deal. The application of this questionnaire to a group of Virginia high schools was attended by considerable success. This statement is based largely on the high percent of response,⁴ also upon the large number of uncontrolled comments with which the forms were returned. Therefore it would seem to have utility for similar investigations among other schools.

(3) Data arising from the study brought to light what appeared as confusion of purpose and inconsistency of procedure within the drama programs of certain of the schools studied. Had these schools realized that this condition existed, they might well have taken steps toward remedying it.

(4) The study also led to the amassing of some information and materials, not rigorously pertaining to it but nevertheless germane, which is presented in Appendices A and B.

Whitehead⁵ once declared that culture is not possession of information but is activity of thought. In the content of its subject matter, dramatics may not compare favorably with some of the more time-honored members of the curriculum, but in the

4 Although but 61 schools of the 107 addressed returned answers to the questionnaire in form suitable for tabulation, 30 others made replies containing comment and criticism.

5 Whitehead, Alfred North. The Aims of Education. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1929. p. 1

opportunity it offers the student for activity of thought, to the writer at least, it is second to none. If this thesis serves to make more explicit the claim of dramatics to be accepted as an important and significant subject in secondary education, perhaps its production will have been justified.

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APPENDIX A

Early Dramatic Activity in American Colleges

Note: The following material, though not integral to the foregoing study, is nevertheless germane to the subject and is included here for the interest it may have for students in this field.

The famous English 47 Workshop, directed by Professor George Pierce Baker at Harvard, is usually credited with being the pioneer movement in college dramatics beyond the extra-curricular level.¹ The Workshop was founded in 1912 as a course in playwriting and, with the cooperation of Ratcliffe, developed into a producing group which continued in existence until 1925. In 1918 it published the first of several volumes of Harvard Plays.² In addition to contributing Eugene O'Neill to the American theatre, the Workshop enormously influenced the development of community and college drama all over the United States. It richly deserved its place at the forefront of the movement for a better theatre which swept this country in the early years of the century.

However the fact remains that the 47 Workshop did not

1 Ommanney, Katharine A. The Stage and the School. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1939. p. 79

2 Baker, George P., Editor. Plays of the 47 Workshop. Brentano's, New York, 1918.

develop into a drama department at Harvard. Except for the actual playwriting done in course, all the other activities of the Workshop were on a purely extra-curricular basis. Many of its members, who were chosen by election, were not students in the University. Its acting and producing activities carried no credit in the college and led to no degree. After the discontinuance of the Workshop, dramatics at Harvard returned to the extra-curricular basis and has remained there ever since. Packard,³ a member of the 47 Workshop, says:

Dramatics, in the usual sense of the term, has never been admitted to the curriculum at Harvard. Such activities have always been in the hands of undergraduate organizations. Professor G. P. Baker's English 47 and 47-a were courses in playwriting, open only to graduates or qualified seniors. They counted for the degrees but were discontinued in 1924 or 25. I think this information is complete. I have known the situation here since 1911.

The development of dramatics in other universities and colleges, though unquestionably inspired and influenced by the movement at Harvard, took quite different forms. At Columbia, for example, a curriculum course in dramatics was taught by Prof. Azubah J. Latham as early in 1914. Before 1920 several other courses had been added, and since 1938 it

³ Packard, Frederick C., Assistant Professor of Public Speaking, Harvard College. Personal letter dated at Cambridge, January 7, 1949.

was possible to major in drama in the School of General Studies at the University.⁴

The Cornell Dramatics Club, organized in 1909 by J. A. Winans, was one of the early pioneers in the field of university drama. Plays of a high quality were produced. However, no credit toward the degree was allowed until 1922, eight years later than at Columbia. The degree of M. A. in Drama was first offered at Cornell in 1926 and the Ph. D. in 1930.⁵

The department of drama at Yale was not founded until 1925, but the M. F. A. degree was first offered as early as 1931. Since 1937, it has been possible to win the Ph. D. in drama at Yale.⁶

North Carolina took the lead in drama among the Southern universities with the establishment of its department in 1918, a lead which was maintained under the direction of Dr. Frederick Koch.⁷ Notable among the many contributions of this school to the professional theatre is Paul Green.

4 Smith, Milton, Director of the Brander Matthews Theatre, Columbia University. Personal letter dated at New York, January 19, 1949.

5 Gassner, John. Producing the Play. Dryden Press, New York, p. 541

6 Hastings, Mabel R. Personal letter dated at New Haven, January 18, 1949.

7 White, Louise H. Personal letter dated at Chapel Hill, January 4, 1949.

The Theatre Department, as the drama department at Northwestern is called, was organized in 1926 by Alexander Dean, and grew under the direction of Theodore Fuchs to be one of the largest organizations of its kind in America. Jennifer Jones and Edgar Bergen are graduates of this school.⁸

The University of Virginia first admitted dramatics to its curriculum in 1928. It was possible in 1949 to secure the M. A. in drama there.⁹

Princeton was one great university which followed the Harvard pattern.¹⁰ No curriculum dramatics had ever been admitted at the time of this writing.

8 Northwestern University. Bulletin of the School of Speech. The University, Evanston, Illinois, 1949.

9 Boyle, Roger, Director of the Virginia Players, University of Virginia. Personal letter dated at Charlottesville, January 10, 1949.

10 Birch, Jane M. Personal letter dated at Princeton, January 14, 1949.

APPENDIX B

A List of Group I Virginia High Schools
Showing the dates on which dramatics was first admitted to
the curriculum with unit credit allowed toward graduation.

- 1927 Newport News High School
- 1935 Jefferson Senior High School, Roanoke
- 1938 John Marshall High School, Richmond
- 1941 Thomas Jefferson High School, Richmond
George Washington High School, Alexandria
- 1943 Maury High School, Norfolk
- 1944 Cradock High School, Portsmouth¹
Petersburg High School
George Washington High School, Danville
- 1945 Hampton High School
Warwick County High School
- 1946 Glass High School, Lynchburg
Fairfax High School
- 1947 Hopewell High School
- 1948 Granby High School, Norfolk
- 1949 Andrew Lewis High School, Salem²

1 Temporarily suspended 1948-49

2 Will be offered for first time at beginning of Session 1949-50.

APPENDIX C

Letter of Dr. Marius Blesi

Note: The following letter is used with the express permission of Dr. Blesi.

EMORY AND HENRY COLLEGE
EMORY, VIRGINIA

March 29, 1949

Mr. Wm. Ellis Jones
Virginia Intermont College
Bristol, Virginia

Dear Mr. Jones:

It was a pleasure to go over your thesis with you personally and, as I told you yesterday, I think you are doing a very worthwhile study of the drama and its techniques.

There is no doubt about the deductions you have reached and the conclusions you have made. All are on a sound scholastic basis. I think the majority of dramatic authorities would approve of your methods and the way you have integrated your problems. Some of your objectives could be handled under a more general topic covering the whole phase of the subject, as I pointed out.

I was happy to find that you have carefully consulted the scholarly books and articles on the theatre, and your thesis is well documented.

On the whole, I think you have covered the topic amazingly well. Your approach to the problem through the questions you asked of me and others in the field of the drama shows your desire to treat the topic fairly and objectively. And that is the type of research paper you should write.

With all good wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

Marius Blesi
Director of College Theatre and
Professor of English.

APPENDIX D

List of Authorities in the Educational Theatre
to whom the Problem-Solution Questionnaire
was submitted.

Ernest Bavely, Secretary, The National Thespian Society,
College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, Ohio.

Clara Black, Instructor in Drama,
Blackstone College, Blackstone, Virginia

Roger Boyle, Associate Professor of Drama and Director of the
Virginia Players, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia

Glenn Hughes, Director of Drama,
University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.

Althea Hunt, Associate Professor of Dramatic Art,
The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia

Theodore Johnson, Editor, Walter H. Baker Company,
178 Tremont Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

John P. Milhous, Instructor in Drama,
Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, Virginia.

Paul F. Opp, Grand Secretary, Alpha Psi Omega,
Fairmont, West Virginia.

Lee Owen Snook, Playwright and Drama Editor,
Row Peterson and Company, Evanston, Illinois.

Claude Merton Wise, Head of the Department of Speech,
Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

APPENDIX E

Final Form of Questionnaire Sent to 107 Virginia High Schools
and Letter of Explanation Addressed to Instructors of Drama

PROBLEMS AND ALTERNATE SOLUTIONS

I. Problem: Schedule of Performances

Solution 1 A few full-length plays produced for a paying public audience.

Solution 2 A larger number of short plays produced for special and sometimes invited groups.

II. Problem: Selection of Scripts

Solution 1 Scripts selected on basis of the needs and talent of the students.

Solution 2 Scripts selected on basis of probable appeal to audience.

III. Problem: Casting

Solution 1 Casting done by rotating all types of roles throughout the group - casting against type.

Solution 2 Casting to type or according to talent and ability of the individual student.

IV. Problem: Directing

Solution 1 Director works out complete stage positions and business for the entire cast.

Solution 2 Director makes a few basic suggestions, leaving much business and detail to players.

V. Problem: Acting

Solution 1 Director assists students by helping them to an understanding of the role to be portrayed and leaves details of characterization to them.

Solution 2 Director suggests to player manner of delivery, gestures, business, etc.

VI. Problem: Grading

Solution 1 Grade the student largely on the basis of progress in speech, diction, etc.

Solution 2 Grade largely on performance in complete acted play.

VII. Problem: Awarding of Honors

Solution 1 Medals, honors, etc., awarded on the basis of performance in roles.

Solution 2 Medals, etc., awarded on basis of student's personal growth in the course.

VIII. Problem: Finance

Solution 1 Department should be self-supporting like athletics.

Solution 2 Department should be financed by the school authority like any other academic department.

Will you be good enough to state here whether dramatics in your school is a part of the regular curriculum or on an extra-curricular basis?

If dramatics is a part of the curriculum with credit allowed toward graduation, can you tell me in what year it was added to the curriculum?

VIRGINIA INTERMONT COLLEGE
Bristol - - - Virginia

April 2, 1949

To the Dramatics Instructor:

I am making a study of certain aspects of dramatics instruction in the high schools of Virginia. Among other things, I am attempting to learn something of the prevailing practice in relating such instruction to the actual production of plays in the school.

On the attached sheets I have listed eight "problems" which are commonly faced by the instructor in dramatics. Under each problem I have listed two "solutions" or methods in which the problem might be resolved. I should be greatly obliged if you would read these problems and then check the solution under each which you prefer.

Of course I realize that in actual practice the instructor often makes a compromise between the two solutions or that his decision is based in part on both. However, what I am asking here is not your mature and considered opinion but your first or "snap-judgment". Nor am I asking you to indicate what you really do in your actual school situation. In checking the solutions, just imagine yourself in an ideal dramatics situation where you could follow unhindered your natural inclination, except that when faced with each problem, you had to make a clear cut choice between the two solutions offered here. Which would you choose? Check that one.

I shall appreciate your help in this matter very much indeed, and when the study is complete, I shall be glad to furnish you with a statement of its results if you care to see it.

Sincerely yours,

Wm. Ellis Jones
Instructor in Drama