The Image of the Public High School Teacher in the American Novel: 1920-1970

Gregor Frederick Zellhofer

Loyola University Chicago

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THE IMAGE OF THE PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER
IN THE AMERICAN NOVEL: 1920-1970

by
Gregor Frederick Zellhofer

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VITA

The author, Gregor Frederick Zellhofer, is the son of Gregor Zellhofer and Marie (Drucker) Zellhofer. He was born on April 11, 1935 in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

He attended elementary school in Salem, Wisconsin and high school in Wilmot, Wisconsin, where he graduated in 1953.

In 1958 he entered Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and in 1962, received the degree of Bachelor of Science with a major in pre-law. After graduation he enrolled at Temple University as a graduate student in education. While completing his studies, he taught at Stoddart-Fleisher Junior High School in Philadelphia. In 1964 he received the degree of Master of Education from Temple University.

In 1974 he began his doctoral studies in the Foundations of Education at Loyola University of Chicago. Currently he is an elementary school teacher in the Chicago Public Schools.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The novel has long been regarded as both a reflector and a creator of our attitudes. It is an important source for gaining insight into people, for discovering the issues they face, and for understanding the environment they inhabit. Through the years the American novel has helped to illuminate the problems and situations of people involved in education in the United States. In 1871, for instance, Edward Eggleston's novel, The Hoosier Schoolmaster, captured the life and quality of education in the backwoods schools of rural Indiana. It enlivened and concretized with detail such once familiar events and institutions as the town spelldown and the one-room school.

Although novelists of the twentieth century continued to show interest in education, they did not portray the public high school teacher as a main character in a novel for more than the first two decades of the century. Even though the public high school had become the dominant form of secondary education in the United States by 1880, the public high school teacher was not depicted as a main character until the publication in 1929 of Lola Jean
Simpson's novel, *Treadmill*. Beginning in the late 1920's, the characterization of the public high school teacher in American novels appeared somewhat frequently. By 1970, the public high school teacher had appeared as a main or minor character in more than thirty novels, excluding mysteries, fantasies, and juveniles.

The imaginative writing of the novelists added another dimension to the history of education. "Good novelists," wrote Nelson Manfred Blake, "have a fine sensitivity for observing the right things and putting their observations into appropriate words; they capture the quality of events."\(^1\) Because of their creative ability, good novelists have given their testimony "a vividness that material culled from more prosaic sources often lacks."\(^2\) Although few novelists achieve literary greatness, many less-than-great novelists have provided useful insights into people, events, and situations because of their keen observation, verbal skills, and creative power. Since novels are often written by some of the most perceptive observers of human nature and social situations, the novel can be a valuable source for the educational historian.

The novel offers the educational historian a valid means for discovering the social reality of both the school

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\(^2\) Ibid.
and the community. As Hans Meyerhoff has stated it,

Descriptive statements in fictional literature are a rich source of general information . . . descriptions of people, who they are, what they are, what they eat and wear, what they do and how they do it . . . the inner world of passion and thought . . . what people say, think, and feel . . . institutions, types of work, ways of making a living.3

Or, in Dorothy Yost Deegan's words:

Nowhere can social attitude be more easily recognized than in fiction; nowhere is the slow and subtle change in attitudes more readily observed. Fiction is one of the best sources of social data, being impersonal and detached from actual life, yet deeply personal in its connotative and empathizing qualities.4

Although the novel is an excellent source of historical and social data, the testimony of the novelist, like the testimony of other witnesses to history, must be treated with caution. The novelist's intention will not only color his testimony, but the demands of his craft will also determine how much and what is told. An historian can disregard neither the novelist's intentions and artistic demands nor the idea that a novel is not a mirror of the real world but a believable extrapolation of real life.

This study presented the image of the public high school teacher as depicted in selected American novels

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published between 1920 and 1970 and examined that image in relationship to historical reality as reported in non-fictional sources. It also developed a composite image of the teacher and appraised that image in terms of its positive or negative impact on the teacher and the teaching profession. Although previous studies examined the fictional image of both the elementary and the secondary school teacher, no study has examined the novelists' treatment of the high school teacher in the light of historical data. Following chronological development, this study not only utilized documentary research but also employed the historical method; its purpose was to add the historical dimension to the view of the high school teacher in the American novel.

Several limitations and working definitions had to be established to provide a manageable period and a struc-

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nature of reference. While excluding mysteries, fantasies, and juveniles, this study borrowed Katherine Lever's definition of the novel: "The form of written prose narrative of considerable length involving the reader in an imagined real world which is new because it has been created by the author." The selected novels had to be published between the years 1920 and 1970, and each novel had to depict an American public high school teacher as a main or minor character. The term "public high school teacher" referred to an individual whose principal occupation was education in an American public high school, grades 7 to 12. Throughout this study, the term "image" referred to either a physical representation or a mental impression or both.

The following procedure provided the structure for this study. Novels depicting the public high school teacher were selected from such sources as the Book Review Digest, the Fiction Catalog, and the Fiction Index. Each novel was read to discover the characteristics of the high school teacher's professional and personal life. Non-fictional sources were then examined to discover the kind of historical milieu in which imaginative writers created their novels. The next step related the fictional treatment of the public high school teacher to non-fictional accounts of similar problems, issues, situations or conditions.

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The final step examined the changes and recurring patterns that the novels reflected of the teacher and the teaching profession.

In examining the changes and recurring patterns, this study used an impressionistic approach to determine the kind of composite image that the high school teacher reflected in each novel. Supported frequently by book reviews, the impressionistic approach evaluated and classified the fictional image of the high school teacher in terms of its positive or negative impact on the teacher and the teaching profession. For example, fully drawn characters—those who "rang true"—could have reflected either a positive or a negative professional image while stereotypes could also have reflected either a positive or a negative professional image.

Although the teacher-image was evaluated in terms of its positive or negative impact, the following distinctions were observed throughout the study. An image of the high school teacher was fully and positively drawn if the character reflected a credible portrayal of human nature and experience as well as a favorable image of the teaching profession. In contrast, an image was fully and negatively drawn if the character reflected a credible portrayal of human nature and experience but created an unfavorable image of the teaching profession. Albert Nissman's discussion of full characterization in fiction
served as a guide for the impressionistic approach. Nissman wrote:

Characters in fiction can be fully developed in four ways. They must be dramatized through dialogue and action. The author shows us the characters; he does not discuss him. Second, characters must be consistent in their behavior unless there is a plausible reason for their inconsistency. Third, the characters need to be clearly motivated; some rationale impels them to act and speak the way they do. Fourth, characters must be plausible, credible, and life-like. Characters who lack one or more of these criteria are reduced to stereotypes or idealizations, stock figures and caricatures. 7

A stereotype is an incomplete but psychologically coherent image that lacks individuality. There are two different stereotypes of the teacher: the positive and the negative. The idealization of the teacher is a positive stereotype which, according to Willard Waller, is "that of the self-sacrificing, gentle, kindly, self-effacing creature, overworked, underpaid, but never out of patience and always ready to 'give freely of her time and money' for school purposes. . . ." 8 In this study, the image of the high school teacher was positively stereotyped if the character typified an educational ideal and reflected a favorable image of the profession. A character, for instance, was positively stereotyped if he or she were perceived as

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a "mouthpiece" for typical goals in education rather than as a human being. Moreover, a teacher-image that reflected not a person but the way a teacher should be was considered a positive stereotype.

An image, on the other hand, was negatively stereotyped if the character typified unflattering and undesirable qualities and reflected an unfavorable image of the teaching profession. If the characterization was neither stereotyped nor fully drawn but had the tendency to be positive or negative, the image was regarded as generally positive or generally negative. In novels with contrasting images of the high school teacher, the dominant image represented the important image.

In some novels, the entire novel reflected an attitude about the high school teacher; in others, passages conveyed an attitude. Since many attitudes could best be conveyed by citing verbatim, this study used direct quotations to present attitudes that would be lost in paraphrasing. In discussing this problem of dealing with attitudes, Dorothy Yost Deegan wrote:

The ideal way to get at such subtleties as attitude . . . is by means of direct quotation. In some instances an attitude must be gained from the whole context of the novel rather than from any one or more statements which can be directly quoted.9

The study that follows has been organized to present

9Deegan, p. 37.
a decade by decade examination of the fictional treatment of the public high school teacher from an historical perspective. The next chapter sets the stage for the study by tracing the historical development of secondary education in America from the early Latin grammar school to the reorganized high school. Its purpose is to shed light on the non-fictional secondary school teacher.
CHAPTER II

THE AMERICAN SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER

IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: 1620-1970

The historical development of secondary education in America represented this country's steadily increasing faith in the importance of the school. For more than three centuries, this faith in the school grew as the institution responded to the changing conditions of American life. From 1620 to 1970 the growth of secondary education in America was marked by four stages of development. Each stage became identified with the institutional form that was dominant during the period. The institutional forms were the Latin grammar school, the academy, the public high school, and the reorganized public high school. While the Latin grammar school dominated the colonial and early national periods, the academy prevailed in the nineteenth century until 1880. From 1880 to the present, the traditional four-year public high school has established a strong hold on public secondary education. But during the first decade of the twentieth century, the public high school came to include more than the traditional four-
year program; it included schooling from grades six through twelve. This fourth institutional form of secondary education has been termed the reorganized high school.

While the secondary schools responded with new forms of organization, education assumed an ideal form in the conscious life of the American people. Richard Allen Foster, a literary historian who had examined the school in American literature from the colonial period to 1930, maintained that Americans had a "general tendency to idealize education. . . ." Even though the idealization of education had manifested itself early in America's historical development, the school did not become a literary theme for American writers until the nineteenth century: the early writers were generally attracted to religious and political subjects and they saw few literary possibilities in the school.

In the nineteenth century, however, many illuminating but often unflattering comments about teachers appeared in American literature. But the idealization of education continued even as changing social and economic conditions swept away much of the theological orientation of the earlier period in American education. Although an anti-intellectual strand ran through American life as

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2 Ibid., pp. 5-25.
Richard Hofstadter argued, education, nevertheless, was idealized in the colonial period for its religious value and thereafter for its practical benefits. The idealization of education had influenced the character of American life by making education almost necessary for successful living. Education, like success, had become an American ideal.

Teachers, on the other hand, often fell short of the ideal and found rather unflattering portraits of themselves in American literature. Washington Irving's description of Icabod Crane, the schoolmaster in Sleepy Hollow, is a classic example of the unflattering portrait:

The name of Crane was not inapplicable to his person. He was tall, but exceedingly lank, with narrow shoulders, long arms and legs, hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves, feet that might have served for shovels, and his whole frame most loosely hung together. . . . To have seen him striding along the profile of a hill on a windy day, with his clothes bagging and fluttering about him, one might have mistaken him for the spirit of famine descending upon the earth, or some scarecrow eloped from a cornfield.

The remainder of this chapter unveils the portrait of the secondary school teacher in the historical development of American secondary education.

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As early as 1620 the colonists in Virginia had planned to establish a Latin grammar school, but these plans ended suddenly because of the Indian massacre of 1622. Another school in Virginia may have been established to teach Latin grammar about 1634, but the school did not remain open for very long. Therefore, the year 1635 marks the beginning of the secondary school in America: it was the year Bostonians established the first permanent Latin grammar school.

Although the Boston Latin grammar school was the first permanent secondary school in America, it was a secondary school only in that it offered college-preparatory courses. The Latin grammar school paralleled rather than followed the primary school of the time. Boys were admitted to the Latin grammar school at seven or eight years of age and graduated from the school at fifteen years of age. Ellwood Cubberley, an educational historian, pointed out that a boy graduating from a Latin grammar school at the age of fifteen had mastered enough Latin so that he could enter Harvard College. Cubberley wrote:

He [the boy] was usually ignorant of numbers, and was usually unable to write English with any degree of fluency or accuracy. He was, however, well
schooled in the Latin tongue and usually, in the last years of the course, in the elements of Greek as well. 5

The pattern of the secondary school in the early American colonies generally followed the English grammar school whose curriculum was based on the classical humanist school of the Renaissance. Forerunners of the colonial Latin grammar school were such great secondary schools in England as Winchester (1382), Eaton (1440), St. Paul's (1509), Shrewsbury (1552), Rugby (1557), and Westminster (1560). Like these English secondary schools, the colonial Latin grammar schools specialized in ancient literature written in Latin and Greek. Often, however, students learned mainly the grammar of Latin and Greek instead of appreciating the literature for its aesthetic quality; it was the language that was studied rather than the ideas of the classical writers. Although the record of the early curricula of the different Latin grammar schools is unclear, enough evidence reveals that the curriculum was classical rather than scientific. Harvard College, for example, required Latin and Greek for admission and the Latin grammar schools prepared students for Harvard. 6

Support for the Latin grammar school came from


various sources. Funds were derived from donations, taxation, land grants, and even lotteries. Although tuition fees also provided the school with funds, instruction was free to the poor. The Latin grammar school was basically public in its general control even though private funds played an important role.

The main purpose of the Latin grammar school in New England was to train selected boys for college so that the colonial theocracy would have clerical and civic leaders. The Act of 1647 ("Old Deluder Satan Act") required every township of fifty families to appoint and to pay someone within the town to teach the children to read and write. Moreover, the act required every township of one hundred families or more to set up a grammar school whose master would prepare the students for the university. As the Act decreed, the schoolmaster had to be of "discreet conversation, well versed in tongues." The purpose of the Act of 1647 was to prevent Old Deluder Satan from leading the young people astray, but the Act abetted and supported secondary education in Massachusetts.

But the Latin grammar school was not popular in Massachusetts. Although about one-third of the towns of Massachusetts had Latin grammar schools by 1700, many towns failed to comply with the provisions of the Act of

1647 and preferred to pay a fine rather than to maintain a grammar school. The fact that the Massachusetts legislature had to increase the fine in 1671 and 1683 for non-compliance with the Act suggests that the value of the Latin grammar school was seriously questioned by the colonists. 8

To characterize the colonial schoolmaster is a difficult task. But in The Making of Our Middle Schools, Elmer Ellsworth Brown put the colonial schoolmasters into three groups. The first group consisted of a few scholarly men dedicated to the best traditions of the old schools in England. The second group contained young clergymen who had recently graduated from college but were waiting for a parish. The third group included "a miscellaneous lot of adventurers, indented servants, educated rogues, and the like, all either mentally or morally incompetent, or both, who taught school only to keep from starving." 9

The teachers were undoubtedly as diverse in their social standing as the schools were in their academic standing. But everywhere piety and good character were required to put a teacher in good standing with the community. Less commonly required, however, were high

8French, p. 45.
intellectual qualifications. Still the Latin grammar school teacher was employed under the assumption that he was knowledgeable in classical languages and literature. "The three most common requirements of teachers," wrote R. Freeman Butts and Lawrence A. Cremin, "were that they be religiously orthodox, loyal to the civil government, and morally acceptable."¹⁰

The typical colonial schoolmaster remained in teaching for a very short time. In Ancients and Axioms: Secondary Education in Eighteenth-Century New England, Robert Middlekauff maintained that teaching was a means of support for a young man while he studied for a profession or looked for an opportunity in business. Teaching was not the way to wealth and high social position. Nevertheless, most of the masters took their work seriously while they were teaching even though their position was a steppingstone for them. In discussing the colonial schoolmaster, Middlekauff wrote:

Most masters considered their work useful, and many spent hours outside the classroom correcting papers and preparing exercises for their charges. Yet almost all gave up teaching a few years after they started, entering business or the professions. Their motives in leaving teaching were mixed, but most were looking for money. Business, medicine, and law—all could be made to pay more than teaching and held possibilities of great wealth for some. Even the ministry,

which held out only minimal financial attractions, usually paid more than teaching.\textsuperscript{11}

Exceptions to the typical schoolmaster existed throughout the colonies. Unlike the typical schoolmaster who had no intention of staying in teaching for more than a year or two, Ezekiel Cheever taught at the Boston Latin School for thirty-eight years. Praise from former students attested to Cheever's outstanding qualities as a teacher. Comparing Cheever with the typical schoolmaster of the colonial period, Lawrence Cremin wrote:

Cheever's career as a teacher was anything but representative, though it has often been portrayed as such: whereas most of the better colonial schoolmasters were products of Harvard, Cheever had been educated in England; whereas most chose teaching as a temporary occupation, Cheever made a profession of it; whereas most commanded modest salaries, Cheever taught at the Boston Free School for sixty pounds a year; and whereas most enjoyed local reputations at best, Cheever was known throughout New England.\textsuperscript{12}

The colonial schoolmasters were undoubtedly a diverse group. Although slander and lawsuits were characteristics peculiar to the Dutch schoolmasters, over-indulgence in alcohol was a common shortcoming of the early schoolmasters. While excessive drinking was common, charges of profanity were conspicuously absent, records of violence conspicuously scarce, and cases of immorality


conspicuously few. In *The American Teacher*, Willard Elsbree concluded that "the colonial schoolmaster was at least as 'good' as his contemporaries and probably better."\(^\text{13}\)

**The Instructor in the Age of the Academy**

The Latin grammar school of the colonial period stood on its narrow curriculum: classical subjects for college-bound students. Slowly, however, the tide of social, political, and economic affairs in America began to wash away the foundation of the Latin grammar school. By the middle of the eighteenth century, major changes such as the growth of democracy, the expansion of trade and commerce, and the increase in immigration and migration had all contributed to the rise of a new form of secondary school: the academy. While the Latin grammar school had been an English institution serving the needs of an earlier period, the academy reflected changes in an age of science, business, and industrial growth. The academy received the support of a rising middle-class who recognized the need and value of education.

As early as 1743, Benjamin Franklin recognized the need of providing a secondary education that was broader than the narrow curriculum of the Latin grammar school.

In 1749, Franklin published his essay, "Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania," in which he proposed the establishment of an academy. His academy opened in Philadelphia in 1751 with three departments: the classical, the English, and the mathematical. The broadened curriculum in Franklin's academy included such subjects as arithmetic, accounting, geometry, oratory, logic, morality, and natural history as well as the classics.

Franklin's educational ideas were reflected in the academy movement. Spanning the period from the Revolutionary War to about the 1870's and having its greatest period of development from 1820 to 1840, the academy movement ushered in a curriculum that offered a more flexible and useful course of study from that offered by the Latin grammar school. At first the academy was in competition with the Latin grammar school, but eventually the academy absorbed the college preparatory function of the Latin school. Like Franklin's academy, other academies offered instruction in a wide range of subjects: courses ranging from acoustics to zoology. Although these academies offered a wide range of subjects' the courses were often superficially taught.

In contrast to the Latin grammar school, the academies' course of study followed rather than paralleled that of the common school. Moreover, the academies en-
rolled both boys and girls. Even though the students attending the academy represented different social classes, the students came from parents who were reasonably well off. While most academies were boarding schools for children of the reasonably well-to-do, some were day schools serving the needs of a particular locality.

The academy was primarily an independent institution controlled by a board of trustees. Although a few academies were ecclesiastically controlled, the academies in most states were incorporated through a charter granted by the state. With the exception of New York, no state authority made the academies accountable. In New York, however, the Board of Regents, a state-wide authority, had in 1874 the power to develop, encourage, and systemize secondary education. In Pennsylvania, academies often received state funds and were regarded as semi-public institutions.14

Like the schoolmasters of the Latin grammar school, the instructors in the academies were undoubtedly a diverse group. Still, Theodore Sizer characterized the average academy instructor as "a poorly educated transient."15 In his evaluation of the typical academy instructor, Sizer wrote:

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14 French, p. 64.

Judging from the range of subjects that the one- and two-man staffs offered, one might suspect that they were a liberally and thoroughly educated elite. That they were not is obvious. More often, they were people with a minimum of training, who moved rapidly from job to job unable to make a go of any. Sometimes they were college students earning a few dollars during vacation or young girls doing a stint of teaching before marriage.¹⁶

And as Gerald Gutek characterized the academy instructor,

Some of the teachers were college graduates and competent in their teaching areas, but others were charlatans, merely interested in a quick tuition fee.¹⁷

But exceptions to the typical academy instructor stood out as masters in the memories of former students. Benjamin Abbott, who stayed at Phillips Exeter for fifty years, was one exception; he had the reputation of being an extraordinary teacher. Other exceptions were Eliphalet Pearson of Phillips Andover and John Chavis, a black man whose school in North Carolina received high acclaim.

Good teachers were not only difficult to hire but also difficult to keep because of the low salaries. Many academies could exist only if they kept their expenses down. Working for a pittance, the teachers indirectly supported the academy. Discussing the indirect sources of aid to the academy, Sizer wrote:

The teachers, representing the largest item on the budget, could contribute most toward lowering opera-


ting costs: the smaller their salaries, the smaller the deficit . . . the teachers, by performing their tasks for a pittance, became the main source of financial support. The benefactions of the state and the income from tuition pale in comparison with their donations.18

Low salaries were not the only problems teachers faced in the academy. "The pretentious curricula," Sizer said, "were taught by one or two teachers to a constantly changing group of students, most of whom lacked a sound grasp of the rudimentary studies."19 Since most of the students had to master the basic studies, they were usually unable to advance to the more specialized studies. The teachers, gearing their instructions to the needs of the students, often taught their subjects superficially.

The Teacher in the Years of the Traditional High School

Shortly after the Civil War, the academy began to decline and the public high school emerged as the leading institution of secondary education in the United States. Since many parents could not afford to pay the tuition charged by the academies, the parents looked to the emerging public high school for providing their children with a secondary education. Reluctant to pay both the tuition to an academy and the tax bill to support the public high school, more and more parents sent their children to the public high school. The academy also declined as the

state normal schools grew in popularity: the academy was no longer the largest supplier of teachers to the lower schools.20

In its development after the Civil War, the public high school attempted to serve both the student who wanted a terminal secondary education and the student who wanted to prepare for college. The public high school not only attempted to imitate and improve the program of the academy, but it also sought to extend and democratize secondary education. Although the growth of the public high school did not eliminate private secondary education, it ended the private control of secondary education as exemplified by the academy.

In 1821 the first public high school appeared in Boston under the name of the English Classical School. Three years later, in 1824, this school for boys was renamed the English High School and became known as just the "high school." While the term, English, designated the language of instruction in the school, the term, high school, originated either from an article written by John Griscom in the North American Review21 or from a proposal made by John Pierpont in his position as secretary of the Boston school committee.22 Nevertheless,  

20French, p. 81. 21Cubberley, p. 253.  
other communities gradually established high schools and the name disseminated from Boston "to every city, town, and large village and community in America."\(^{23}\)

The idea of a free, tax-supported secondary school gained acceptance in the United States only after a struggle. Financial support for the high school, like the common school, had to come almost entirely from local taxation. In the battle for secondary education at public expense, one unresolved issue was whether taxpayers should have to pay for the education of their neighbors' children if that education was not part of the publicly supported system recognized by law. This issue, however, did not come to a head until 1872.

Between 1827 and 1872, many states in the North had passed legislation authorizing the establishment of high schools. In 1827, Massachusetts passed a law requiring every town of more than 500 families to establish a high school. In 1853, New York State passed legislation that permitted school districts to consolidate to establish high schools. In 1854, Pennsylvania passed a law that gave school directors discretionary powers that covered secondary education. In 1872, however, a taxpayer in Kalamazoo, Michigan filed a friendly suit which challenged the school district's constitutional right to levy a tax for

\(^{23}\) Ibid.
the support of a secondary school. Two years later, in 1874, the high school was established by court decision when the Michigan Supreme Court ruled that the School Board of Kalamazoo had the right to levy taxes to establish an intermediate school between the common school and the state university. The decision, written by Chief Justice Thomas M. Cooley, declared that the state's policy, beginning in 1817, had been in the direction of free schools which would bring the elements of a classical education "within the reach of all the children of the state." 24

The decision in the Kalamazoo Case established a precedent for other states and gave impetus to the development of a system of universal secondary education. Ellwood Cubberley noted the importance of the decision:

In almost all the Upper Mississippi Valley States this decision has deeply influenced development. In more than one State a Supreme Court decision which established the high school has been clearly based on this Michigan decision. It ranks, therefore, along with the Massachusetts law of 1827 as one of the important milestones in the establishment of the American public high school. 25

Accepted as part of the public school system after the Kalamazoo Case of 1874, the public high school added the missing rung of the American educational ladder; that is, a "single, articulated, and sequential system of schools." 26


25 Cubberley, pp. 263-64.

26 Gutek, p. 72.
Believing that a high school education was the means of social mobility, many Americans supported the concept of the public high school as the way of improving their children's opportunities to climb higher on the social-economic ladder.

The high school movement spread from the New England States to the Middle States, and then into the Middle West. Between 1870 and 1890 the number of high schools increased by five times.²⁷ Before 1870 the growth of the public high school had been slow: only 321 high schools had been established up to 1860.²⁸ In 1890, sixteen years after the Kalamazoo Decision, the number of high schools was "just over 2,500" and twenty years later the number had increased to "well over 10,000 high schools."²⁹ By 1930 the number of high schools had risen to "just under 24,000."³⁰ John Brubacher, a professor of education, viewed the growth of the high school as "nothing short of phenomenal."

The American public high school assumed its traditional form between 1880 and 1920. Out of the educational turmoil of the 1870's and the 1880's, high schools created

²⁹ Brubacher, pp. 410-11.
³⁰ Ibid., p. 411.
their own purposes, their own offerings, and their own multitude of problems. But still unresolved was the lingering question of whether the high school was to be a preparatory institution for students going to college or a terminal institution for students wanting to conclude their formal education. The lack of any common standard among high schools within most states and throughout the country eventually led to attempts at standardization.

The establishment of a series of committees and the reports that resulted from those committees also helped to shape the public high school between 1880 and 1920. In 1892, the National Education Association appointed the Committee of Ten to study the problem of standardization. After an exhaustive study, the Committee recommended that every high school subject should be taught in the same way and to the same extent regardless of a student's educational destination. Moreover, a Committee recommended that high school students study fewer subjects for a longer period of time. In 1899, the Committee on College Entrance Requirements reported that students should elect courses after they had taken a core of courses required of all students. In 1918, the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education set forth seven objectives of secondary education: health, command of the fundamental processes, worthy home membership, vocation, citizenship, worthy use of leisure time, and ethical character. Thus, out of
these committees and other committees that responded to the changing conditions of American life came the reports that influenced secondary education.\textsuperscript{31}

Thoughout the growth of the high school, the need for competent teachers increased. The early high school teachers often lacked either pedagogical training or academic preparation or both. In describing the early high school teachers, William Marshall French wrote:

In the past, many a person has taught in high school without ever having had a course in education, many others without being college graduates, still others without a college major or minor in the subject taught, and even some without any college credit whatsoever in the subject taught.\textsuperscript{32}

He also noted that the academic teachers came from both normal schools and liberal arts colleges. Whereas the graduates of normal schools were strong in methodology and weak in subject matter, the graduates of liberal arts colleges were strong in subject matter and weak in methodology. French maintained that strong and weak institutions of both types existed.

The faculty of the traditional high school consisted of both men and women. While men had dominated the teaching positions in the Latin grammar schools and to a lesser degree in the academies, women were employed in a


\textsuperscript{32}French, p. 112.
greater number to teach in the public high school. According to French, four reasons accounted for the increase in the number of women in the high schools. First, more educated women were available because barriers against women in higher education had given way. Second, greater opportunities to women college graduates existed in teaching because other professions were still closed to them. Third, well-educated women could be hired at lower salaries than men were paid. Fourth, men sought more remunerative jobs outside of teaching as the economy expanded in the United States.\(^{33}\)

The Educator in the Times of the Reorganized High School

Between 1880 and 1920, the traditional high school had existed as a selective institution. During the 1920's, however, the selective character of the high school gave way to democratization, and educational opportunity was extended to all students. By 1930 the high school had become a comprehensive institution that offered a wide range of subjects to students who came from a variety of backgrounds.

As the traditional high school became more comprehensive in character, a movement was under way to extend secondary education downward and upward. While the junior high school was an extension downward, the junior college

\(^{33}\)Ibid., p. 115.
was an extension upward. The reorganized high school changed the traditional 8-4 plan of education to a variety of grade patterns. The reorganization came as a result of the child study movement which emphasized the child's "psychological age" and held that the adolescent needed a new approach, a new kind of school, and a new curriculum. In 1909, Columbus, Ohio became the first community to use the term "junior high school" when it introduced a three-year intermediate school with grades 7-8-9. However, the growth of the junior high school came after 1920.34

Between 1920 and 1970, numerous studies reported the professional status of the teacher. In 1925, for example, George Counts investigated the social status of occupations and discovered that high school teachers ranked tenth among forty-five occupations while elementary school teachers ranked thirteenth.35 Other studies using a rating scale similar to Counts' method indicated that teaching ranked in a superior position in relationship to a wide range of occupations. In 1962, however, Patrick Groff pointed to still other studies and methods that produced disagreement over the professional status of teachers.


The evidence that Groff gathered in his study illustrated "the awkwardness of fitting teachers into widely-accepted social status scales." School teachers, according to Groff, might best be classified as "middle-class professionals." Defining the term, he wrote:

This term, while retaining for them the distinction of having had professional-type education and of subscribing to professional-type purposes and ethics, takes a realistic view of their comparative social status with the other professionals and the propertied class which appear truly to constitute the upper social class.

Many empirical studies of teachers portrayed in American literature have also revealed much about the teachers' professional status. In 1950, for example, Don C. Charles examined the works of more than sixty representative American writers from the Colonial period to present times. He found that the imaginative writers stereotyped women teachers as either "sweet young things" waiting for a marriage proposal or shrewish old maids behaving foolishly in the presence of a man. The writers stereotyped men teachers as either odd-looking disciplinarians wielding birch-rods or smart, bookish fellows being intellectual fools or behaving cleverly because they were

37 Ibid.
not "manly" enough to be forceful. 38 A decade later, in 1960, Edna Furness examined the image of the high school teacher in American literature. Furness wrote:

Writers seem to have a penchant for giving the impression that our high school teachers are social misfits, lovable old bears, fuddy duddies, ineffectual quacks, "rag-ends of unsalable males and unmarriageable females," someone who is a school teacher and nothing more. 39

Since a teacher stereotype—like all stereotypes—represents a widely shared image in the minds of people, it undoubtedly has some influence upon the teacher and his profession. "Much of social interaction," wrote Willard Waller, "rests upon stereotypes." 40 The teacher stereotype exerts influence not only on social interaction but also on the way teachers perceive themselves and their profession. Discussing the effects of the stereotype on the teacher as a result of social interaction, Waller wrote: "When the teacher has internalized the rules which bind him, he has become truly a teacher." 41

No doubt any image can be carried in the minds of people as if it were real. Regardless of whether a teacher-image is oversimplified and incomplete or fully drawn, its


40Waller, p. 415. 41Ibid., p. 420.
significance lies in the composite image conveyed to the reader in terms of being either positive or negative; that is, leaning toward a teacher-image that is favorable or unfavorable. Thus the following chapters present the fictional image of the high school teacher in the light of historical reality and subjectively interprets that image in terms of its positive or negative impact.
CHAPTER III

THE FICTIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER DURING THE PROSPEROUS YEARS: 1920-1929

Prosperity, though not equally shared, characterized the American economy during the middle years of the Nineteen-Twenties. Increased efficiency through science and technology had contributed to the well-publicized prosperity. Increasing their output to gain greater profits by volume, farms and factories intensified competition and helped to create a national surplus of goods. But many economic, social, and political factors combined during the decade to raise havoc on the national economy. By the end of the decade, prosperity collapsed.

The decade of the Twenties saw the high school come into its own. As America's living habits and educational views changed with urbanization, the enrollments in the nation's public high schools swelled. Enrollments increased from just over 2,200,000 students in 1920 to just under 4,400,000 students in 1930. "Schools could not be built or enlarged fast enough," wrote Edward Krug, "and new entrants overflowed into branches, often housed in nearby elementary schools, and into temporary buildings hastily
High school policies during the 1920's varied from school to school, but the students of that decade were closely supervised while in school. While their teachers accepted low salaries and listened to the optimistic rhetoric about the mission of the schools, the students accepted school rules and listened to reproaches stereotyping many of them as "wild youths" engaged in rampant misbehavior both in and out of school. Edward Krug examined this period of educational history and concluded that although many variations in school rules and policies existed, "student populations lived under tight regulation and control, some of it contributed by themselves." 1

Krug generalized about the high school students of the 1920's from an historical perspective, but Robert Carr, the novelist, concretized their lives through vivid detail. Carr's novel, *The Rampant Age*, published in 1928, was the story of Paul Benton, a sixteen year old boy who spent much of his freshman year at Westfield High learning how to be a "regular guy." 2 In the cornbelt town of Westfield, a "regular guy" shot pool for money, smoked cigarettes, drank corn liquor, and used words like "hot rocks" to show approval. The most formidable student in the freshman class

1 Krug, 2:42.  
2 Ibid., p. 130.  
was a "regular guy" who had "cussed out" the county school superintendent.

The students of Westfield High School "studied frequently, seldom, or never--according to who the teacher was." Mr. Carter, a strict disciplinarian, taught history and Paul liked the subject because of the way Carter taught it. Carter made history interesting by skipping over "musty battles and law-makings to concentrate on some one picturesque happening . . . such as the date and the circumstances surrounding the landing of the first boatload of slaves on American soil." Students paid attention in Carter's class and generally studied for his lesson, but in Miss Botts's French class, the students looked bored, yawned frequently, and even fell asleep. Miss Botts's method for teaching French was to have the class recite in unison the parts of a French verb as she tapped slowly and rhythmically the point of her pencil on the desk.

The teacher's interest, mood, and tone of voice have always been crucial factors in effective teaching. "A disinterested teacher," said the narrator in The Rampant Age, "can cast a dreary pall over a course in eccentric dancing while a man like Mr. Carter could work up enthusiasm over the Composition of Fossil Sediments in the Upper Nile!" While Carter made history interesting with stimulating

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4 Ibid., p. 44. 5 Ibid., p. 43. 6 Ibid., p. 44.
anecdotes, Mr. Irwin, the algebra teacher, drove his subject into the heads of the students like a riveter. After Irwin's algebra class, some of the students "complained of a bruised feeling in their brain, as if they had been black-jacked."  

While interested teachers, both in and out of fiction, sought stimulating ways to teach, routine-following teachers stuck to their unimaginative methods. Reporting his observations in the Superintendence Report of 1928, John C. Almack of Stanford University criticized most high school teachers for being bound to traditional methods and routines. "Nearly all," he reported, "make oral assignments of the 'take from page 80 to page 87' type. . . . Almost all the class exercises consist of drill."  

In The Rampant Age, Paul did not have to study algebra every night because of Mr. Irwin's undeviating method of teaching: Irwin called on students to recite and went completely around the class once every two days.

Just as the algebra teacher was bound by unimaginative routine so was the English teacher tied to traditional methods. The English teacher had her students read Homer's Odyssey, which according to the narrator "is weird fodder

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7Ibid., p. 40.

for fifteen- and sixteen-year-old minds."\textsuperscript{9} Although there was nothing intentionally smutty in the school edition of the \textit{Odyssey}, students determined to find something dirty at which to laugh were able to find material in the book. As a result, the English teacher called upon only those few students who could read aloud without giggling. "About once a week," the narrator said, "she had the class write, with their books closed, a synopsis of events over a given portion of the \textit{Odyssey}; otherwise the study of English consisted almost entirely of hearing someone read haltingly aloud."\textsuperscript{10}

Although high school teachers were often criticized for their methodology, their habits were often regarded as even more annoying than their unimaginative methods. The \textit{Peabody Journal of Education} published in 1940 a study of annoying habits of high school teachers.\textsuperscript{11} Some of the annoying habits most frequently mentioned in the study (e.g., "talks too fast," "uses monotone," ) had been depicted over a decade earlier in \textit{The Rampant Age}. In the novel, Miss Botts's voice affected the way that students responded to her teaching. The narrator said that she "talked rapidly and without emotion, like a machine that

\textsuperscript{9}Carr, p. 45. \textsuperscript{10}Ibid., p. 46.

has been turned on and set at a certain speed."\textsuperscript{12} While Miss Botts was known for her machine-like talking, Mr. Irwin, who taught algebra, physics, and Latin, had the reputation for bellowing instead of talking when he was cross. The problem for students was that Mr. Irwin was usually cross.

High school teachers in small towns were often placed in difficult professional and personal positions. Irwin was not only a teacher but he was also the superintendent of Westfield Centralized High School. Placed in a complicated position, he was responsible first "to that small town monster, Public Opinion and then to other levels of authority. While Irwin hearkened to the sound of public opinion, Ellen Craig, an artist, taught high school geometry to pay her board, but used her art to keep "her soul alive." In Westfield and that part of the cornbelt, art was not one of the regular subjects in a high school's curriculum. Ellen Craig organized on her own a small group of students interested in art and met with them on her own time after school hours.

Although art was unimportant in the small cornbelt town, basketball was stressed in Westfield. Students participated in all the major sports to some degree, but basketball was the sport that was played all year by

\textsuperscript{12} Carr, p. 39.
everyone athletically inclined. Even though athletics in Westfield had an important social function in uniting the entire community around the school, some schoolmen outside the fictional setting had misgivings about the direction of athletic programs in the United States. Writing in *School Review*, C. W. Whitten, the manager of the Illinois High School Athletic Association, discussed some of the disquieting aspects of athletic programs. He maintained that "the very intense popularity" of sports frequently tempted educators "to forsake educational ideals" and to resort "to more or less devious practices for the purpose of turning out winning teams."\(^{13}\)

The intense competitiveness in athletics paralleled the competitiveness that characterized much of America's industrial and commercial society. In *The Rampant Age*, Paul's father, "a fat-man-in-a-hurry," had forged ahead in the tractor business and had thus become financially and socially successful. But Paul's father was away frequently on business trips and the only common ground that the father and the son had was the father's checkbook. Robert Carr, the eighteen-year-old novelist of *The Rampant Age*, indicted society and especially parents for the faults of youth. He implied that the irresponsibility of parents--

their drinking, their infidelity, and their extravagance—was to blame for much of their children's "wildness."

After Paul's first year at Westfield High School, his father was promoted and the family moved to the city. In September, Paul enrolled at East High School, a white stone building that took up a whole block. At East High School, some teachers were shunned while others were sought after. "Old Hoss" was one of the teachers to be avoided, for "she was a tall shrunken old woman with snapping eyes and cruel, thin lips which always looked as though she was on the verge of saying something sarcastic." 14

Old Hoss's method of teaching was not a model for a pedagogical textbook. Describing a typical class session, the narrator wrote:

Each day the Old Hoss would dictate to her pupils the assignment on which they were to be held responsible at the next class. These assignments had to be copied down verbatim into special English notebooks. At the beginning of each class, the dictation of the previous day would be read aloud by one of the students, who must then ask for corrections and criticisms.

Someone always disagreed with something. They would argue, as the rest of the class yawned and the hands of the clock crept around the dial. On some occasions the period would be half over before the assignment was threshed out. This time-curtailment would leave various biographies and memorizations not recited upon to pile up until the amount of unfinished work on hand was truly dismaying. Then Old Hoss would calmly cancel all back orders while her pupils wept silently and calculated the dimensions of the wound a carefully-hurled paving brick would produce on their English teacher's os frontis. 15

14 Carr., p. 108. 15 Ibid., pp. 158-59.
Students in Old Hoss's class had to outline "Julius Caesar." A boy who had been called upon to give an oral review of the first act had forgotten his outline. Although the boy had memorized a whole part of the act and knew it thoroughly, he could not escape Old Hoss's wrath because he had neglected to bring the outline to class. Characterizing Old Hoss, the narrator said:

Unless a pupil held this outline before him and recited from it in stereotyped phrases, the Old Hoss felt that he was defying the public school system and insulting her personally.16

In contrast to sarcastic Old Hoss was Robert Billings, the chemistry teacher, who made high school a worthwhile experience for students by expressing his friendliness. Although he was the most popular teacher at East High School, Billings could be stern whenever he saw that the fun was getting out of hand. "Perhaps that is why they [the students] liked him," said the narrator, "for any person who is consistently indulgent with high-school-age youngsters soon finds himself sneered at instead of liked."17 Even though students laughed hysterically in Billings's class, he just had to frown slightly and the laughing stopped. Mr. Skinner, the principal, disapproved of students laughing in class and he often wanted to inform Billings of his disapproval. But Skinner could just scowl his disapproval as he passed Billings's classroom because

16 Ibid., p. 159. 17 Ibid., p. 236.
students were learning in Billings's class.

The Rampant Age received mixed reviews in 1928. Although Survey reviewed the novel unfavorably, the reviewer found Carr's criticism of the regimented high school as the most revealing part of the book. The reviewer thought that Carr's novel had shown the system "as wasting years of young life by inflexibility and the mass methods that never awaken the imagination or enlist the splendid loyalty of youth."\(^{18}\) While the review in Survey was mainly negative, the London Times Literary Supplement praised the novel for its satire directed at school organization and teaching methods.\(^ {19}\) Of the novel, the New York Times said, "The Rampant Age, ... has a certain amount of sensationalism in its make-up. Yet it has a realistic portrayal that smacks of the authentic."\(^ {20}\)

In Carr's novel, Miss Botts, Mr. Irwin, and Old Hoss depicted a negatively stereotyped high school teacher and Mr. Carter, Ellen Craig, and Mr. Billings depicted a positively stereotyped image. While the novel had contrasting images of the high school teacher, the dominant image reflected a negative stereotype. The following

\(^{18}\) Survey, 1 May 1928, p. 177.

\(^{19}\) Times (London) Literary Supplement, 4 October 1928, p. 706.

descriptive sentences revealed the narrator's general view toward teachers:

She did not look like a school teacher. She was dressed in rather good taste and was only medium homely.\(^{21}\)

She was a wide, kindly widow, neither a kiln-dried old maid nor a cynical victim of some early emotional mishap as are so many of the women on high school faculties.\(^{22}\)

Carr's novel indicted not only parents who failed to be good examples for their children but also those teachers who failed to be good models for their students.

Carr's novel, published in 1928, portrayed the life and problems of a high school student from a high school student's point of view. The following year, however, a landmark novel appeared in book stores. In 1929, a high school teacher appeared for the first time as a main character in an American novel. Lola Jean Simpson's novel, *Treadmill*, published in the year of the Great Depression, had a small town in northern California as the setting of the story.\(^{23}\) Leslie Burleson, the main character in the novel, returned to Oakleyville to teach history and civics at the town's high school. She had attended the State University at Berkeley where she completed her college work in three years instead of four and took the fourth year for

practice teaching. The teaching position at the Oakleyville High School was important to Leslie not only because she wanted to teach but because she was the sole provider for Adalia, her step-mother, and Grandma Tingley, Adalia's mother.

In 1929 a surplus of teachers existed both in California and in other states. Leonard Koos reported in School Life that the oversupply of secondary school teachers in California tended to elevate standards. He did not mention, however, that the surplus of teachers gave school boards much bargaining power and curtailed much of the militancy of underpaid and discontented teachers. "Teacher discontent," wrote Edward Krug, "remained throughout the twenties, but as a chaotic and unorganized force. Chances for effective militancy, moreover, were hampered by the repeated and massive influx of new teachers."

In Treadmill, David Havener, a professor of modern history from the University of California and an observer who came to Oakleyville High to see the working plan of the school, felt that salaries were a "festering sore" in education and would continue to be one until the whole profession was put on a decent economic basis. He said to


25 Krug, 2:149.
Leslie, "Think of a man or woman either spending eight or ten years and thousands of dollars preparing for his profession and in the end getting less than a chauffeur."²⁶ David also believed that the image of the teacher was related to economic conditions. When Leslie told him that he was the only man teacher she ever knew who was not "a total loss," he replied:

It's the system. Very few first rate men can afford to go into the profession because it hasn't any economic status. Fortunately or otherwise money is our standard to-day in this country, and on that basis a man who teaches in the grammar or high school is regarded as a nincompoop. And those who do go in for teaching as a rule can't stand the gaff, I've seen it take even pretty good fellows and break their spirit in a few years. Or if they assert any individuality they are kicked out. What can they do? Most of them have families. They've got to knuckle to the powers that be or lose their jobs. So they knuckle.²⁷

In May 1929 the Research Bulletin of the National Education Association presented the distribution of salaries paid to teachers during 1928 and 1929.²⁸ The median salary paid to senior high school teachers in cities over 100,000 in population was $2,680 while the median salary in cities from 2,500 to 5,000 in population was $1,584. The average teaching salary in 1929 was $1,400; it was $5 lower than the average for all employed persons. In October 1929, the American stock market collapsed and the Great Depression

that followed the collapse had far-reaching effects on
teachers' salaries. Teachers' salaries were cut after 1929
and by 1934 the average annual salary of teachers had fallen
to $1,235. 29

"Greater economy" was the rallying cry of many
boards of education and Oakleyville's was no exception.
Martin Galloway, the principal of the high school, saved
the Board money by doing secretarial work in the school.
He was usually "overwhelmed by a mass of details, hunting
up tardy slips, checking absence records, examining ex-
cuses. . . ." 30 The Board also saved money by paying women
teachers less than men. Gale Waters, Leslie's friend who
was also a teacher, complained that she deserved much more
money than her male principal because she was worth much
more. About the inequality of salaries, Gale angrily
asked, "But why, why, why? Why don't women get as big
salaries as men?" 31

J. R. McGaughey, a non-fictional professor of edu-
cation, had an answer to the equal-pay question in the
American School Board Journal. His thesis was that the
workings of natural law--the economic law of supply and
demand--made a policy of equal pay for men and women un-
sound. Contending that equal pay-for equal work was

29 Myron Lieberman, Education as a Profession (Engle-
30 Simpson, p. 300.
31 Ibid., p. 135.
founded upon "sentimental rather than scientific bases,"
McGaughey wrote:

Under equal pay, one or both of two unfortunate situations must exist: Inferior men will be drawn into our junior- and senior-high-school teaching positions and the cause of good education will suffer, as it is now suffering in many communities for this very reason; or women teachers will be overpaid in the economic sense. No board of education has the moral right to pay women teachers higher salaries than the economic demand for their services justifies. To do so is just as pernicious as to waste public money upon some other project for which there is no such well-organized, sentimental propaganda.\textsuperscript{32}

In 1930 equal pay laws were in effect in only ten states, one of which was California.\textsuperscript{33}

The Board of Education in \textit{Treadmill} was the bane of both the principal and the teachers. When the principal, Martin Galloway, "mentioned that body he lowered his voice as if he were speaking of the Deity."\textsuperscript{34} The Board members frowned upon teachers going to public dances, attending the movies on week nights, and playing tennis on Sunday. Gale Waters, Leslie's outspoken friend, complained that boards of education were never known to study the problems of teachers; their only business, she felt, was to oppose, criticize and limit teachers. David Havener, thought, however, that Oakleyville's Board members were "a good bunch"

\textsuperscript{32} J. R. McGaughey, "Equal Pay for Equal Work?" \textit{American School Board Journal} 82 (February 1931): 60.

\textsuperscript{33} Elsbree, p. 451.

\textsuperscript{34} Simpson, p. 32.
and "just like most boards, self-opinionated, ignorant and well meaning." 35

In the novel, the weight of Oakleyville's Board of Education was felt by what topics were permitted to be discussed in the classroom. For several recitation periods, Leslie's class had discussed America's policy in regard to Mexico. The subject gave Leslie the opportunity to see how well students were doing in thinking for themselves. When Lem Biggers, a pig farmer and the President of the Board of Education, had overheard several students on the street criticize the State Department's Mexican policy, he brought the matter before the Board. The members of the Board decided that such discussions as Leslie conducted in her classroom were dangerous and had to be discontinued. Mr. Galloway, the principal, informed Leslie of the Board's decision:

The Board has never thought it wise to stir up too much controversial feeling, especially where the United States is concerned. They feel that to question the policy of our present state department is heresy. It introduces an element of doubt into the minds of our young people and keeps them from being one hundred per cent Americans. I don't believe I would continue the discussion to-morrow. 36

Like Ulysses Irwin, the superintendent of Westfield Township Centralized High School in Robert Carr's The Rampant Age, Martin Galloway, the principal of Oakleyville High School, was subservient to that "small town monster"

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called Public Opinion. Galloway told Leslie that "you have to square your ideas with public opinion when you hold a public position." Subservient to the Babbittry of the Board of Education, Galloway suppressed any further discussion of Mexican affairs in Leslie's class.

In an article in *School and Society*, Burton Davis warned high school teachers of a persistent drive in the nation "to throttle free speech and the open mind in the class rooms of the secondary schools of America." Writing in 1931, Davis maintained that "sinister forces" were attempting to dominate the instruction in social sciences in the secondary schools by intimidating school officials. Moreover, he strongly opposed the kind of teaching that molded youthful minds into the form that "prevailing Babbitts" considered conventional. In lofty rhetoric, Davis stated the need for academic freedom:

The interests of all the children of all the people are to be the only interests to be heeded, to the end that a youth unblinded by bigotry and unstultified by toil, freed by the consideration of all sides of political, economic, social and international questions, may come into its heritage of an unspoiled democracy with some hope of being able to plan for the best interest of all instead of some special interests.

In Simpson's novel, Leslie's purpose for wanting to

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37 Ibid., p. 274.
39 Ibid., p. 632.
teach young people American history sounded not quite as lofty as Davis's rhetoric about academic freedom. To teach history was what Leslie had wanted to do for a long time. Filled with idealism and enthusiasm, she wanted to teach high school students about their country's history and "to plunge below the surface with them to find out the causes of the things which happened long ago as well as those happening to-day." In her classes, she showed prints and reproductions of pictures and maps of periods of American history under discussion. The students could discuss among themselves the material she passed around; they could ask questions. "Leslie propped picture after picture against the blackboard, talking about each one . . . The occasional quick crackle of a question merely punctuated a fresh flow of facts about that period. . . ." She thrived on developing "quaint and unorthodox methods of placing facts before her students and training them to draw deeper than surface conclusions."  

While the teaching of history was Leslie's main concern, David Havener, the professor of modern history, was more concerned with the spirit of the adolescent boy and girl. He wanted to discover if education is an adventure for young people in high school. To Leslie he said, "Your good principal Galloway is only too eager to give me all

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40 Simpson, p. 11.  41 Ibid., p. 45.  42 Ibid., p. 74.
the statistics I want, but the number of students you have, the care of your equipment, your policy in apportioning the work among your teachers, your athletic regime, those aren't what I'm after."\textsuperscript{43} It was not even the teaching of history that David was after but rather "life and youth."

While David considered "life and youth" his main concern, Martin Galloway, the principal, believed that the care of the buildings was the main consideration. Athletics, however, was also considered a source of community pride and stood on an equal footing with the school buildings. Instead of spending the money from the semi-annual school play for the purchase of books to fill vacant library shelves, the Board decided to use the money to buy new football uniforms. When Leslie questioned the need for new football uniforms, she was told that athletics were just as important as education. Continuing her questioning, Leslie asked:

Then why doesn't your system provide exercise for everybody? . . . Perhaps thirty, counting the whole football squad, get the benefit of intensive training. The rest take out their sport in watching the games and rooting for them. That isn't sport. That's competition. Athletics ought to be conducted so that every boy can take part. Then there would be more enjoyment in games for their own sake—as there is in England.\textsuperscript{44}

In 1929, the same year that \textit{Treadmill} was published, Cornelia S. Adair, writing in the \textit{Journal of Education}, thought, like Leslie Burleson, that some attention should

\textsuperscript{43}Ibid., pp. 51-52. \textsuperscript{44}Ibid., p. 304.
be given to the program of games conducted in the schools of Great Britain. "The major emphasis there [Great Britain]," wrote Adair, "is on general participation by all pupils." Also writing in the *Journal of Education*, G. E. Dille, the superintendent of schools in Chillicothe, Missouri, voiced objections to high school athletics similar to those expressed by Leslie in *Treadmill*. Superintendent Dille said:

> In too many cases high school athletics are not so organized as to give physical development to the whole school. Often-times eleven big, husky fellows have been selected from the hundreds of boys in high school for a football squad. These fellows are fully developed physically and frequently need very little, if any, physical training. They are given full benefit of an expensive training in physical prowess while hundreds of scrawny weaklings go through the four years of high school utterly undeveloped physically.

Athletics in Oakleyville not only took precedence over physical education for all the students but the athletes were also immune from regular school discipline. Snort Wayland, the captain of the football team, had been expelled from Leslie's class; his dismissal meant that he could not play the first football game of the season. Leslie felt confident that she had Mr. Galloway's support in her action. "The students," Mr. Galloway said, "must

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45 Cornelia S. Adair, "Are High School Athletics Overdone?" *Journal of Education* 110 (September 1929): 235.

learn that disobedience is not to be tolerated." But because the Board wanted Snort on the football team, it maintained that Leslie had been too hard on the football player. Obsequious and fearful, Mr. Galloway yielded to Board pressure and Snort Wayland returned to Leslie's class and to the football field.

Always fearful of offending the Board, the teachers at Oakleyville High lived with the threat of losing their position. Leslie fantasized that because she was having a discipline problem in class, the principal might one day come to her and say, "Miss Burleson, the Board feels that your discipline is so poor that they [sic] will have to ask you to resign." Often teachers who were "burned out" were thought to lack enthusiasm. Miss Gaylord, the Latin teacher was thought of in that way. "She was a fine teacher," said Mr. Galloway, "until she lost her enthusiasm." Miss Gaylord was worn out after teaching for fifteen years, but she had another fifteen years to teach before she could collect her pension, a meager fifty dollars a month.

Two years after the publication of Simpson's novel, School and Society reported that the Commission for the Study of Educational Problems in the State of California had

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47Simpson, p. 39.
48Ibid., p. 37.  
49Ibid., p. 141.
recommended that "the amount of the retirement salary for teachers in California be increased."\(^{50}\) A 1927 study of the retirement salary of teachers had not been reassuring.\(^{51}\) No doubt Miss Simpson had been aware of the problem of meager retirement benefits.

Although *Treadmill* was the first novel in which a high school teacher appeared as a main character, the novel according to the *New York Times* was at its best "no more than mediocre."\(^{52}\) Both the *New York Times* and *The New Republic* pointed to poor characterization as the weakness in the novel. However, the reviewer in *The New Republic* credited the novel for presenting well the lives of public school teachers. The review noted that such scenes as "the school board's command to stop history discussions of the United State's Mexican policy, the failure to discipline a scalawag football player, the censure of a teacher who had 'lost her enthusiasm' . . ."\(^{53}\) were all admirably done.

In Simpson's novel, Leslie, the main character and the dominant image, reflected a positively stereotyped image of the high school teacher. She was the dominant image even though her colleagues were negatively portrayed.

\(^{50}\) "Retirement Funds for Teachers in California," *School and Society* 33 (6 June 1931): 746.

\(^{51}\) Ibid.


The following portrait of Leslie's colleagues emerged:

. . . a family of such washed out looking teachers as tired Miss Gaylord, impassive Miss Samp, little Mrs. O'Neill who blew her nose until Leslie was certain that was the reason she was so pop-eyed, and the men who pussy-footed about, blinking like scared rabbits in the confusion of light and sound.54

The respective settings for Treadmill and The Rampant Age were the West and the Midwest. The next novel, Harold Brecht's book, Downfall, had the East as the setting.55 The scene for Brecht's novel was laid in Spring City, Pennsylvania. Published in 1929, Downfall is the story of Malcolm Campbell, a defiant but open-natured adolescent who is a freshman at Spring City High School. When Malcolm won success as the star pitcher on the varsity baseball team, he became popular with the students and gained admission into the exclusive Alpha Delta fraternity. Like Paul Benton in The Rampant Age, Malcolm strove to be the American high school "shiek": a boy who smoked, drank, gambled, and boasted.

In trying to achieve his idea of perfect liberty, Malcolm defied Coach Zeideman during a game. When Coach Zeideman put Malcolm off the team, Malcolm swore at the coach and then refused to apologize. Certain that Zeideman would have to reinstate him before the next game, Malcolm felt

54 Simpson, p. 167.

confident in his own indispensability. The students, however, sided with Zeideman and looked upon Malcolm's refusal to apologize as harmful to the school's chances of winning the championship. Malcolm was expelled from the Alpha Delta fraternity, ridiculed by his former supporters, deserted by most of his friends, and condemned to the companionship of an unpopular student.

Malcolm also had academic problems: he was failing algebra, history and Latin. Moreover, he disliked his algebra teacher, Miss Sturges, whom he viewed as thin and ugly but having "confidence in her manner, as though she felt proud of the homeliness without which she could not have dedicated her life to service." Miss Sturges gave him no special treatment even though he was touted as being the best pitcher Spring City ever had. "You may be the pitcher on the ball nine," she told him, "but in here you're going to do your work like anybody else, or take the consequences. Athletes don't get any special consideration from me." While Malcolm was still on the team, he was confident that Miss Sturges would not dare to fail him. During the football season, the principal made the Latin teacher give a flunking football player a special examination which subsequently made the player eligible again for football. Malcolm felt confident that the star pitcher

56 Ibid., p. 131. 57 Ibid., p. 207.
would undoubtedly be given the same consideration during the baseball season.

Even though athletes received no special consideration from the fictional Miss Sturges, a nonfictional study concerning preference shown high school athletes revealed some interesting results. In 1927, the School Review reported a study of an inquiry into the attitude of high school students toward athletes. The students' replies concerning the partiality shown toward athletes revealed that students generally felt that the people of the town, the teachers, the athletic coach, and the student body showed partiality toward athletes. On the other hand, the replies indicated that the high school principal, the superintendent, and the school board did not grant special privileges to athletes. 58

In Downfall, Malcolm had some doubts about Miss Sturges's granting him special privileges. As the school year drew to a close, Malcolm began to worry about being promoted. Unable to remember the last time he had prepared a lesson for Latin or history, Malcolm calculated that his best chance for a passing grade was in algebra. To insure his promotion, Malcolm broke into the school on the weekend and copied down the examination questions that he found in Miss Sturges's desk. His girlfriend then worked out the

problems and he memorized the answers along with a sprinkling of mistakes. On the day of the examination Malcolm was shocked when he discovered that the problems had been changed. Discovering that someone had rifled her desk, Miss Sturges had changed the problems on the final examination. In a desperate effort to pass algebra, Malcolm copied an answer from another student during the examination, and was consequently caught by Miss Sturges. Since the suspense of not knowing whether Miss Sturges would fail him in algebra was more than he could endure, he visited Miss Sturges at her home. Confessing that he had copied from another student's paper but never revealing that he had broken into her desk, Malcolm tried to persuade Miss Sturges to pass him. "To do so," she told him,

would be the worst possible thing in the world for you (though you don't think so now) because it would confirm you in the way of life that is already ingrained in you. That, no matter what you do, you can get away with it, to use a slang expression.59

That Miss Sturges had an overly zealous desire to raise Malcolm to adult standards instead of recognizing what was happening in his growth process could provide much psychological discussion. To be sure, Malcolm did not want Miss Sturges to interpret his experiences, and he was eager to take his leave of her once he knew for sure that he had failed algebra.

59 Brecht, p. 324.
Even though Brecht was a teacher, the image of the high school teacher in his novel was generally negative. The Boston Transcript said, "Brecht is a teacher and his criticism, more implied than expressed, is much against teachers." A review in the Saturday Review of Literature praised the novel for its sociological value. "Mr. Brecht writes with intimate knowledge of his subject," said the review, "and while what he says of high schools will be vigorously contested by the righteous, there is painfully little doubt but that it is substantially true."

**Conclusion: 1920-1929**

During the Twenties, three novels portrayed the public high school teacher as a main or minor character. Two novels, The Rampant Age and Downfall, depicted the high school teacher as a minor character but reflected a negative image of the teacher. In 1929 the publication of Lola Jean Simpson's novel, Treadmill, marked a significant event in the history of American education: for the first time, a novel portrayed the American public high school teacher as a main character.

Even though the character depicted in Treadmill was a positive stereotype, the fictional treatment of the

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60 Boston Transcript, 18 May 1929, p. 3.
61 Saturday Review of Literature 4 May 1929, p. 973.
public high school teacher signified the novelist's concern for the problems of the secondary school teacher. The professional problems described in *Treadmill* were often the same problems found in many later novels that portrayed the high school teacher as a main character. Low salaries, community pressure, and administrative repression were recurring problems in the novels published in later decades.
CHAPTER IV

THE DEPRESSING DECADE AND THE NOVELISTS' HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER: 1930-1939

The crash of the American stock market in 1929 ended the prosperity of the Twenties and ushered in the Great Depression. Hidden defects in the national economy caused a depressing decade of unemployment, demoralization, and social instability. Sharing in the effects of the economic collapse, the schools had their revenues reduced and the teachers had their salaries cut. As the wave of cost-cutting measures washed across the public schools, teachers saw support for education collapse. Cost-saving measures brought teachers larger classes, fewer programs, and less money. Although the purchasing power of teachers' salaries was relatively high during the first days of the depression, teachers received their worst cuts by 1934-35. Discussing the financial troubles of teachers during the Depression, Edward Krug noted that "teachers got their severe cuts in a period when averages for other workers had begun to rise." \(^1\)

\(^1\) Krug, 2:215.
A social welfare mood in the Thirties replaced the business-dominated mood of the Twenties. Seeking to restore the confidence of the American people in their government, President Roosevelt attacked the depression with an arsenal of social legislation. His New Deal, an experimental and innovative program to fight the depression, reflected a need for social change in the nation. As Roosevelt's advisors (the "Brain Trust") formulated experimental and innovative ideas from earlier political movements, the Progressive Education Association pressed for experimentation and innovation in the nation's schools and directed the Eight-Year Study (1933-1941), a project aimed at curriculum revision.

While the drama of social, political, and educational change had billing in the national theater during the Thirties, novelists were also playing a role on the national scene. Portraying a variety of characters in a diversity of situations, the novelists often told Americans something about themselves and others. In the novel, In Tragic Life, published in 1932, Vardis Fisher told the reader about the effects of high school on a rural adolescent. Vridar Hunter, a gifted and sensitive boy from a farm environment, enrolled in the senior high school in a western town. Tutored in nature, he looked upon the

\[2\] Vardis Fisher, In Tragic Life (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1932).
high school with reverence and upon educators with awe.

In educators . . . it seemed to him, there could be no meanness, no dark guilt of the kind that tortured him, no exploitation of the defenseless or weak. Education, he had assured himself, was noble and good.

He was at a loss, therefore, to explain what he saw in his teachers. One of them seemed to be incurably dishonest. One of them stared at the legs of girls until, becoming self-conscious, he blushed and stuttered and turned away. And another seemed to like only the vaguely erotic poetry in the textbook.3

The principal, John Hannibal Short, taught Latin but did very little teaching since he spent much of his time becoming entrenched in the community. Short, an atheist, had bitter enemies in the community, but he was liked because of his manners, poise, and tact. "A teacher's position, he said again and again, was the most insecure of all positions in life. 'After slaving for years, and acting as wisely as he can, a teacher is suddenly kicked out. . . .'"4 Even though Short had devoted the best of his life to the town, he was eventually dismissed.

While John Short was mainly interested in becoming entrenched in the town, Franz LeBon, the algebra teacher, seemed interested only in the girls in his class.

He stared at them with cadaverous hunger until they blushed and giggled; whereupon he would redden, cough a little in one palm, and say ah and um. He embarrassed Vridar to the point of suffocation. It was not what the man did or said: it was a part of him, rising visibly against his clothes. . . .5

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3Ibid., p. 397.  
4Ibid., p. 398.  
5Ibid.
Similarly, Sylvanus Stanley Mope, the teacher of literature, "dwelt at great length on the more scandalous verse, tonguing it over and over, tasting its faint scarlet." 6 A year later Le Bon died, and two years later Mope was dismissed. Mope was replaced "a tall pious fellow, married and a churchman, who made love, under cover of darkness, to grammar grade teachers close by." 7 Although Le Bon and Mope were enthralled by the sexual and the erotic, Jonathan Bowl, a teacher of logic, blushed and lost his voice at any reference remotely related to sex.

Sex obviously dominated the thoughts of three of Vridar's teachers. Only George Turner, the science teacher, showed interest in Vridar and nourished him intellectually. "He swept his classroom with tides of enthusiasm or tempests of wrath. A few students hated him, a few loved him, but all of them respected him." 8 After Turner's fourth year of teaching, he was dismissed because "he was an agnostic, with a prodigious zest for truth, and because his frankness was headstrong and lusty. . . ." 9 As long as a high school teacher outwardly conformed to what the community expected, his position was secure. If he dared to be different, he was dismissed.

In 1934, Dr. Walter H. Gaumnitz, a specialist in

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6 Ibid., p. 399.  
7 Ibid., p. 401.  
8 Ibid.  
9 Ibid.
rural school problems in the United States Office of Education, noted the difficulties of bringing change to a rural community. No doubt rural communities disliked change in their educational practices as much as they disliked nonconforming teachers. "Rural people," wrote Dr. Gaumnitz,

tend to be conservative not only by nature but they have so little opportunity to see and learn, and they are so close to their local school situation, that they frequently insist that practices obtaining in these schools in the past be not changed. Departures from the traditional are apt to arouse opposition.\(^1\)

Rural communities not only regulated the educational practices in the high school but they also regulated the teachers' personal lives. In discussing the public attitude toward the American teacher, Willard S. Elsbree wrote:

> While the size of community does not necessarily alter the attitude of the public toward questions of morality, teachers in large cities undoubtedly feel fewer restraints with respect to their own conduct than those in smaller communities. The personal life of the city teacher is more certainly detached from her school life than is that of teachers in villages and rural towns. It does not necessarily follow, however, that immorality among teachers is more prevalent in large cities than in small communities.\(^1\)

In Fisher's novel, *In Tragic Life*, the image of the high school teacher with the exception of George Turner was generally negative. Warped by community pressure to...

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\(^{11}\)Elsbree, p. 537.
conform to the norms, the high school teacher sought circuitous outlets to express some of his repressed feelings. Fisher clearly showed the influence of the community in shaping and, in a sense, distorting the lives of the high school teachers.

While insecurity and repression marked the life of the small town high school teacher in In Tragic Life, Edgar Calmer's novel, Beyond the Street, published in 1934, portrayed the frustrated lives of high school teachers in a large city. The novelist sketched the lives of ten teachers in a large high school in New York City. Starrett High School with a faculty of more than one hundred teachers stood among a factory, a maternity hospital, a gas tank, a branch of the city morgue, and rows of tenement houses. Inside the building, the corridors were long, the walls gray, and the classrooms dim. Although the nearly three thousand boys in the high school represented many ethnic groups, most of the boys were from Jewish parents who had emigrated to America from Russia. Against this background and within shifting scenes, the private lives of the high school teachers unfolded during a school year of three semesters and two holidays.

In Beyond the Street, physical suffering, unrequited love, and frustration were central in the lives of

these high school teachers. Nils Lunden, a tall and strong-shouldered Latin teacher, knew his students only by their names on the roll-call. He worried about his affair with Miss Gerstman, another teacher at Starrett, because of what his mother would say if she found out that he was seeing a woman. His mother had told him that if he ever married, it would break her heart. Feeling that he owed his mother everything, Nils convinced himself that he felt nothing for Miss Gerstman and if it came to a choice, he would have to choose his mother.

Like Nils, Anna Gerstman was also worried: she fretted that Nils would not be decisive enough to marry her. However, Nils was decisive; he refused to marry her. Anna, who was "tall, serious, and a trifle ungainly," taught Spanish, but according to a Mexican boy, the way she spoke Spanish was not real Spanish. She did exude love to the students "if they were gentle and sweet."

Teachers at Starrett High not only fell in love with other teachers but also with students. In a triangular affair, Miss Cassall, a history teacher, loved Mr. Quent, an English teacher, who loved John West, a student who in turn loved Miss Cassall. Stewart Cassall, a Southern girl who was popularly regarded as the prettiest woman on the faculty, yearned to know Mr. Quent beyond the professional activities of the school, but she found him reserved and distant. Even while she was teaching a class,
Mr. Quent came into her thoughts and "she remembered that three floors above her Lloyd Quent was teaching to a room full of boys." Quent's thoughts, however, were more often on the room full of boys. For instance, to quiet the movement of a boy eager to recite, Mr. Quent would put his hand on the boy's head. The narrator made the point that Quent always found the head "an agreeable sensation."

Nevertheless students considered Quent one of the best teachers at Starrett because his classes generally ended too soon while other classes dragged on too long.

Students were not the only ones looking forward to the end of a class period; teachers had the same thought. While Miss Cassall thought about seeing Lloyd Quent at the end of the period and while Lloyd Quent wondered if John West, the school's star athlete, would come to his room after class, Franny Treylor, a middle-aged English teacher, put into action her romantic thoughts of Mr. Norsworthy by descending upon him after classes with the full strength of her resolve to know him better. Believing that "anything was possible if one carried through a conviction," Miss Treylor pursued Mr. Norsworthy so obviously and persistently that even the students guffawed and snickered behind her back. A graduate of Smith College and a devotee of literature, Franny Treylor pursued ideas with the same

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13 Ibid., p. 13. 14 Ibid., p. 100.
planned deliberation that she pursued Mr. Norsworthy. For example, she set a reading schedule for herself and always felt foolish if she sat inactively when there was a book that had to be read. Loneliness, however, was a yearning that she could not cope with intellectually.

Douglas Norsworthy, on the other hand, was grateful for his solitude and was pleased to be away from people. Dignified yet somehow strange among the teachers at Starrett, he wanted to return to England and the university there, but circumstances had prevented him. For three years he had taught at Starrett and like Miss Sturges in Downfall, he felt compelled to set straight a student caught cheating on a test. Just as Miss Sturges felt that the habit of cheating and lying had to be broken in a student so did Mr. Norsworthy feel the same obligation. "The test was not important," he told the cheating student. "It's not even important if you fail this term of work if you tried honestly to pass.... What is important is that you have been cheating and lying about it." ¹⁵ Unlike Miss Sturges who cared about her students, Mr. Norsworthy thought the boy was no good like most of the boys at Starrett. He resented the whole idea of school and even his being there. Looking at a group of boys, he "thought their lives were strange to him, he thought he had begun to hate

¹⁵Ibid., p. 97.
it [Starrett High] now, it was—a dirty place, morbid, and
with this Treylor woman making it more and more—."  

Although Mr. Norsworthy thought that the boys at
Starrett High were "no good," Arthur Hurd, the general
science teacher, actually hated the boys he taught. But
there was not a boy in Mr. Hurd's class who did not hate
him also. Apparently Hurd's hateful attitude and sadistic
behavior toward the boys were tolerated because of the
notion that discipline had to be kept up. "Hurd," another
teacher said, "behaved—well like a fool. There was
nothing to do about it, though. After all there's, well,
a discipline of that kind to be kept up. . . ."  

Mr. Hurd felt that he, a mature and intelligent
man, was wasting his time "teaching a bunch of little
shysters the Phases of the Moon." Blaming poverty for
the way his life turned out, Hurd saw himself and the other
teachers at Starrett as "nobodies" who ground out their
days on a treadmill. Hardened, helpless, and hateful,
Arthur Hurd suffered a nervous breakdown and committed
suicide by jumping out a classroom window.

In contrast, Hurd's colleague, Irving Chemwitz
"always seemed like [sic] he was having a good time teach-
ing. . . ." He suffered with an excruciating pain in his

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16 Ibid., p. 162.
17 Ibid., p. 72.
18 Ibid., p. 102.
19 Ibid., p. 21.
lame leg: a pain sometimes "so intense that it seemed almost as if he could no longer bear it."\textsuperscript{20} One student observed, however, that Chemwitz's face had a passionate quality that could not be attributed to the pain of his lameness. Students liked Mr. Chemwitz not only for his personal qualities of being sympathetic and understanding but also for his ability in making the History of Art an interesting subject.

In the History of Music, Henrik Koppel had the reputation of never failing anyone. He was perpetually in good humor, considered somewhat of a saint, and sometimes regarded as a crazy old guy. He taught music and believed that the really great music ended with Mozart and Haydn, for all music after them was romantic and no longer divine. Like Mr. Chemwitz, Henrik Koppel enjoyed being with boys and seeing them learn something. Although Mr. Koppel thought Starrett was too big and too crowded and not ideal, he thought the teachers were doing a fine job with most of the boys. He felt that the boys' parents were proud of their sons' achievements. "Their mothers and fathers are proud of them," he told Mr. Hurd. "These boys most of them are having the chance that their parents never had. Some of them, many of them go to college afterward..."\textsuperscript{21}

Despite his praise of the faculty and students, Mr. Koppel

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., p. 23. \textsuperscript{21}Ibid., p. 102.
revealed to Gerda, his housekeeper, that "in all of that big school of thousands of boys only perhaps three in ten speak good English. The English spoken by the teachers themselves is a very poor average." For this, Mr. Koppel found no excuse.

Although Mr. Koppel gave teachers no quarter for their average verbal ability, he showed much understanding when Miss Farge, a French teacher, came to him with a personal problem. Isabel Farge, who shared an apartment with her suspicious and possessive sister, was so starved for love that she even became flustered when she conjugated the French verb aimer: to love. Stricken with anxiety by the thought that she was almost thirty years old, Miss Farge sought love from handsome Donal Keefe, "one of the Brilliant Boys of the school." But Donal saw their relationship like scenes in a play or in one of his stories and felt that there was only one way it could possibly end; that is, he would "go all the way with her." When Isabel did not go through with Donal's designs for her, he totally rejected her and ignored her whenever they met each other.

In New York City, the newspapers did not ignore the mental state of the City's high school teachers. Although the newspapers published, in 1934, a story stating that 1,500 teachers in the New York City school system were

22 Ibid., p. 83.
mentally unfit, Dr. Emil Altman, the Retired Chief Medical
Examiner of the City's school system, reported, in 1941,
that the newspapers' 1934 estimates were too conservative.
He believed that the number of teachers in need of psy-
chiatric treatment was closer to 4,500. After citing the
obstacles that made it difficult to remove a mentally un-
fit teacher, he wrote:

Yet in my office today, from cases I handled per-
sonally, are the records of 1,300 mentally ill teachers,
still in the schools though reported years ago. Close
to 500 others have retired, either voluntarily or by
request, in the past two years. Despite this mass of
evidence, the Joint Committee of Teachers' Organizations
fanatically insists that the problem of unstable teachers
has been exaggerated.23

In Calmer's novel, the teachers were also reduced
to cases. Appearing as cases rather than an individuals,
the high school teachers in Beyond the Street reflected a
generally negative image. A reviewer in the Saturday Re-
view of Literature thought that Calmer had failed "to bring
his people to life."24 Still, the Boston Transcript
said, "No one but a teacher could have written the book,
but one does not have to be a teacher to find profit in
reading."25

In Ruth Suckow's novel, The Folks, which was pub-

23 Emil Altman, "Our Mentally Unbalanced Teachers,"
Education Digest 6 (April 1941): 17.

24 Saturday Review of Literature, 28 April 1934,
p. 668.

25 Boston Transcript, 11 April 1934, p. 2.
lished in the same year as *Beyond the Street*, the superintendent of schools in Salisbury, Wisconsin, Carl Ferguson, morally supported two female high school teachers who had been reported for smoking cigarettes in a hotel in another town.  

"Smoking has until recently been considered a cardinal sin for teachers," wrote Willard Elsbree in 1939, "and in many sections of the country they [teachers] must still confine their use of tobacco to their own private homes or dormitories."  

In *The Folks*, Mrs. Bondy, one of the town's concerned ladies, demanded that the incident involving the two female teachers be brought before a public meeting. Miss Chisholm, who was a Latin grammar teacher, an aging spinster, and one of Mrs. Bondy's supporters, thought that the two girls had used their femininity to persuade the Superintendent to take their side. In Miss Chisholm's opinion, "those two girls had got around Mr. Ferguson with their wiles, that it was just because they were pretty young fools that he had taken their part."  

Carl Ferguson, pleading with the School Board that smoking was even permissible in the best schools, maintained that the two girls were normally proper in their conduct in addition to being good teachers. Even though

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27 Elsbree, p. 536.  

28 Suckow, p. 150.
Carl had saved them from being dismissed, they would not return to Salisbury High the following year. Even for Carl, compromises had to be made; he had to give in to certain pressures for the good of the school. In *The Folks*, public sentiment from various organizations backed the Superintendent and overwhelmed Mrs. Bondy and her supporters. Had Carl not received this support, the School Board would have ousted him with dispatch.

Carl Ferguson took pride in being the suave, cheerful, and authoritative head of the whole school system. He enjoyed the youth and femininity of the female teachers who were not long out of college, who came from "good homes," who "spent the greater part of their salaries upon their clothes." Still he always felt compassion for the aging spinsters like Miss Chisholm who was burdensome to the other teachers because she believed that she had some authority over them when she had none. Teaching Latin grammar for thirty-five years, Miss Chisholm remained steadfast in her position, but her position had become "more precarious instead of more assured year by year."

As a minor character in *The Folks*, Miss Chisholm presented a negatively stereotyped image of the high school teacher. Although she had given thirty-five years of her life to teaching, her reward was a growing sense of in-

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29 Ibid., pp. 149-50. 30 Ibid., p. 150.
security. Discussing the financial problems of the superannuated teacher like Miss Chisholm, William Elsbree wrote:

It was argued by the proponents of teachers' pensions that the salary of teachers was relatively small and that it was unfair for the public to exploit a professional group throughout the best days of their life and then leave them unprotected and without resources during the last few years of their earthly journey. . . . It still has to be accepted on faith, although it is argued, and with considerable force, that the removal of financial worries which a pension system at least partially insures makes for better teaching, and that the retirement of teachers before the enfeeblement of old age has crippled their efficiency is beneficial to society generally. 31

Although the teacher was portrayed as a minor character in such novels as The Folks, only two novels up to 1937 had dealt with the public high school system as the main background of an American novel. High school teachers had been portrayed as main characters in Treadmill and Beyond the Street. In 1937, Playsted Wood's novel, The Presence of Everett Marsh, added to the list of books portraying the lives of high school teachers in a high school setting. 32 The scene for Wood's novel was set in the Big School, the oldest school in one of Wisconsin's urban educational systems. Attended by some fifteen hundred boys and understaffed by a faculty of fifty-two men, Big School would be considered a comprehensive high school. While some boys prepared for college and tech-

31 Elsbree, pp. 468-69.

nical schools, others prepared for work in offices, stores, factories, and gasoline stations. Some boys came from families that were well-to-do, and others came from the slums. The character who dominated the Big School and who personified the ideal educator was Everett Marsh.

It was in Everett Dwight Marsh, the principal, that unity lay. Confusion resolved in him. Order, strength and purpose emanated from him. He was authority and control. He was the Big School and every boy and man there knew it. . . . Everett Marsh recognized no half truths, and no shades. Years of dealing with boys and their parents had taught him that. What he disliked he hated. Honesty he understood. Wisdom and tenderness he had, but of these he could make no parade, for reserve and aloofness were deep in the man.33

Marsh received loyalty from both the Big School's powerful alumni and his teachers. City politicians threatened Marsh's position twice, but they had to retreat quickly before an alumni group loyal to Marsh. Marsh not only received the support of the alumni, but he also gained the loyalty of most of the faculty. When Theodore Bell, the superintendent of schools, announced to the teachers that the Board of Education was unable to pay full salaries because of unexpected expenses, Marsh became enraged and came to the defense of the teachers. Marsh knew that the city was still eight months in arrears on teachers' salaries which had been unpaid three years earlier. Although the Board and the city finance committee had agreed to restore the lost salaries, they made up the deficit by cutting all

salaries 20 per cent. Another outrageous action of the Board came when Theodore Bell announced,

The Board and I have decided to ask the teachers of the city—who I am sure will respond with all the nobility traditionally associated with our profession—to work through the last two school months without stipend.34

Unorganized teachers were undoubtedly forced to submit to these unfair and degrading conditions. Many teachers still felt that genteel poverty was better than the unionism associated with the working classes. Many teachers still believed that as professional men and women they were "hardly to be compared with the wage-earning classes. . . ."35 Although John Medford, the fifty-three year old print shop instructor roared his view of "no money, no work," the teachers accepted the salary cuts as an inconvenient loss and justified it by believing that it was "more important to have their jobs in September than indulge in a fuss. . . ."36 To add to the teachers' insecurity, the Board issued no contracts for the following year and thus violated a long established custom. Even though the teachers' salaries were scaled down, money was spent on new buildings. "New buildings," one teacher cynically commented, "impress visitors and the taxpayers think they're getting something for their money."37

34 Ibid., p. 101.  
36 Ibid., p. 107.  
37 Ibid., p. 167.
Budget-cutting in the 1930's was financially devastating to the teacher. In The Shaping of the American High School, Edward Krug wrote:

The most obvious victims awaiting the budget slashers, however, were not programs but human beings, the teachers and other members of professional staffs. Even when subjects and programs were the ostensible targets, these were the real victims. Besides getting rid of teachers, money could be saved through salary cuts and even in some instances, although not by intent, through not paying teachers at all. Teacher welfare, a precarious matter even in the golden days of prosperity, became in the period of depression a domain of disaster.38

While budget-cutting financially hurt the teachers of the Big School, the sudden death of Everett Marsh ended the presence of a vital and unifying force that made the Big School an outstanding institution. When Everett Marsh died, Franklin Moore, the superintendent of schools from a small city in Illinois, replaced him. Understanding the peculiar quality of the school, Moore carried on the best traditions of the Big School and made some innovations. Although the school operation was smoother, a cold impersonalness wedged itself into the life of the Big School.

When Franklin Moore accepted a principalship in another city at a higher salary, he was replaced by Dr. F. Wilbert Swingle. Dr. Swingle, an assistant principal in a junior high school, "made a special study of Education" and then concluded that students needed "more

38Krug, 2:215.
than mere instruction in subject matter." Under Swingle's administration, teachers and students were to solve problems together. While teachers and students were solving problems together at the Big School, Dr. Swingle followed the advice in Chapter II of *High School Administration* by Heimenburger who said: "One of the first moves of the efficient school executive on taking a new position, should be the proper delegating to subordinates of all minor tasks so that the executive's mind may be left free to cope with major problems." Dr. Swingle needed to be free to lunch downtown with various civic clubs or to visit at the administration building. Because he was always too busy to handle school problems, discipline at the Big School declined.

Although Dr. Swingle could not be concerned with "petty disciplinary matters," he wanted the teachers to change their methods of instruction. He viewed the methods of teaching at the Big School as a liability to students who needed to be freed of traditional thinking. Like Dr. Swingle, Richard LaPiere, a non-fictional professor at Stanford, believed that students should be liberated from traditional thinking. In August of 1933, LaPiere asked an audience of principals if they were "liberating" their students "from the principles and prejudices of the Middle

Ages that they [the students] might experiment, however unsuccessfully, with the warp of our culture." He answered his own question by saying that the administrators had not liberated the thinking of their students.

In *The Presence of Everett Marsh*, the best of traditional education was personified and idealized in the principal, Everett Marsh. The novel was told from the teacher's point of view and presented a positively stereotyped image of the high school teacher. "Playsted Wood," wrote the *Saturday Review of Literature*,

> takes a crack at political control of schools, and another at the charts, questionnaires, and white rats of the educational experts, but the distinctive thing he has done is to emphasize a curious truth with which all teachers are familiar—the personality of a school, whether public or private.

The personality of the Big School was shaped by the personality of Everett Marsh.

**Conclusion: 1930-1939**

During the Thirties, four novels portrayed the image of the high school teacher, but only *The Presence of Everett Marsh* depicted a positive image of the teacher. While the high school teacher was a main character in *The Presence of Everett Marsh* and *Beyond the Street*, the image


41 *Saturday Review of Literature*, 4 September 1937, p. 19.
reflected in Beyond the Street was generally negative. In The Folks and In Tragic Life, the high school teacher was a minor character who was negatively portrayed.

In spite of the negative portrayals, the novelists saw the demands of the community as a significant factor in warping the lives of high school teachers. Thwarted desires and sexual frustration haunted teachers who could not conform to the role that the community assigned to them. Low salaries and community pressure to conform were major problems facing the fictional teachers during the 1930's. But the writers of fiction were not creating their novels in a vacuum; non-fictional sources were also providing testimony that lent credence to the problems shown by the novelists.
CHAPTER V

THE FICTIONAL PICTURE IN THE DECADE OF

WORLD WAR II: 1940-1949

The Great Depression still lingered in the United States as the decade of the Forties began. The nation was at peace but events abroad signaled the coming of a global conflict. On December 7, 1941, Japan launched a surprise attack on American soil and four days later Germany also declared war on the United States. The United States had entered World War II and Americans united almost immediately to protect the nation and to defeat the totalitarian enemy.

Serious problems plagued the public schools during World War II and the years immediately following the war. Faced with such problems as increased enrollments, teacher shortages, an insufficient number of classrooms, and not enough money, the schools struggled to maintain some reasonable standards. The schools had to compete for tax dollars with other purposes for collected revenue such as streets, highways, and armaments; the schools often lost.

In 1940, the year before the United States entered World War II, the Dial Press had awarded to Sophia
Engstrønd its prize for her novel, *Miss Munday*.\(^1\) Written by a teacher, this story portrayed the life of Helen Munday who after five years of being a submissive high school teacher in River Port, Wisconsin found the courage to struggle against the bigoted powers dominating the school and the private lives of the teachers. Her courage grew from her love for Adam LaFond, an independent and uneducated fisherman, who disregarded the social codes of the community. For five years Helen had been an exemplary English teacher in the high school and a model teacher in her private life, but at thirty-one she wanted something beyond her own insulated and repressed existence; she wanted a life more varied and deeper. From Helen's point of view, the author portrayed the deleterious effects on teachers who had to live by community standards that set them apart from the rest of the community.

In the mid-sized town of River Port, the teachers had to follow a strict morality that the rest of the community did not necessarily follow. Teachers, for instance, were not asked to join the parents in their homes for a party. The respectable parents, according to Helen, had their reasons for not wanting teachers at their parties: the parents did not want teachers sitting around and watching the amount of liquor consumed nor did they want teachers

imitating their behavior. What Helen most deplored was the fact that "into all the River Port homes her ideas, her brain-blood had gone, nourishing their ideas, their brains . . . yet she was not drawn into their family lives."² While the female teachers were shut out of the social life of the respectable people on the east side of the river, they could not associate with the factory workers and the fishermen of the west side. Helen argued that "it would be infinitely better if teachers could be themselves, if their normal desires did not arouse moral indignation."³ She also felt that students would neither respect nor emulate the hypocritical behavior of teachers who pretended to be paragons of virtue.

A female teacher's virtue in River Port had to be retained by abstinence or by falsehood, for she was not allowed to marry and to keep her teaching position. This unfairness was compounded by the fact that a man who married was given a raise of two hundred dollars a year. "It's not right," argued Francine Walzer, a science teacher who had secretly married, "that after spending years to become a teacher I won't be allowed to teach just because I married. . . . Society would be richer if I were allowed to be both wife and teacher."⁴ Although the members of the

²Ibid., p. 16. ³Ibid., p. 72. ⁴Ibid., pp. 183-84.
school board forbade female teachers from marrying, Adam LaFond, the fisherman, disliked the restriction because there were "too many half-crazy gals in the teaching business" and what made them half-crazy, he felt, was that they were not doing what other people were doing.

Marriage for a woman teacher was one of the most frequent grounds for her dismissal. Writing in the *Review of Educational Research*, Henry L. Smith stated that 87 percent of the nation's cities excluded married women from teaching except under special conditions, and that a woman would lose her position in 66 percent of the cities if she married. In 1941, Harry M. Lafferty pointed out in *Educational Administration and Supervision* that women teachers were forbidden the normal function of life in marriage.

"The attitude of boards of education toward married women teachers," wrote Willard Elsbree in 1939,

has been increasinlgy antagonistic since the depression of 1929. The prejudice against them is so deep-seated that facts demonstrating equal efficiency with single women teachers have been totally ignored, and the merit principle lost sight of completely in an effort to divide the salary budget according to the economic needs of the applicant.

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7 Elsbree, p. 538.
Other imposed restrictions on teachers reflected a community's attitude toward teachers. In Ohio, for example, a County Board forbade teachers to "go with" other teachers. A Mississippi contract stated that socializing and frolicking on school nights was a sufficient cause for dismissal. In Alabama, a school board forbade teachers to "have company or go automobile riding" on school nights. Thus, teachers were cast in the role of "example status" by these standards. In Education and the Teacher, B. J. Chandler wrote:

> Double standards prevailed in many places to insure that teachers would abide by patterns of conduct that would be better examples for young people to follow than those exemplified by many parents and citizens generally.

Although the "example status" of teachers may have been thrust upon them, Helen in Miss Munday justified it on the grounds that a teacher has to be that way to keep discipline over hundreds of students daily and to force them to accept lessons. She felt that the fault lay not so much with the teachers as with the school system. Teachers would be able to act differently if the system allowed for more creativity and less regimentation. Helen wanted the public schools to be like the Progressive schools with their small classes, individual tutoring, and

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9 Ibid., p. 335.
free expression. Moreover, she wanted a freer system because incompetent teachers could be weeded out and better teachers could be selected on the basis of general intelligence and personality, instead of irrelevant factors like grades, nationality, and religion.

Like Friedrich Froebel, the nineteenth century educational philosopher, Helen viewed the role of the teachers like that of the gardener. She worked patiently with rows of students "as a gardener cultivates rows of plants." The school for Helen was like a field where growth took place and where each month definite stages of progress could be observed. Although she could not correlate her subject with the subject matter taught by other teachers, she hoped that eventually the fragmented education the students received would be replaced by one more integrated.

Even though teaching expressed something deep within Helen, she could not live solely on dedication. Helen's monthly check--one hundred fifty-seven dollars and fifty cents--was a guaranteed income, but the teachers in Port River had not received any salary increases for several years because the school was still being paid off. Still the community expected the teachers to contribute generously to the school and to charitable organizations. Helen's friend, Martha, commented that in one week she had "already given a dollar to the Red Cross, pledged five dollars to the community chest, and put out six dollars for
Moreover, one new teacher maintained that there was "no sucker like a new teacher for donations to everything from Christmas seals to the new fire truck." Male teachers were not allowed to earn additional money if the community disapproved. For instance, Martin Sudler, the proprietor of a diner, asked Miss Munday to tutor his unmarried brother who wanted to prepare for a civil service examination. Like many teachers in need of extra money to keep parents back home alive, Miss Munday could have used the extra money from tutoring to send to her struggling parents in South Dakota. But Mr. Larkey, the principal, thought that "some people would see it in the worst possible way" and refused to grant Miss Munday permission to tutor Sudler's brother.

Financial hardship existed at the time not only for teachers but also for factory workers and their children. For several years the factory workers in River Port had been employed irregularly and therefore lacked money to buy their children some of the necessities. One student, for example, had to come to school without shoes inside his boots because of the family's poorness. Some people thought that Mr. Johnson, the millionaire owner of Johnson's Metal Works and the president of the School Board, could have provided some financial relief by keeping

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10 Engstrand, p. 34. 11 Ibid., p. 107.
the men on the job. But the school janitor thought that "Old Man Johnson and his kind don't cut their own profits when times are bad. They just let men go."¹² Like a benevolent despot, Johnson provided his factory workers with Johnson's Community Center and ruled River Port with prejudice and intolerance.

Mr. Johnson controlled the Board of Education even though he had only one vote. While Johnson was president of the school board, his wife served as president of the Parent-Teachers Association. They thought that the people should have only manual training and fought against the new school with its liberal arts curriculum. Johnson also opposed having Jews on the faculty. But Helen Munday crusaded to have Mabel Simon, a highly qualified Jewish girl and Helen's former student, replace Francine Walzer, the science teacher who resigned when Mrs. Larky, the principal's wife and self-appointed watch-dog of the teachers' conduct, disclosed Francine's marriage at a P.T.A. meeting.

From year to year teachers had to be fearful of not being offered another contract for the following year. Because teachers needed their jobs, they could not afford a scandal or utter an opinion disapproved by the governing bodies of the school. Therefore, female teachers had to content themselves with dancing together, going to the

¹²Ibid., p. 174.
movies together, and finding their enjoyment together. They were socially marooned and unable to join the main current of living; they were anchored by a school board that did not want them becoming involved in life outside the classroom because "they might stir up too much mud."

One of the few places that teachers from Port River were able to stir up anything was at the state teachers' convention in Big Bay, a large city in Wisconsin. The convention itself provided little for the teachers, but it provided them with the opportunity to feel the freedom of a large city. At the convention, the teachers heard speeches about what they already knew: classes of forty-five were too large, burdens on teachers had increased, a teachers' union could work favorably in a school system. Helen knew that the thousands of words uttered at the convention would not "alter the state's educational set-up by a hair's difference."\textsuperscript{13}

As much as teachers were expected to attend the state teachers' convention, so they were expected to attend summer school. One teacher returning to summer school wondered why it was necessary for her to have to go to summer school when she would be teaching the same way the following year. She believed that summer school was a racket "invented by those who collect tuition."\textsuperscript{14} Helen,

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 201 \hfill \textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p. 249.
who needed only one more summer to obtain her master's degree, thought that "pedagogical snobbery" was the motive for the incessant drive to obtain advanced degrees. In fact, she objected to the way teachers obtained their summer school masters' degrees; that is, to the practice of passing term papers and previous examination questions from teacher to teacher summer after summer. She felt that each summer the factory-universities rolled out plodding teachers with degrees that were warranties for professional advancement.

Although Helen was not totally unconcerned with professional advancement, she was more concerned with the art of teaching. She gave Kurt LaFond, Adam's younger brother and the school's discipline problem, the opportunity to draw his themes instead of writing them, and he ceased to be a discipline problem. She gave instruction in diction and carriage to Rosemary Gauthier, a young girl with an inverted ego, and the girl eventually married a bank teller. She gave all her students her praise, criticism, and suggestions as she taught them how to express their ideas clearly in writing and speaking. She moved eagerly among her class of forty-five students, "answering questions and occasionally questioning, forcing them to think." 15 Although her classes could be rough and uncon-

15 Ibid., p. 41.
trollable at times, she gave them "thoughts to conquer instead of her."16

"As a novel," a review in Books said, "Miss Munday has many faults in development of character and plot, but in spite of that it tells a common story uncommonly well."17 Reviewing Miss Munday in the New York Times, Louise Field wrote:

The story is interesting, its characters flesh-and-blood persons. . . . The dialogue is a trifle sententious at times, and there are moments when the writing is strained, but the book impresses one as giving a truthful as well as a vivid picture of an important part of our American life.18

In the novel, the image of the high school teacher was both positively and negatively stereotyped. Repressed female teachers struggled and rebelled against the bondage that the community imposed on them. The male teachers, on the other hand, were not assertive; they were not considered "attractive as men, and not even interesting as people."19 One female teacher said that she would not marry a male teacher because "most of them are so placid, juiceless."20 Still, the dominant image in the novel was a positive stereotype.

In 1940, the same year The Dial Press published

16 Ibid., p. 160.
Sophia Engstrand's novel, *Miss Munday*, Carson McCullers was receiving reviewers' accolades for her novel, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*.\(^1\) The scene for McCullers' novel was a small town in the deep South before World War II. One of the main characters was Mick Kelly, a thirteen year old tomboy girl who is a freshman at Vocational High School. Mick liked high school, especially her courses in algebra, Spanish, and mechanical shop, but mechanical shop required her getting special permission for enrollment because of her being a girl.

But in the novel, the image of the high school teacher was negatively portrayed. Describing Mick's high school teachers, the narrator wrote:

> Her English teacher was Miss Minner. Everybody said Miss Minner had sold her brains to a famous doctor for ten thousand dollars, so that after she was dead he could cut them up and see why she was so smart. On written lessons she cracked such questions as "Name eight famous contemporaries of Doctor Johnson," and "Quote ten lines from "The Vicar of Wakefield,'" She called on people by the alphabet and kept her grade book open during the lessons. And even if she was brainy she was an old sourpuss. The Spanish teacher had traveled once in Europe. She said that in France the people carried home loaves of bread without having them wrapped up. They would stand talking on the streets and hit the bread on a lamp post. And there wasn't any water in France--only wine.\(^2\)

The United States was still at peace the year


\(^2\)Ibid., p. 88.
McCullers' novel was published. But the following year, in 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and the United States entered World War II. William Saroyan's novel, The Human Comedy, published in 1943, was the story of the Macauleys, a fatherless family who lived in the small California town of Ithaca during World War II. Homer Macauley, a fourteen year old student at Ithaca High School and the central character, secured a job as a messenger for the Postal Telegraph office by lying about his age. "This job," Homer told his mother, "is the greatest thing that ever happened to me, but it sure makes school seem silly." Homer's mother also viewed schools dimly and thought their only purpose was "to keep children off the streets...." Like Saroyan who dropped out of Fresno High School when he was fifteen because formal education held little interest for him, Homer Macauley found little that could hold his interest at Ithaca High.

Despite Homer's skeptical view about the value of school, he developed a positive personal relationship with Miss Hicks, the ancient-history teacher. Miss Hicks taught in a traditional way; she had students come to the

24 Ibid., p. 34.
25 Ibid.
front of the room, read aloud from the textbook, and then discuss the subject matter. A discussion based upon material in the textbook often gave the class comedians the opportunity to show off their cleverness. Although Miss Hicks's class seemed formal and the students unruly, she was portrayed sympathetically as she talked to Homer about what honesty and mutual respect mean in a democracy. "Each of you," Miss Hicks told Homer, "will begin to be truly human when, in spite of your natural dislike of one another, you still respect one another." 27

Miss Hicks had taught ancient history at Ithaca High School for thirty-five years. She had taught Oscar Ek, the principal, and Mr. Byfield, the boys' athletic coach, when they were students in the school. And through Miss Hicks, Homer learned that "teachers are human beings like everybody else . . ." 28 and he saw her practice her beliefs by demanding that Coach Byfield apologize to an Italian boy for an ethnic slur.

In Saroyan's delightfully unreal novel, the high school teacher was positively stereotyped. Reviewing The Human Comedy in the New York Times, Wallace Stegner wrote:

Mr. Saroyan is a complete romantic. His fancifulness, his ecstatic love and admiration for children and even half-wits, his enthusiasm, his delight, his wonder at everything and anything, his faith in the promptings of the heart over those of the head,

27 Saroyan, p. 57.  
28 Ibid., p. 56.
his conviction that good always drives out sickness and evil and that love conquers all, make him difficult to argue with. One can only disagree.  

Published in the same year as The Human Comedy, the novel Friday, Thank God! by Fern Rives had a time setting from one Friday to the next during the week the Nazis invaded Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg. While the war machines of World War II began moving in Europe, Allison Bourdet, a glamorous divorcee who taught English and French at East High School, struggled with her love for Jefferson Ward, the unhappily married principal of East High School.

Jefferson Ward's female admirers thought that he was "more like the head of a big business than like an ordinary principal." Like his admirers who thought of him as "the reasonable executive" and "the most untypical principal," Ward thought of himself as "not exactly the educator type." He attributed his success for five years at East High School to his ability as a business executive. Even Ash Fenton, Ward's rival for Allison's love, thought that it was "not a bad idea to get regular business executives to head schools. . . ."

Just as an ambitious business executive looks to

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31 Ibid., p. 76.

32 Ibid.
higher positions and more money so did Jefferson Ward feel that he was "not a man to stop for life in a five thousand a year job." Ward sought a political appointment through his school contacts with Sal Pacelli, "the big boss behind the bosses." Pacelli was the county supervisor who made or broke "everything from little girls to big bankers." He peddled influence and helped his friends, but he had some pet hates, Communism being one of them. Since the United States was not yet at war and the Russian Communists were not yet America's allies, the Communists were considered a cancerous growth that had to be cut out of democratic institutions.

Concerned about what kind of influence one of her students was under, Allison attended a meeting for "parlor pinks," a term applied to people sympathetic with Communist ideology. At the meeting, James Burke spoke to the group.

James Burke had taught history in the county Union High School and had been accused by the local defenders of the Constitution of teaching communism. Instead of allowing himself to be removed quietly he had insisted upon a trial, and when the local courts had pronounced him "unprofessional in his conduct and unworthy to be a leader of the young," he had carried his case to the state courts, called in members of the Civil Liberties Union, produced several students and teachers as witnesses and proved to the satisfaction of the higher courts that he was not teaching communism, but was merely providing an unusually free and unprejudiced atmosphere for vital class discussion of controversial issues.

\[33\] Ibid., p. 157.  
\[34\] Ibid., p. 19.  
\[35\] Ibid., p. 176.
Although James Burke had been publicly vindicated, Allison felt that the "parlor pinks" invited James Burke to speak at the meeting not because he was innocent but because they thought he was a clever Communist who managed to get himself reinstated. Allison believed that Burke had been invited to the meeting to give "if not a red, at least a pale pink talk."\textsuperscript{36} Burke disappointed his audience by exhorting young people to save the democratic world. Ironically a shooting incident brought the meeting and Allison's presence there to the front page of two local newspapers, one of which demanded that the Board of Education launch an investigation of "Red" tendencies among students and faculty at East High.

Concern about Communism in the schools was not an invention of the fiction writer. By 1933, major leaders in American education had begun to battle the Communist influence among teachers. Clarence Karier, an educational historian, stated that the Communists had gained control of the largest local of the American Federation of Teachers, New York's Local No. 5. Their success among the teachers, however, was minimal. By 1941, prominent American educators had counterattacked the Communists and wrested control of the teachers' union from them. "As political realists," wrote Karier, "the Communists had to admit that

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p. 177.
In spite of the fertile depression years, they were singularly unsuccessful with the schools."

In *Friday, Thank God!,* Allison was saved from further exposure in the newspapers by the influence of a family friend and Sal Pacelli. Jeff Ward watched his political opportunities improve again as the newspapers discontinued their stories about "Red" tendencies among students and faculty at East High. He had been concerned with his image as a competent administrator and his appointment as district supervisor.

While Jeff represented the efficient, aggressive business executive in education, his counterpart in the school was the idealistic but ineffectual Dr. Lowry, the vice-principal. Allison described Dr. Lowry as "a perfect cross between a Newfoundland dog and Mr. Chips" and she thought his face glowed with the fires of idealism and kindliness. Like Dr. Lowry, Mark Williams taught because he had the call, but both men were distinctly unlike the successful but opportunistic Jefferson Ward. Mr. Bellows, the big and cheerful but dense coach, also paled thin next to the bright and self-assured principal of East High.

Jefferson Ward, however, needed self-assurance to

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38 Rives, p. 137.
perform some unpleasant tasks, one of which was the selection of teachers to testify at the trial for the dismissal of Mrs. Purdy, a history teacher. One teacher described Mrs. Purdy's idea of heaven as "a well-upholstered wheelchair in a hotel lobby." Mrs. Purdy who could not maintain discipline in her class was charged with incompetence and was to have a dismissal trial. Allison whose classroom was next to Mrs. Purdy's and whose testimony was needed at the trial questioned the validity of the teacher tenure law when it protected inefficient teachers such as Mrs. Purdy. Another teacher toyed with the idea of taking her chances each year at being rehired so that the dismissing of incompetents would be easier. Amused by the ideas of the two younger teachers, Mrs. Calkins, a veteran teacher, explained the possible position of teachers in schools unprotected by the tenure laws:

Imagine a school where every single teacher begins to worry March first for fear she will be without a job next year. Just imagine what that does to the morale of a school! By the first of May half the faculty is in a state bordering on panic. Teaching becomes a secondary consideration; the attention of the faculty is focused on attempts to please the principal, to please the Board of Education and the P.T.A. Of course the very young teachers take it in their stride and the old war horses get hardened to it, but the rank and file get very close to nervous prostration.40

Mrs. Calkins believed that the responsibility of weeding out the incompetents lay both with training schools

39 Ibid., p. 246. 40 Ibid., p. 252.
and the school supervisors during the first five years of teaching. Jeff Ward also held the same view and expressed it to Allison:

She [Mrs. Purdy] should never have been allowed to teach in the first place. The university is to blame. She should have been weeded out the first year of training school . . . and even if she had been given a certificate she should have been ousted by the first principal who had the bad luck to hire her. 41

But a non-fictional writer did not treat the dismissal of a teacher as cavalierly as Jefferson Ward did. Writing in the Journal of Education in 1943, C. W. McNary, the assistant superintendent of schools in Erie, Pennsylvania, said:

Until we in supervisory capacity have exhausted every means and expended every effort to bring the work of the failing teacher up to acceptable standards, we are in no way justified in thinking of dismissal. 42

Like Mrs. Calkins and Jeff Ward, McNary believed that the school supervisors are responsible for effective teaching. Speaking critically of principals and supervisors, McNary wrote:

The reports of tenure cases appealed to the chief educational officer in this state abound with instances of faulty preparation of evidence, and by the same token, of unfairness to the teacher. In view of the fact that authorities on supervision all stress the importance of the teacher-supervisor conference as a means of improving instruction, it is astounding to

41 Ibid., p. 40.
find how frequently even well-trained principals and supervisors neglect it.\textsuperscript{43}

In \textit{Friday, Thank God!}, Mrs. Purdy never came to trial; she broke her hip when she fell down the stairs during a fire drill. Since the Board of Education did not want to bring a crippled teacher to trial for inefficiency, the problem remained unresolved.

Another unresolved problem among the teachers at East High School was the controversy of progressive education versus traditional education. Progressive education was a movement that saw the schools as an instrument to improve the life of the individual and the community. Mabel Ellis from the Main Counselor's office spoke to the teachers about progressive education. She exhorted the teachers to "be concerned with the \textit{whole} child, not merely the brains, but with brains, body, emotions, individual and social adjustment."\textsuperscript{44} Since Mrs. Ellis believed that every child needed counseling at some time in his development, she argued that every classroom had to become a guidance clinic, and most of the work of counseling had to be taken over by the classroom teacher. When a teacher challenged Mrs. Ellis about being soft on the three "R's," she answered:

\begin{quote}
I defy you to find me a passage in any really reputable Progressive leader advocating the abolition of the three "R's." Most of the difficulty has come, not
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{43}Ibid. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{44}Rives, p. 139.
from the original teaching, but from the careless interpreters of the Progressives. Because we would add to the curriculum creative expression, individual guidance, and freedom of action, you must not assume that we would throw out the development of the basic skills.45

The traditionalists at the meeting were not easily persuaded; they challenged Mabel's progressive views on all fronts—on order in the classroom, on methods of teaching, and on the basic goals of teaching.

In Rives's novel, the dominant image of the high school teacher was a positive stereotype: Allison Bourdet and Jefferson Ward represented this image. The New York Times said it was impossible to take the novel seriously "as a picture of what goes on in an average public high school. . . ."46

Rives's novel had been published during the war years. The war in Europe ended officially with the signing of the German surrender in May of 1945. World War II concluded four months later, on September 2, 1945, when the Japanese signed a formal surrender aboard the battleship Missouri. During and after the war, the public schools faced many problems. Paul Eldridge's novel, And Thou Shalt Teach Them, published in 1947, depicted some of the problems in education after World War II.47


The novel recorded Dean Dick Hoe's handling of people and situations in a New York City high school. Although the fragmented presentation of characters and events revealed much about the attitudes of high school teachers, most of the scores of teachers sketched in the novel were portrayed as cynical, corrupt, maladjusted, or prejudiced. George Cooper, for example, cynically defined education as the ability to unlearn; therefore, he argued that the less the teacher taught the less the student had to unlearn. Elmer Dwynn, the administrative assistant, allowed nothing to stand in the way of his ambition and desire for power. Josephine McCracken, Dean of Girls, scraped off the girls' rouge and lipstick with zealous enthusiasm, and Ronald B. Franklin Knickerbocker stood firm in his belief that Negroes should not be allowed to attend white schools. Contrary to these teachers was Hyman Goodman, a new teacher, who believed that teachers had a duty to society to teach the young to think clearly and to be citizens worthy of a democracy.

Like Hyman Goodman, Dean Dick Hoe took the broad philosophical view that an educated citizenry formed the foundation of democracy. Even when a boy stabbed Hoe in the shoulder because of a truant officer's report, the Dean took the broad view and listened with patience and understanding to the boy's problems. When the boy asked to be punished because of his guilt, the Dean said, "You've had
enough punishment. . . . We don't want revenge. We want to put you on the right track to become a good citizen."48

Good citizenship in the public view often meant that teachers should not seek higher salaries and better working conditions by means of a strike. The teachers at City High split into two groups: those calling themselves workers and those calling themselves professionals. The workers sought relief from their conditions by demanding a strike while the professionals shied away from any strong methods. Mr. Robinson, for example, opposed any strong methods that would destroy the dignity of the profession, for he had taught nearly forty years and "accepted genteel poverty and many petty tyrannies in exchange for what he thought he possessed--dignity of profession."49 But when the Governor signed a bill making a teacher's strike illegal, Mr. Robinson explained to Dick Hoe his changed point of view:

I was against strikes because I am proud of my profession. I believe in its dignity. But if we are not allowed to strike, then it's fear, not honor, which will restrain us. . . . I shall strike that I may be allowed not to strike--voluntarily.50

In 1947, teacher walkouts and threats of strikes occurred in many sections of the country. Although the American Federation of Teachers had had a no-strike policy

48 Ibid., p. 203.  
49 Ibid., p. 183.  
50 Ibid., p. 253.
since 1916, a teachers' strike in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1946 forced the AFT to re-examine its policy. It was becoming evident that as long as working and economic conditions remained intolerable, teachers would see the strike as a needed weapon.\textsuperscript{51}

In \textit{And Thou Shalt Teach Them}, Mr. Robinson was against strikes because he was concerned with the profession in all its dignity. But the senior class at City High had a different view of teaching. Honor students laughed at Dean Hoe's inducement of free weekends, several holidays, and a long vacation as reasons to prepare for the teaching profession; "they preferred a profession in which the work, and not the lack of it, would be the chief attraction. . . ."\textsuperscript{52} Honor students rejected the profession's job security which seemed to them "to be the reason why so many teachers lacked initiative, ambition, and courage."\textsuperscript{53} They looked askance at the statement that teaching was an opportunity to develop the minds and character of the young, for few teachers in their opinion trained the minds of students and inculcated character.

When Dean Hoe failed to persuade any honor students to prepare for teaching, he sought out boys from the middle third of the class to prepare for the profession--"a pro-


\textsuperscript{52} Eldridge, p. 136.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
fession which finds in the achievement of others its deepest pride." Among these students, he was also laughed at because they objected to earning less money than factory workers and to being at the mercy of the politicians. Although the Dean knew the pointlessness of seeking recruits from the bottom third of the boys, he spoke to them out of curiosity. Violently denouncing the profession, they preferred to dig ditches rather than to go into that "stinking profession."

Dr. McCracken, the Dean of Girls, found a similar attitude among the female seniors. While the upper third of the girls were interested in the many alternatives open to women other than teaching, the middle third "pointed to the quick deterioration of beauty and charm in this nerve-racking work, and the paucity of opportunities to meet marriageable men." An abundance of candidates existed, however, among the lowest third of the girls, but teaching requirements were still high enough so that only a few would qualify.

Athletics at City High was as important as the program was at Oakleyville High School in Lola Jean Simpson's novel, Treadmill. Just as Leslie Burleson had objected to a few athletes at Oakleyville High getting all the benefit from intensive physical training, so did Dean Hoe voice the

54 Ibid., p. 137.  
55 Ibid., p. 138.
same objection. Dean Hoe argued that neither football nor baseball afforded "to more than a handful of youngsters the opportunity of physical development and play, unless we call the atrocious yelling exercise for throat and lung and the arguments about results, play." Like Miss Burleson who wanted her school to spend money on new reference books for the library instead of on new football uniforms, Dean Hoe wanted his school to move in the direction of intellectual pursuits instead of athletics. "We must stop over-developing brawn," Dean Hoe said, "and hasten to develop brain." 57

Writing in School and Society in 1947, Nellie Thompson complained about expensive sports programs that crowded out other school activities. Also criticizing athletic programs for benefitting the few, Thompson wrote:

The pleas for intramural sports, modified athletic programs, less travel, higher drama standards, better musical productions, and guarded academic endeavors fall on deaf ears... A public-health crusade to include all pupils in active games—especially those who needed corrective attention the most—and to eliminate the American Spectator has been almost forgotten. 58

In And Thou Shalt Teach Them, the dominant image of the high school teacher was a negative stereotype. Underpaid and demoralized, the high school teacher in

56 Ibid., p. 171. 57 Ibid.

Eldridge's novel reflected the economic and social crisis that characterized much of education immediately after World War II. Nevertheless, Eldridge, a retired high school teacher of Romance languages in New York City, fell short of fully characterizing the high school teachers in his novel.

While Eldridge's novel had a large city setting, the next novel was set mainly in a small town. Virgil Scott's *The Hickory Stick*, published in 1948, was the story of Doug Harris, a high school teacher in the small town of Shenkton, Ohio. The novel depicted the pressures of community conformity on the teacher, the machinations of the town's school board members, and the darker aspects of educational practices. Although the novel was published in 1948, the story took place in the Thirties, a time when some newspaper reporters were writing that "prosperity was really just around the corner . . . only everybody knew it was a lie." Scott's dedication in the frontispiece key-noted the theme of the novel.

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60 Ibid. p. 5.
the first informal law for teachers: the Board expected a
teacher to spend his salary inside the town. Charley Felder
owned the town's department store and Sam Elvin owned the
Main Street grocery and both of them were members of the
School Board. George Gilchrist, the superintendent of
schools, told Doug that it would be a good idea to buy
furniture from Felder and groceries from Elvin even though
their prices were a little high. Advising Doug, Gilchrist
said:

... it's a good idea to get in debt when you start
teaching in a town. They always think twice about not
rehiring you if you owe them money... Run up a bill,
about four or five hundred dollars, one you can't pay
off in less than two years. A debt is as good as a
contract when you're a teacher.61

Doug also discovered that the town's forty-six teachers
got to Doc Heck, an inept doctor, rather than to Doctor
Becker, a competent physician, because Doc Heck was on the
School Board.

The second informal law Doug learned was that a
teacher had to know his place in the community. Because
the teachers' salary was paid by the community, the com-
munity considered the teachers public servants and ex-
pected certain standards of conduct that were not adhered
to by the rest of the community. To the junior and senior
high school faculty, George Gilchrist said:

In a town this size you know that you aren't suppose

61 Ibid., p. 139.
to be seen in public taverns downtown or in the state liquor store. You know that you shouldn't smoke on the street, or use profanity. You know that it's a good idea to stay out of local politics and spend your salary inside the town and not talk about religion or politics.62

While the teachers were forbidden certain kinds of behavior, they were expected to perform other kinds of public service. George Gilchrist advised his teachers to become known as town boosters, for they would then be regarded as good teachers without anybody ever looking in on their teaching.

Again to the faculty, he said:

In a town this size there's plenty of opportunity for boosting. For one thing, you ought to join a church, those of you who are new, and then go often enough to get known by the congregation. You'd be surprised how much a church membership can count if you ever get in trouble.63

Gilchrist also pointed out that there were other ways teachers could establish themselves in the town. They could volunteer to be assistants for the Boy Scout Troops which were sponsored by the Rotary and the Legion or for the Girl Scout Troop which was sponsored by the Baptist Church. He warned them to think twice before they refused to contribute to the Red Cross or Community Chest.

In The American Teacher, written in 1939, Willard Elsbree examined many of the same conditions that Virgil Scott depicted so vividly years later. Describing the public attitude in some communities, Elsbree wrote:

In a few school districts, the trustees even dictate where teachers shall board and how many weekends they are expected to spend in the community. Teachers are called upon to be extremely generous with their time outside of school hours in promoting civic affairs and satisfying the whims of parents. Church attendance, Sunday-school teaching, and Christian Endeavor activities are commonly expected of teachers, even though the responsibility for such work is not written down officially in the rules and regulations of the board. While teachers are expected to be civic-minded, they are not allowed to be active in political affairs.\(^6^4\)

In *The Hickory Stick*, George Gilchrist had revolutionized rural education by skillfully bucking school boards, but he had lost his influence over the years because of economic and political changes in the community. His kind of school was efficient, smoothly run, and quiet. George maintained that he had no quarrel with progressive education, but he felt that progressivism had "to be tempered to suit the conditions."\(^6^5\) He believed that the theories of progressive education would not work well at Shenkton High School because discipline was a major problem with the school's student body of four hundred fifty students. The teachers' job was to keep the majority of the high school's potential hoodlums quiet enough so that the serious and bright students could be taught something.

But eventually George Gilchrist was replaced by a progressive educator. The corrupt School Board maneuvered Gilchrist out of the job that he had held for seventeen years and replaced him with Carlton Rider, a Board member's

\(^{6^4}\) Elsbree, pp. 538-39.  \(^{6^5}\) Scott, p. 208.
brother-in-law who "kicked back" 20 per cent of his salary to the Board on the condition that he could run the school without interference. In contrast to Gilchrist's traditional approach, Carlton Rider planned to reorganize and revitalize the school by making it less authoritarian. Orienting the faculty to his progressive views, Rider explained:

The school you are accustomed to is traditional. You are subject-matter teachers in a departmentalized program. You are accustomed to an autocratic organization. The barriers you have been running into must be broken down.66

To give the students the opportunity to face real-life situations in a democratic society, Rider inaugurated student self-government. The student council handled all the discipline problems. In about seven weeks Shenkton High School came apart. "By November," the narrator said, "the students had discovered that getting away with anything short of murder was a breeze."67

Writing in *Progressive Education*, Edwin C. Morgenroth explained a progressive view of the relationship between teachers and students in secondary schools. In his article, Morgenroth wrote:

When teachers do not understand the peer culture they set up barriers against the normal aggressions of early adolescents. Teachers who identify the child as one who is resistant to their authority

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66 Ibid., p. 620.  
67 Ibid., p. 673.
begin to impose adult standards on the student with consequent damage to the personality of the growing organism. 68

In The Hickory Stick, Doug degenerated in personal integrity while the "growing organisms" in the high school degenerated in discipline. After betraying Superintendent Gilchrist, Doug turned away from the people who were unwilling to compromise and turned to his colleagues who were willing to crawl. He betrayed his wife, Nancy, and sought out Phyllis Ryan, a colleague and the daughter of a Board member. Doug's marriage broke up after his affair with Phyllis Ryan and he became even more dissolute, callous, and disillusioned. But slowly he recovered his integrity at the cost of his position in Shenkton High School.

In Scott's novel, much of the preparation of the high school teacher in the School of Education was shown to be unpalatable. "Schools of education," wrote Bradford Smith in the Saturday Review of Literature, "are going to have what my grandmother used to call a conniption fit over Virgil Scott's treatment of them." 69 Doug, having a Master's degree in English, took some courses in Education so that he could receive a high school teaching certificate. Of his courses in Education, Doug remembered the chairs in


69 Saturday Review of Literature, 23 October 1948, p. 28.
a circle in a classroom, the inane objective tests, and the educational jargon.

He remembered by a kind of mental osmosis the jargon they used, the words which nobody including their inventors could define but which studded the talk of students and teachers and fouled up all the pages of all the textbooks. . . . 70

Although the School of Education was indicted in the novel, other colleges of the university did not go unscathed. The feuding and the game-playing of the committee members during Doug's oral examination for the degree of Master of Arts portrayed scholars at their worst. Two of the members, for example, were known to work over a candidate like "healthy athletes working out on a cripple." 71 They had developed a technique that was "beautiful to watch" except if you were the candidate.

. . . the candidate had put some years of a life and a lot of sweat into graduate work and he was playing hard and for keeps, only he couldn't win. He couldn't win because these two had spent twenty years learning the details and the candidate had spent that many months and in twenty months you can't learn all the answers. 72

In The Hickory Stick, Doug Harris, the main character and the dominant image, was fully and positively drawn. Hardhitting and well-written, The Hickory Stick threw light on a very dark side of teaching in some small American communities. Virgil Scott, who had taught English

70 Scott, p. 96. 71 Ibid., p. 26. 72 Ibid.
at Franklin High School in Franklin, Ohio from 1937 to 1941, wrote perceptively of what was wrong in education.

The setting for the next novel, published in 1948, was New York City. In 1948, the concept and practice of "separate but equal" facilities for Negroes still had not been vigorously challenged in many parts of the United States. The schools in both the North and the South were segregated—the former by de facto segregation and the latter by de jure segregation. Irwin Stark's novel, The Invisible Island, was the story of Matthew Stratton, a young white man who took a teaching position in a segregated high school in Harlem during World War II. The story unfolded in alternate parts: scenes from the present followed by flashbacks that moved closer to the present.

Matthew Stratton had gone to high school in the East Bronx in New York City. His English teacher, Emily Wilkins, "represented for Matthew as well as for the others a world that was alien, fragile, and ineluctably refined." She was the only teacher who told him in high school that "he could really write, that he could be a writer." But his other teachers represented something else for him.

Mr. Wickham taught algebra with the enthusiasm of a corpse and kindliness of a Caligula. Miss Metzger

74 Ibid., p. 77.  
75 Ibid., p. 103.
taught biology with a rigid awareness of the salacious implications of pollination. Mr. Ayres taught English with the light touch of a Tamburlaine.\textsuperscript{76}

No doubt Matthew's high school teachers were not as callous and rigid as he had characterized some of them. After he had entered Metropolitan College, he had a changed view of his high school teachers.

He struggled to adjust himself to his classes, to make the cruel transition from the sympathetic men and women of high school to the aloof men who lectured and read endless notes from unapproachable rostrums.\textsuperscript{77}

After graduation from college, Matthew spent a year and a half as a teacher-in-training and as a substitute teacher in Buchanan High School in Brooklyn. Agnes Richardson, chairman of the English Department, helped Matthew whenever a problem arose and served as his model of a "great teacher." She informed teachers in advance of her classroom visits and emphasized the positive aspects of their teaching and lesson plans. For Agnes, the secret of teaching was to love genuinely as opposed to manufacturing love if it was not there.

Matthew, who was unable to remain at Buchanan because registration had fallen, accepted a teaching position at Grant High School in Long Island. After becoming bored with "polite schools," middle-class students, and safety, he applied for a position at Emerson High School in New York's Blackbelt. Feeling guilty because he was 4F and

\textsuperscript{76}Ibid., p. 79. \textsuperscript{77}Ibid., p. 94.
because his best friend had been killed in the war, Matthew tried to validate his own life by taking a difficult teaching position.

At Emerson High, Matthew's initiation into teaching in a "tough" school came with his first class. Johnny Boston, a hostile black boy, walked into class late, sat down, and began to drum on the desk. When the other boys picked up the rhythm and the sound swept the room, Matthew managed with effort to check his anger as he allowed himself to appear amused at the experience. The boys stopped one by one, and Matthew gained some of their confidence.

In an article, "White Teacher in Harlem," written in 1947, Eugene Maleska reported his observations after teaching seven years at a junior high school in Harlem. Although he did not think Harlem was heaven, he did not believe it was a blackboard jungle. Relating what he had learned about the Blackbelt, Maleska wrote:

Best of all in my teaching in Harlem I learned that the Negro boy will take a white man for what he is. If the boy senses that his teacher is competent and unbiased, he is more than willing to be friendly.  

In The Invisible Island, the narrator blamed a brutish system for brutalizing both the students and the teachers. Philip Johnson, a black assistant principal, ran Emerson High School heavy-handedly. He had learned to see

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the world as a strong man's world in which the weak perish. The white principal, Charlie Connors, had more than thirty years in the system and he wanted to be in a different school. He had been told to "go where you're sent or start living off your pension." While Martin Coates, the sensitive mathematics teacher and misplaced scholar, had to ice many of his hot ideals, O'Brien, the woodworking teacher, advocated putting "the fear of God in the bastards everyday" with a strong fist. Tom Mallory, a Negro detective from the Police Department, found power in knowing that nervous teachers depended upon him to collect homemade pistols and long-bladed knives. And to cover up what was really going on in class, teachers such as Matthew's predecessor, Hallman, faked their lesson plans because a teacher had to have them if Connors or the superintendent "popped in" for a visit.

Matthew considered most of his colleagues as "cultivated middlemen" who were "intelligent, reliable, tactful, and sometimes cultured" but who were not free because they transmitted "what was inscribed in the texts ordained by the society which hired them and depended on them to perpetuate itself." Referring condescendingly to Matthew's colleagues, the narrator said:

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79 Stark, p. 59.  
80 Ibid., p. 164.  
81 Ibid., p. 264.
Listening to the small talk in the faculty room, the bowling scores, the conventional pronouncements on politics, the heated discussions on yesterday's bridge hand, their concern over pensions and wages, Matthew saw that they could offer little in the way of light.\(^{82}\)

In *The Invisible Island*, Matthew Stratton, the main character and the dominant image, was positively stereotyped. The minor characters, however, were negatively portrayed in the novel. The teachers, like the students, endured a brutalizing system that provided little freedom and encouragement. Irwin Stark, a teacher in the New York City public school system, presented a vivid picture of a high school in Harlem. Of the novel, the *Saturday Review of Literature* said:

> It could not be as vivid as it is, or as sincere in its devotion to emotions that stir the man who dreams in the midst of confusion of a perfect society, if it were not autobiographical.\(^{83}\)

Another novel concerned with the high school teacher and published in 1948 was Burke Boyce's *Miss Mallett*.\(^{84}\) The novel traced the life of Emily Mallett, a teacher in a metropolitan New Jersey school system for thirty-five years. Emily had graduated *magna cum laude* from Wellesley in 1905. For twelve dollars and thirty-four cents a week she taught fourth grade at School Number Nine. Resenting the over-

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\(^{82}\)Ibid., p. 263.

\(^{83}\) *Saturday Review of Literature*, 31 July 1948, p. 11.

powering approach of some teachers and the absurd ineffectiveness of others, she became disgusted with everything at the school but taught vigorously and honestly for two years. After she had passed a qualifying examination for teaching in high school, she received a life certificate, an appointment to North High School, and a raise in salary to eight hundred dollars a year. Always an individualist, Miss Mallett had her own way of teaching. "It was born in sympathy, and nourished by pride in her work and the driving force of her own honesty."\(^8^5\) For Miss Mallett, teaching had become a craft; for her, it was a skill. Emily had the gift of a performer and played on the changing moods of her students like an actress captures and holds an uneasy audience in the theater. Although she was strict and had certain codes which could not be violated, she had the knack of having students drop their suspicion by awakening their minds.

One summer in Europe, Emily fell in love with Hal Woodward, a graduate of Columbia with a master's degree in education. When she met Hal, he was a high school teacher in the Mohawk Valley. Hal asked Emily to marry him and she accepted; but after they had exchanged their views on education, Emily decided that the marriage had to be postponed because they could not reconcile their opposing

\(^8^5\) Ibid., p. 42.
views of education. Hal could not see himself as "a high school drudge, a run-of-the-mill schoolmaster." "I've met that kind," he said. "Crabby eccentrics full of tricks and postures. They aren't teachers, they're actors. Circusmen in the wrong profession. . . ." For Hal, teaching was a steppingstone to administration, politics, and money. He said, "You can't get money out of teaching. Not plain teaching. The money's in education, administrative education, the business end, the organization." For Emily, real education was teaching children. "The best school you can build," Emily said, "is useless without true teaching. The teacher is the vital spark." While Emily thought that the teacher came first and then the administrator, Hal felt that a teacher could be hired any day of the week.

Describing his view of modern day education, Hal said:

Education is a mass question now. Look at the problems to it [sic]. Architecture, landscaping, sports, school bands, fire laws, modern laboratories, outside activities, budgets, janitors, textbooks, personnel, supplies--it's a whole new empire, and nobody knows what else is ahead. Least of all the public. But they know it has to be regulated, directed, and whipped into shape, and they'll pay the men who can do it.

Unlike Hal Woodward in Miss Mallett, John Wesley Best, a non-fictional educator, believed that "compared with

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86 Ibid., p. 62.
87 Ibid., p. 63.
88 Ibid.
89 Ibid., p. 64.
teachers, such things as buildings, textbooks and administrative organization are secondary in importance."90

Writing in the Journal of Experimental Education in 1948, Best examined some of the factors underlying the choice of teaching as a profession. Best's quotation from Ward G. Reeder's The Fundamentals of Public School Administration aptly stated where the emphasis in education should be placed. Reeder said:

It would be better for children to attend school in hovels, granted that the hovels were comfortable, safe and sanitary, there to be instructed by competent teachers, than to attend school in million dollar palaces, there to be under the tutelage of persons of inferior qualifications.91

Best noted in his study that the problem of recruiting qualified young men and women for the teaching profession had reached a critical stage in American Education. He found, however, that low salaries were a prominent factor that explained the lack of interest in teaching as a profession.

In Miss Mallett, Emily did not object to Hal's wanting to improve the schools, but she objected to his selfish motives. She told him, "You're not doing it for the school's sake. You're doing it for your own. For what


91 Ibid.
you can get out of it."\textsuperscript{92} Hal became a successful administrator on the state level, a prominent speaker at conventions, and a member of important committees shaping legislation for education. Years later Emily heard Hal speak at a convention. "He talked on improvements in the schools and what they meant to the teaching organization."\textsuperscript{93} Concluding his hour long speech, Hal spoke about what the teacher could expect:

As for the teacher, their salaries, their contracts—well, with patience and perseverance something could be accomplished in that line also. They must trust their leaders, who were working with and through the state capitols, and he was confident in the long run it would come.\textsuperscript{94}

Although Hal had honors, tangible accomplishments, and much influence, Emily had the children as her reward for years of effort. She thought that although Hal's motives had been selfish, his results were good. Hal's selfishness was similar to Miss Crittenden's goddess-like ego. Miss Crittenden, Emily's colleague in the English Department, encouraged crushes in selected students, elevated them to her self-loving plateau, basked in their clinging admiration, and disregarded the other students in class. Emily's emotional outlet was not spiritual snobbery like Miss Crittenden's nor selfishness like Hal's, but enthusiasm for making learning a living thing. With the

\textsuperscript{92} Boyce, p. 65.  
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., p. 235.  
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid.
boys from the tenements she played no favorites, picked no victims, and dealt an even-handed justice. With unusual students like Charles Bolton, she stimulated the possibilities for growth by bringing out a deeper sense of meaning in literature.

Emily taught by insight and not by theory. Curious about progressive teaching in relationship to her own way, she went to the public library and checked out a pile of pedagogical books. She was amazed by these books: "each was intolerant, with the fanatic intolerance of scholarship, of any opinions but its own."\textsuperscript{95} Trying to clarify them and pick the best from each, Emily found the task impossible. Applying what she had read to her teaching was even more impossible. Yet she believed that in spite of their feuds, the progressives were all fighting on a common front and would eventually make headway toward better teaching. She concluded that "the end of progressive- ness was simply plain, good teaching. . . ."\textsuperscript{96}

In this metropolitan New Jersey school system, the teachers' work did not end after class but extended into extra demands and extra hours. There were school societies, the monthly newspaper, athletics, assembly programs, class elections, and class business conclaves. While progressives encouraged these activities as social participation, the

\textsuperscript{95}Ibid., p. 86. \textsuperscript{96}Ibid., p. 89.
teachers were given the responsibility for providing adult supervision and counsel. The School Board turned these activities over to the teacher because the teachers were the logical ones to assume these additional jobs:

In the vague and undefined notion of where teaching left off and private life began, this seemed sound administrative logic. The schools were for the pupils, the teachers served the schools. Who else was to do it?97

Besides the student activities, teachers had to attend Saturday afternoon lectures sponsored by the School Board. "It was felt that teachers would be glad to give their time."98 Mr. Somers, the principal of North High School, intimated that attendance at the lecture was not a matter of debate and all the teachers attended dutifully.

Being dutiful was the Board's idea of being a good teacher. Mae Pettingill, a timid little teacher from School Number Nine, went on a crusade for higher salaries and spoke at one of the local associations. "Teachers," the narrator commented, "were paid what the public decided to pay, arbitrarily and seldom generously."99 When the School Board "got wind" that Miss Pettingill was agitating for a general pay increase for the city's teachers, it launched an investigation. Since the verdict was a foregone conclusion, the investigation was regarded as a sham

97 Ibid., p. 91.  
98 Ibid., p. 93.  
99 Ibid., p. 190.
"which everyone admitted but which had to go on ponderously justifying itself in order to keep up its tradition."100 Reviewing Miss Pettingill's career, the president of the school board, read aloud every error "to the last damning detail" that Miss Pettingill had ever made at School Number Nine. "Pathetic, meek Miss Pettingill . . . had committed no crime against society except the crime of not being able to live on what society paid her."101

In 1948, the year Boyce's novel was published, the average salary for all teachers was estimated at $2,750; the average salary for teachers in New Jersey was higher: $3,300. The National Education Association reported in its Research Bulletin that the average salary of teachers was still below the average for all employees. When the teachers' average salaries were translated into purchasing power, the trend for average salaries was downward or almost static.102 Although the time-setting for Boyce's novel had a span of thirty-five years, low salaries in the teaching profession had been and were a chronic problem.

In Miss Mallett, the image of Emily was positively stereotyped but generally her colleagues fared not as well: Miss Crittenden was supercilious, Miss Hammann overpowering

100 Ibid., p. 195.  
101 Ibid.  
and Miss Case incompetent. Of the novel, the New York Herald Tribune said: "Teachers, pupils, principals, parents, school board—all come warmly alive. . . ." And a book reviewer writing in the New York Times thought that Burke Boyce's teaching experience had given him understanding of the relationship between teacher and pupil.

Conclusion: 1940-1949

In the Forties, five teachers, according to available information, wrote novels that portrayed the high school teacher as a main character. Only one of the novels (And Thou Shalt Teach Them) portrayed the teacher negatively. The other novels created a positive image that was either fully and positively drawn (The Hickory Stick) or positively stereotyped (Miss Munday, Friday, Thank God!, The Invisible Island, Miss Mallett). During the decade, two novels, The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter and The Human Comedy, depicted the high school teacher as a minor character, but only The Human Comedy reflected a positive image of the teacher. Teaching in the fictional high school during the 1940's was still financially unrewarding. The subtle community pressure that violated the high school teacher's

freedom was a recurring theme in novels that portrayed the teacher as a main character. The fictional high school faculty of the 1940's, like that of the Twenties and the Thirties, had only a few outstanding teachers, but often these teachers just voiced educational problems, issues, or conditions and failed to "ring true" as real people.
CHAPTER VI

THE NOVELISTS' HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER DURING

THE RUPTURING TIMES: 1950-1959

An Allied victory ending World War II in 1945 brought Americans a brief respite from war, but the begin­ning of the Korean conflict in 1950 put America's war machine back to work. During the 1950's, national atten­tion also focused on such issues as Senator Joseph McCarthy's charges of national subversion, court-ordered school desegregation, bus boycotts, and the launching of Sputnik by the Soviet Union. While the impact of McCarthyism lessened but still persisted after the Senator's political demise in 1954, racial conflict in the United States intensified during the decade. The launching of Sputnik in 1957 had an important impact on the nation's politics as well as its educational system. The United States needed to recover its national prestige and insure its national security. Thus, the federal government initiated an expensive crash program for study and research in space technology. Discussing the impact of Sputnik on American education, James F. Wickens wrote:

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Following the American tradition of seeking a villain to blame for their shortcomings, Americans turned on their educational system. They demanded greater emphasis on academic subjects and less on courses dealing with life adjustment, which so-called "progressive education" had introduced.¹

But attacks on progressive education and its popularly supposed "soft pedagogy" had a long history. Challenging the traditional school, educational progressivism (1876-1957) had embraced a variety of ideas and programs by which the school could improve the life of the individual and reform the community. But critics had sharply criticized progressive education for not cultivating intellectual skills and knowledge and for not teaching systematically the basic subjects of reading, writing, mathematics, English, history, and foreign languages. While many progressive educators became narrowly child-centered in their perspective, others became excessively concerned with programs that made the school an agent of social reform. Gerald Gutek, an educational historian, maintained that "conflicts and counter-arguments between the child-centered and the socially oriented wings of the movement weakened progressivism."²

In 1951, Don Fontaine satirized progressive

²Gutek, p. 199.
education in his novel, *Sugar on the Slate.*³ Mr. Burkhardt, the principal of Peyton Junior High School, had the reputation for going off to conventions, educational workshops, or summer study and bringing back "a load of sweet stuff" in the form of innovative ideas that had to be put to work.

. . . Mr. Burkhardt habitually introduced into the routines of his school something new and challenging. Sometimes it was a method, sometimes it was a person and sometimes it was simply a gadget. It mattered little what it was, so long as it was as yet untried by the teachers and pupils of Peyton and so long as it could divert minds.⁴

The phrase "sugar on the slate" originated one March when Mr. Burkhardt diagnosed the mental apathy of the seventh graders as "midmorning fatigue" and ordered thereafter a "midmorning" snack of sugar cookies and chocolate milk for the students. Although the expression took hold spontaneously and referred originally to the snack of sugar cookies and milk, the phrase soon took on broader connotations and was applied to other so-called innovations in the school. Teachers applied the expression to germicidal lamps installed in the auditorium to discourage germs during assemblies, to social dancing and manners, and to a program of psychological vivisection of the students.

One of Burkhardt's newer innovations had come over the summer. He replaced the old-fashioned stationary desks

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⁴ Ibid., pp. 16-17.
with tablet armchairs so that teachers could turn their classrooms into centers for socialized activities. This change was viewed as another example of Burkhardt's "pouring sugar on the slate." Mr. Burkhardt had also hired Malvinia Phipps, an activity-minded Latin teacher, who bubbled with ideas and methods about how to make Latin live for the students. They had met at an educational workshop in New York where both of them served on the Committee on Techniques for Administering a Program of Instructional Classroom Activities in the Modern Child-Centered Junior High School.

To better popularize classroom activities and to jolt tradition-bound teachers out of their complacency and lethargy, Mr. Burkhardt authorized a public showing of some of the things the activity-minded Malvinia was doing in her classroom. *Spectaculum Romanum*, a spectacle of Rome, was to be one of the better assemblies of the year. When the boy who was to play the emperor came down with the measles, Malvinia pressed Mr. Burkhardt into the role of the emperor. Deprived of his bifocals, Mr. Burkhardt stepped outside the curtain and read his lines with the script close to his eyes. After Mr. Burkhardt's speech, the students applauded wildly as he poked the curtain, "hoping that trial and error would sooner or later bring
him to an opening through which he could make an exit." 5

The audience thoroughly enjoyed Malvinia's Spectaculum Romanum. When the tempers of two gladiators flared during a scene of gladiatorial combat and the boys rolled on the floor, pulled hair, and engaged in fisticuffs, the students yelled and applauded wildly to show their approval. But Malvinia became fearful when one boy pounded the other boy's head against the floor. "Her fears increased when she observed that all the spectators of her Colosseum, including the emperor, were unmistakably signaling thumbs down." 6 At the conclusion of the play, the students applauded thunderously and Mr. Burkhardt pinned a floral tribute on Malvinia's shoulder.

Mildred Pilson, a social studies teacher, had always followed a traditional approach to teaching her subject. She gave her students a textbook, assigned certain pages for homework, asked questions about the home study, and expected answers to her questions. Although Mildred's colleagues embraced the new methods, she vowed to uphold traditional pedagogy at Peyton Junior High School. But eventually feeling that the "scorners' bench" had become too lonesome, Mildred capitulated to the new Burkhardt program of "teaching the whole child" and "bringing life to the classroom." She took her class to Schlosser's farm.

5 Ibid., p. 42. 6 Ibid., p. 48.
The trip turned out to be a "real-life" experience for the students but a harrowing one for Mildred and the Schlossers.

Mr. Burkhardt had exhorted his teachers to live their subject and to stop teaching it. When Mr. Schiller, the principal of Christie Consolidated School, proposed that the ninth graders of the two schools participate in a quiz program covering subjects common to both schools, Mr. Burkhardt accepted the challenge, confident his brilliant program of activities would bring Peyton Junior High a victory. At the end of the quiz program, Christie, a school using traditional methods, had collected forty-nine of a possible seventy points. Even though many parents began to criticize the program at Peyton, Burkhardt concluded that "in any community there are always certain types who will oppose anything new--any change from the methods they had in school." 7

Under pressure from the community, Burkhardt needed to come up with something new to regain his flagging prestige. He came up with the idea of giving the students direct experience in democratic living by having them run the city for a day. The students took over the city and soon discovered a few ordinances that went back to the Civil War days and were still technically legal. When Rose Chapman, the female police chief, enforced every law on the

7Ibid., p. 170.
books, the townspeople became unpleasantly excited, and at the end of the day they demanded that the school return to disciplined learning.

In *Sugar on the Slate*, Mr. Burkhardt, the principal, and Malvinia Phipps, the Latin teacher, were negative stereotypes of progressive educators. While Mildred Pilson was positively stereotyped as a traditional teacher, the other junior high school teachers were ambiguously depicted. Don Fontaine, a teacher of modern languages in a Toledo high school, wrote from first-hand experience. "His narrative style," wrote Joyce Geary in the *New York Times*, "is bright and effortless, and the only serious flaw is in the dialogue, which is amateurish and clumsy at times." 8

Mary Frances Morgan’s *Teacher Lady*, published in 1952, was the story of Bruce Sheenan, a young female teacher who had received a teaching position at Belden Springs High School after graduating from Louisiana State University. 9 Belden Springs, Louisiana had a teacherage, "a house surrounded on all sides by taxpayers, through whose portals pass the most dutiful women on earth." 10

After arriving at the teacherage and being given a room, 


10 Ibid., p. 83.
Bruce began investigating her assigned drawers in the dresser and her space in a musty locker. In the locker, she found an envelope addressed "To the New Teacher." The salutation began with "Dear Sucker" and the letter concluded by advising the new teacher to "refuse to polish apples, and dare to show the lot of 'em that you don't have to sign a death warrant to personal liberty in order to teach school."\textsuperscript{11} The letter was signed: "A Former Sucker."

Periodically remembering the words of the Former Sucker, Bruce experienced the strains of teaching, of handling students, coping with parents, placating the principal and the women at the teacherage, and trying to live on a meager salary. In her class, she justified the students' poor spelling by believing that they were still vacation-minded. She defused Wade Timberlake, her teacher-chasing principal, by gently putting him in his place. But she had to hope that she would not be fired when a parish supervisor caught her manicuring her fingernails while her class was occupied with seat work. She also had to ward off a bill collector who sought payment for some bills she owed several stores in New Orleans. The bill collector turned out to be Dexter B. Carter, an attorney who was also a candidate for the state Senate. After paying her bills and femininely disarming Carter, Bruce bested him in an

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 85.
argument about better pay for women teachers. Bruce argued:

The small-town schoolteacher is the forgotten woman. Society subjugates her. She's victimized by The System. Why, she's no more than a white-collar sharecropper who slaves all day over a hot pupil and--and only reaps a harvest of hardened arteries. The salaries they pay us are better, yes, than they used to be. But have they kept pace with the inflated cost of living? They have not. After all our deductions, we do not have enough left to keep a self-respecting strip tease in G-strings.\(^{12}\)

In the Research Bulletin of the National Education Association, a study of rural teachers in 1951-1952 showed that high school teachers were paid higher salaries than elementary school teachers. But for all rural teachers reporting in 1951-1952, the estimated average cash salary was $2,484. "At an average pay of $2,484 per year," the report stated, "rural school districts are exceedingly fortunate in having as many fine teachers as they do."\(^{13}\)

The NEA study found that boards of education had been reasonably successful in getting their secondary school teachers to live within the school district. While the majority of rural teachers in secondary education owned or rented their living quarters, 5 per cent lived in teacherages. According to the study, teacherages owned and maintained by boards of education had been widely recom-

\(^{12}\)Ibid., p. 131.

mended as a way to solve the problem of housing teachers in rural areas. But in Teacher Lady, the narrator believed that the teacherage was "rapidly becoming a species of vanishing Americana."

The NEA study also identified conditions affecting instruction in the rural school. The following controversial issues had to be sidestepped in the classroom: sex, criticism of prominent people, separation of church and state, race relations, and communism. Extremely sensitive to public opinion, a large number of rural teachers avoided controversial issues not only in the classroom but also in their discussions with laymen.

In Teacher Lady, Bruce Sheenan, the dominant image, was generally positive. The image of the other teachers, however, was unflattering. Bruce, for example, did not want to "look like a schoolteacher." Undoubtedly the school of education she had attended helped to create the stereotype of a teacher. She related what teachers had been repeatedly told during practice teaching:

You have chosen for yourselves a serious profession. You must avoid extreme fashions and excessive makeup in order to bring dignity to your work. Anything bordering upon the sensational or the unconventional will tend to lower your personal chances for advancement.14

In 1954, a new term became popular to describe a particular kind of classroom in the high school. The title

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14 Morgan, p. 87.
of Evan Hunter's novel, The Blackboard Jungle, became synonymous with classrooms in which teenage delinquents made teaching nearly impossible.\textsuperscript{15} The novel was about Richard Dadier, an idealistic teacher who faced for the first time the brutal realities of teaching in a vocational high school in New York City.

As a new teacher at North Manual Trades High School in the East Bronx, Richard received the worst program in the English Department. He was assigned many students who were just marking time until they were old enough to get their working papers. Most of the boys in the class were white; a few of them were black. As freshmen, these boys had followed a block program; that is, they moved from class to class as a group instead of having an individual program. During their freshman year, a student who was no longer with the group had thrown an inkwell through the principal's closed window and then tried to throw the principal after the inkwell. The boy went to reform school but many of his disciples were in Richard's class. The warning, "never turn your back on a class," applied particularly to Richard's group. Of these sixteen and seventeen year-old boys whose official dress was a tee shirt and dungarees, the narrator said:

... it was extremely difficult to consider them "kids" when a good many of them outreached you and outweighed you, and sometimes (only sometimes) outthought you.16

Richard wanted to teach and needed a job, for teaching was the job he had been trained for at Hunter College. But Mr. Small, the principal of North Manual Trades, wanted a well-disciplined school and needed troublemakers squelched quickly, for trouble in the school made him look publicly and administratively bad. Following Mr. Small's advice at the first organizational meeting, Richard treated the boys in a normal vocational school manner: he showed the students a tough exterior. Explaining this kind of attitude, the narrator said:

In a vocational school you had to be tough in order to teach. You had to be tough, or you never got the chance to teach.17

Of course, one danger was that teachers became so tough that they forgot that they were supposed to be teachers.

Solly Klein, a cynical, twelve-year veteran at the vocational school, felt that only the philosopher survived at a "dump" like Manual Trades. He thought the school was "the garbage can of the educational system" and the teachers' job was "to sit on the lid of the garbage can and see that none of the filth overflows into the streets."18

Since Solly believed that the students of North Manual

16 Ibid., p. 211.  
17 Ibid., p. 60.  
18 Ibid., pp. 66-67.
Trades were "a big rotten whole," he advised Richard that it would be a mistake to single out one student as a troublemaker and think the boy had something personal against the teacher. He maintained that the less intelligent students gave the teacher a lot of trouble, but the bright students looked for an outlet for their leadership qualities. Explaining to Richard that bright students need to express their abilities to lead, Solly said:

In a normal setup, those qualities would find normal outlets. But in this dump, there are no normal outlets. Does a kid become a leader by kissing the teacher's ass? Hell, no. He becomes a leader by making things rough for the teacher. That's how he's recognized. The bigger the bastard, the better the leader. . . .

For Solly, North Manual Trades was one big defective machine. He believed that the high school was not made to do anything useful; therefore, it did nothing right except make a lot of noise. He maintained that outside of school a boy could be "the nicest kid in the neighborhood," but once the boy came inside the school, he became part of that defective machine.

In a 1954 issue of The School Review, an article entitled "Factors Affecting Social Acceptance of High-School Students," discussed the principal elements which affected high school students' social acceptance among their schoolmates. The study came to a conclusion that

\[^{19}\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 159-60.}\]
differed from Solly's view in The Blackboard Jungle. The study concluded with the following statement:

All teachers should be alert to recognize aggressive, objectionable behavior in adolescents is likely to be compensatory in character. Teachers should strive assiduously to help students avoid such behavior, by showing them that it will probably lead to social rejection by their peers. . . .

"Social rejection by their peers" was not what Solly Klein thought about aggressive but bright boys at North Manual Trades. They became leaders.

In The Blackboard Jungle, Richard experienced much during the five-month school term. He prevented Lois Hammond, a seductive colleague, from being raped on a deserted stairwell. But his heroism earned him the enmity of the boys who thought Richard should have minded his own business. A gang of boys waited for Richard outside a local bar and viciously beat him and another teacher when the two men came out of the bar. After the attack which supposedly evened the score, the boys settled down to what was considered normal behavior for a vocational school. "They [the boys] called out, and they shouted, and they laughed, and they cursed, and they were disobedient and disorderly and plain goddamn ornery." 21

In Hunter's novel, teachers' colleges were indicted

21 Hunter, p. 131.
for not preparing teachers to handle students in schools like North Manual Trades. Speaking of what he had learned in his education courses, Richard said: "A bunch of horse manure."\(^{22}\) He maintained, for example, that giving difficult students board erasers to clean was a meaningless suggestion when a teacher had an entire class of difficult students. Angrily he said: "There ain't that many board erasers in the city of New York."\(^{23}\) He felt cheated for himself and for other teachers who wanted to teach but did not know how to teach because they had been "pumped full of manure and theoretical hogwash."\(^{24}\) Describing the shortcomings of Richard's preparation for teaching, the narrator said:

Rick had never been told how to stop a fight in his class. He'd never been told what to do with a second-term student who doesn't know how to write his own goddamn name on a sheet of paper. He didn't know, and he'd never been advised on the proper tactics for dealing with a boy whose I.Q. was 66, a big, fat, round, moronic 66. He hadn't been taught about kids yelling out in class, not one kid, not the occasional "difficult child" the ed courses had loftily philosophized about, not him. But a whole goddamn, shouting, screaming class-load of them, all yelling their sonofabitching heads off.\(^{25}\)

Honestly wanting to teach, Richard became concerned with "breaking through to the kids." When Richard was casting for a Christmas play he had written, Gregory Miller, a bright but belligerent black boy, asked for a part as an

\(^{22}\text{Ibid., p. 115.}\) \(^{23}\text{Ibid.}\) \(^{24}\text{Ibid., p. 142.}\) \(^{25}\text{Ibid.}\)
angel. Richard gave Gregory the part and the two worked well together during rehearsals. But after each rehearsal, Gregory again withdrew behind his own arbitrary line of hostility. In class, Richard held the students' attention by dramatizing everything he did in class, but he discovered from the boys' compositions that they had not learned a single thing from all his play-acting. By observing his classes closely, he discovered how to break through to his students. He read aloud to his class Heywood Broun's "The Fifty-First Dragon," an allegory about self-confidence. The boys responded enthusiastically to the story and asked questions that lead to a lively discussion of the story's meaning. Richard had finally broken through to them.

But Richard's "I've-broken-through" feeling was short-lived. Artie West, an insolent antagonist, pulled a switch-blade knife in class because Richard disciplined him during a test. Richard fought furiously and knocked the knife out of West's hand. Belazi, one of West's backers, picked up the knife and stabbed Richard in the shoulder. Apparently finding this action too much, Gregory Miller and the other boys sided with Richard and pinned the knife-wielder down. Unable to let the boys go as Miller had asked, Richard marched West and Belazi to the office.

In the end, Richard Dadier, the idealist, was still undaunted in spite of his experience. He had not been one
of the so-called "meatheads" who drifted into teaching because it offered "a certain amount of paycheck-every-month security, vacation-every-summer luxury, or a certain amount of power, or an easy road. . . ." 26 He wanted to teach. Most of the teachers in The Blackboard Jungle were not as idealistic as Richard who was positively stereotyped; they were, by and large, negatively portrayed.

Evan Hunter, the author of the novel, spent almost two years researching material and interviewing teachers and students in New York City. 27 In 1950, he taught English for six months in two New York vocational high schools. 28 Unlike Solly Klein, the twelve year veteran in the novel, Hunter was fortunate not to stay in vocational education long enough to make all his characters as cynical as Solly.

In 1954, the same year The Blackboard Jungle was published, Agnes E. Meyer discussed in the Atlantic Monthly the problems of juvenile delinquency in large cities. She noted that many youths wanted the excitement from the threat of trouble to relieve them of the tedium of an empty existence. Discussing the lack of interest and motivation in the lives of many young people, Meyer wrote:

26 Ibid., p. 143.
28 Contemporary Authors, vols. 5-8, s.v. "Hunter, Evan."
we have unduly prolonged adolescence without providing an adequate program for boys who are not book-learners. Vocational training can be learned quickly on the job. The best answer is a work and study program whereby the pupils spend half the day on the job and half in the classroom.\textsuperscript{29}

For many boys, the curriculum in Hunter's fictional high school was meaningless and failed to hold their attention. Most of the boys in Richard's class had "considered English a senseless waste of time, a headless chicken, a blob without a goal."\textsuperscript{30} Undoubtedly some educators agreed.

The setting for Hunter's novel was a low-income neighborhood in the East Bronx of New York City. The setting for the next novel of the 1950's was Fleming, Michigan, a town where some people lived in mansions, a few lived in black tar shacks, but most lived in average houses that needed a coat of paint. James Whitfield Ellison's novel, \textit{I'm Owen Harrison Harding}, published in 1955, was about the random experiences of a high school boy struggling with the problems of adolescence.\textsuperscript{31} Owen Harding had just reported to Cornell High School to begin what he called the "rat-race." Owen defined the term:

A rat-race is when you report to school on the first day and run around acting like you want certain

\textsuperscript{29} Agnes E. Meyer, "Schoolboy Racketeers," \textit{Atlantic Monthly} 193 (March 1954): 37.

\textsuperscript{30} Hunter, p. 259.

\textsuperscript{31} James Whitfield Ellison, \textit{I'm Owen Harrison Harding} (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1955).
teachers more than others, which is a real crock. Nobody really wants any teachers or classes is the way I see it, but once you're competing against somebody else, even for something you don't want, you get very greedy about it.\textsuperscript{32}

Owen's homeroom teacher was Joel Dean Harris. Mr. Harris who "looked very young to be a teacher" taught Political Economics and "seemed very anxious to be buddy-buddy."\textsuperscript{33} Owen wondered how long Harris would last, for Harris had "smiled enough in ten minutes to last most teachers a whole semester."\textsuperscript{34} After Owen's friend, Barbara Alslinger, signed him up for Geometry and Biology, she dragged him to Miss Fiske's room and signed him up for Ancient History. Owen thought Miss Fiske was perfect for the subject because she was "just about as ancient as they come."\textsuperscript{35} Owen next enrolled in English with Miss Reynolds who squinted at him "through an eyeglass that was tied onto the end of a long black ribbon."\textsuperscript{36} The last class Owen signed up for was Band; it was the only class he wanted with the possible exception of English.

When Owen received his second month's report card, it was a dismal record. He used ink eradicator to make some changes, but his efforts turned out to be such a disaster that he had to fabricate a story to tell Mr. Harris

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., pp. 12-13. \textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p. 23.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., p. 24. \textsuperscript{35} Ibid., p. 29.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p. 30.
and the other teachers. Needing a grade in Geometry for his new report card, he went to Miss Thorndike and asked her how he could pass her subject. He talked her into giving him a passing grade on the condition that he would hand in his lessons every day, quit drawing obscene pictures, and stay awake in class.

In English, Miss Reynolds often digressed from teaching her subject to talk about politics. Of this practice, Owen said: "Usually she didn't bother anybody in class when she tried to snow us under about politics, but lately she'd gotten so crazy and bitter that it was pretty embarrassing."37 One time Owen stood up in class, clicked his heels together, gave the Nazi salute, and screamed "Heil, Hitler." Miss Reynolds made him report to her after school to write five hundred times, I'm Owen Harrison Harding, and I've been very impolite. When he had finished the task, he told her that she had no right to tell students about her politics.

The image of the high school teacher in I'm Owen Harrison Harding was generally negative and obviously stereotyped. Told from the first person point of view, the story depicted the high school teacher in very unflattering terms. Dissuading Barbara Alslinger from even thinking about becoming a high school teacher, Owen said:

37Ibid., p. 77.
Just look around you. You might end up a raving maniac like most of them do. Most of them do, you know.38

Referring to Miss Fiske, he said:

I'll bet she hasn't combed her hair since the old power plant blew up on South Street, and that was many years ago. It wouldn't do her any harm to hit a shower once every month or so either.39

Describing old Miss Reynolds, he said:

Then she started fiddling around with the buttons on her dress like a lot of old teachers do. Sometimes you get very worried that they might do a strip right in class without knowing it.40

Although Owen wanted little to do with his teachers, non-fictional high school students wanted a different kind of relationship with their teachers. In Phi Delta Kappan, an article entitled "When Pupils Rate the Teacher" discussed the results of a survey that analyzed the relationship between high school freshmen and their teachers. An analysis of the results revealed that the adolescents want a friendly teacher-pupil relationship. Rated by the freshmen, the ideal secondary school teacher had certain qualities:

The ideal teacher . . . is understanding, sympathetic, and friendly; one who will discuss a pupil's personal problems and offer helpful suggestions; one who will sponsor school activities and help pupils win group approval; and one who will assist pupils in planning for their future.41

38 Ibid., p. 30. 39 Ibid., p. 29.
40 Ibid., p. 31.
In I'm Owen Harrison Harding, Mr. Harris helped Owen study for tests in Biology and Geometry because the boy's father requested the help. Nevertheless, Harris gave Owen confidence by acknowledging the boy's potential ability to go to college.

In most of the novels up to 1957, high school teachers had been concerned with what the community thought of them. But Doris Fredric, a high school teacher in James Jones's Some Came Running, cared little about public opinion. Doris was not only beautiful but wealthy; her father was the president of the Second National Bank in Parkman, a small town in Illinois. Doris taught English at the high school and had a "deep love for her 'kiddies' (the high school freshmen and sophomores she taught) which she was always talking about." She dressed expensively, danced demurely, and smiled sweetly; she had a "virginal smile" and a questionable reputation. But one of Doris's former students said:

... if I ever have to be a school teacher ... I just hope I'm the kind of school teacher Doris Fredric is. She goes her own way, and does as she pleases, and she doesn't give a damn what the moralists and the gossips say about her.

In spite of Doris's unconventional behavior, she was ambiguously characterized in the novel. Still, she

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43 Ibid., 695. 44 Ibid., p. 356.
reflected an image that was generally negative. *Some Came Running* was a long and tedious book. While the *New Republic* described the novel as "an extraordinarily immature and undisciplined book," Time said the book was "one vast notions counter of half-fashioned ideas on life, love and literature." The book reviewers generally agreed that the novel was bad.

The book reviewers also treated the next novel unfavorably. Charles Calitri's *Strike Heaven on the Face* received severe criticism in the reviews for its structure, content and language. Kirkus, for example, described the novel as "sordid, salacious, and couched in the respectable language of 'youth today'. . . ." The novel's development grew out of the exposure of a high school sex club in Barthorne Center, which was purported to be in a small town in New England.

Walter Davis, the new dean of Barthorne High School, had been pressed into accepting the position as dean by his ambitious wife and also by his determined principal. While John Wilson, the principal of the high school, wanted a man capable of handling the whole student

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45 *New Republic*, 27 January 1958, p. 16.
46 *Time*, 13 January 1958, p. 96.
48 *Kirkus*, 1 September 1958, p. 675.
body, Grace, Walter's status-seeking wife, wanted the added income and the respect that she felt her husband deserved in the town. As chairman of the social studies department, Walter liked to work in his office for a period or two and then meet with his classes. Nevertheless, he let himself be forced into the position of dean.

As a young teacher, Walter had spoken out on various unpopular issues, but he had compromised over the years and much of his idealism had been squelched. Unlike other teachers, Walter had been an educational "scrapper." He had discussed and compared various religions in his class and then fought back when the Board told him to stop discussing religion. He walked from house to house and talked to parents. The students signed a petition and threatened to go out on strike because the Board had dared to tell Davis what to do. Not realizing how close to victory he was, Davis had given in to the school board and stopped discussing religion. He then went off to war, came back a hero, and politicked for a new school building. But Martin Frennel, chairman of the school board, had resented for years Walter's spunk and still wanted to make the teacher subservient.

Frennel believed that teachers needed to be tightly controlled to keep men like Davis in line. Discussing the need for order in the school, Frennel said:
You got to set up the order like chickens: Everybody pecks one man and low man pecks nothing.\(^{49}\)

Times had changed for teachers, but Frennel would not let Walter forget that a teacher's job was dependent on the Board. At Maury's Bar and Grill, Walter was conscious of his position and "remembered that not too long ago a teacher would not have dared to show himself in a bar."\(^{50}\) Frennel often needled Walter, but Walter felt that "the satisfaction of smashing Frennel in the mouth was not worth his family and his job."\(^{51}\)

In spite of people like Frennel who wanted to dominate the lives of teachers, Walter had chosen teaching as a profession and dedicated himself to it for fourteen years. He chose teaching not as an escape from insecurity but for the promise of putting ideas into the minds of young people. But he knew that a teacher had to be careful.

He remembered the years in which freedom walked away from the teacher, and the classroom became a place where you guarded your tongue, afraid to speak because your words could find themselves misinterpreted.\(^{52}\)

Unlike Walter, Dave Nordhall, a new teacher, had not yet learned that a "teacher had to watch his step." Dave incurred the ire of some parents whose ancestors had founded the town. He upset the parents with his statement that the Puritans ran "away from intolerance to become

\(^{49}\)Calitri, p. 71.  \(^{50}\)Ibid., p. 65.

\(^{51}\)Ibid., p. 74.  \(^{52}\)Ibid., p. 236.
intolerant themselves.\textsuperscript{53} John Wilson gave Walter the responsibility of telling Dave that criticizing the students' ancestors was "out of bounds" because the students' parents would not stand for it. Although Dave had been in Barthorne Center for only a couple of months, he recognized the conservative grip on the town. To Walter, he said:

There are those who want everybody in the same mold, and they're the ones in authority. They make you give in on little things: they work on you, wearing you down until finally they've got you.\textsuperscript{54}

But "the ones in authority" had their social foundations weakened by the exposure of a sex club in which some of their own children were involved. For instance, Roger Frennel, the son of the chairman of the school board, nearly raped Barbara Simmons, a girl whom he wanted to initiate into the sex club called the Modnocs. During the school day following the near-rape, a sense of trouble filled the school.

For the teachers there was only vague premonition. Some noticed nothing at all, being insensitive to everything but their blackboard work. Others were annoyed because the distraction was an enemy they could not defeat. Four or five knew. These were the ones who could finger the pulse of the school, whose entire systems were attuned to each movement of the students. They sensed trouble, but they did not know.\textsuperscript{55}

Trouble erupted when Al Rehbom, Barbara's boyfriend, sought out Roger, pummeled him about, and then broke Roger's nose.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., p. 81. \textsuperscript{54} Ibid., p. 90. \textsuperscript{55} Ibid., pp. 188-89.
After Roger's father demanded that the school take some action against Al, the truth about the sex club began to come out. Having conducted an investigation, Walter gave Wilson a list of fourteen students who were members of the sex club. Describing the effects an exposé would have on John Wilson, the principal of the high school, the narrator wrote:

The town would forget that with Wilson had come some degree of freedom for their young people, making it possible for them to lose some of their hatred for school; the town would forget the new curriculum which had been developed in the last ten years. Or perhaps the town had never liked these things, anyway, Walter thought, criticizing the lack of discipline, the lack of concentration on the three R's, as if any school anywhere had ever stopped teaching children to read, write, and figure. They would point to the Modnocs as proof, and blame Wilson for what had happened to their children.56

After the investigation slowly died and John Wilson took a new position, the town's selectmen had to choose a new principal for the high school. The selectmen chose three candidates. Joe Morrissey, the assistant principal; Ralph Warfield, a department chairman from Boston; and Walter Davis, the dean. Joe Morrissey had been taken out of the classroom because he lacked control and he was put in charge of scheduling classes and buying supplies. Ralph Warfield thought compulsory education was ridiculous and wanted to return to "the business of teaching those who are capable of being taught."57 But Walter Davis, the dean

56 Ibid., p. 226.  
57 Ibid., p. 283.
who saved the town from a nationwide scandal, became the new principal of Barthorne High School after much political wrangling at the meeting of the town council.

In *Strike Heaven on the Face*, the dominant image of the high school teacher was a positive stereotype. Ben Crisler wrote in the *New York Times* that "it is hard to keep his [Calitri's] characters straight or remember which one is doing the talking, because they all seem to be fictitious contraptions rather than living people." 58 Calitri, a former teacher of English in New York City, touched on some of the problems of being a teacher but failed to bring his characters alive.

In 1959, the year following the publication of Calitri's novel, an important document entered educational history. James B. Conant's *The American High School Today* described the characteristics of American secondary education and emphasized the comprehensive high school. 59 The program in a comprehensive high school served three purposes: first, a general education for all the students; secondly, an elective program for students terminating their education with high school graduation; and thirdly, a program for students intending to go on to college. The

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Conant Report pointed to the need for raising the quality of secondary education for all students and especially the academically talented students.

In John Farris's novel, *Harrison High*, published in 1959, 80 per cent of the students went to college.\(^{60}\) Mr. Donal, the principal of Harrison High, took pride in the school's program. "We teach good solid courses here," he said, "and we teach 'em right. Our curriculum is stiff. ... None of this basket-weaving crap for Harrison."\(^{61}\) The school had the reputation for being "one of the five best schools in the state."\(^{62}\)

In Clarkston, Harrison High School occupied a square block near the center of the city and had an enrollment of sixteen hundred students. Although Harrison High was considered one of the best high schools, it had a growing number of troublemakers because of the influx of "upper lower class" students. Overcrowded classes were not uncommon at Harrison. Neil Hendry, an American history teacher, had thirty-seven students in his first period class; he considered thirty the maximum number for efficient teaching. Some of Hendry's students were "bored stiff and showed it," but many of them took interest in the subject "as he skipped informally through the first lesson,\(^{60}\) John Farris, *Harrison High* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1959).\(^{61}\) Ibid., p. 16.\(^{62}\) Ibid., p. 15.
bolstering some of the dry paragraphs with stories and anecdotes retained from his own wide reading of history." 63

Although students learned much about history in Hendry's class, Hendry had no sentimental ideas about his responsibility for the education of the adolescent. But expressing a contrary view in an article, "Secondary Schools and Their Teachers," Ernest Stabler explained that the high school teacher needed to establish a "warm and friendly relationship" with students. Stabler wrote:

He [the high school teacher] must be concerned not only with ideas but with adolescents. He must accept the adolescent with all his imperfections, insecurities, and frustrations. He will make all possible efforts to understand his students as individuals and at the same time gain insights into adolescent culture. . . . He will avoid, however, the danger of becoming sentimentally involved in the problems of the teenager and will not descend into too easy or informal a relationship with his students. 64

To get the kind of teacher described above, the one with a "deep feeling of dedication and a strong sense of mission," Stabler suggested that potential teachers be selected with greater care. "Through more careful selection of students," he said, "and more rigorous and stimulating programs of preparation we can do much to invigorate the teaching profession." 65

63 Ibid., p. 28.


65 Ibid., p. 127.
In Harrison High, Neil had taught the previous year across town at Riverside High, "a cruddy school full of has-been teachers and teen-age whores and toughs who carry their switchblade knives and the contempt they have for the world with the same crazy arrogance." Sharing the attitude of Solly Klein in The Blackboard Jungle as to the purpose of some schools, Neil viewed Riverside High as "a real sinkhole," Neil said:

Riverside serves its purpose. The law says kids have to go to school until they're sixteen, whether they want to go or not. Riverside has a lot of shop courses for that kind, which doesn't make for ideal teaching in other areas. Most of the teachers at Riverside have grown old with the school. They just go through the motions now. The kids run right over them.

Because Neil had manhandled a student at Riverside High, he was removed and sent to Harrison High. At Harrison he had the reputation for being a "tough guy," for giving pop tests, and for failing athletes who did not study for his class. Despite his reputation for hardness, "the majority of his students grudgingly admitted they were learning a lot of history in his classes. . . ." Neil, a former football hero, was offered a coaching position in Dannemont, a little industrial town about seventy miles from Clarkston. In Dannemont, "the schools ranged from mediocre to terrible" and the teachers salaries were low.

66 Farris, p. 21.  
67 Ibid., pp. 160-61.  
68 Ibid., p. 260.
The board members just drew their pay, considered the position a political office, and cared little about what happened to the schools. Although Neil wanted to coach, he refused the position at Dannemont because of the low salary and lack of opportunity. Neil also saw teaching as "a dead end." He said:

Actually I'm rather ashamed to admit I teach. It seems like a humble admission of failure. Teachers are career educators by day. By night they're brush salesmen, short-order cooks, ticket takers and factory hands. A teacher is lucky to earn four thousand dollars a year. The increments don't begin to compensate for the years put into teaching.69

Unlike Neil Hendry, Joanne Dietrich, a Spanish teacher, generally liked teaching. Although she found teaching "exasperating and frustrating and exciting," she was determined to reach "one hundred twenty-three diverse personalities." She tutored many of the students individually despite the large number of them; she was one of the best-liked teachers at Harrison. There were days, however, when she felt as if she were wasting her time, "when all the kid faces had brat looks and it took a day's energy just to keep order in the classes, let alone teach."70

Joanne loved teaching and Neil hated it, but George Hullender, the forty-two year old dramatics teacher, found excitement teaching Anne Greger, a senior at Harrison.

69 Ibid., p. 257. 70 Ibid., pp. 273-74.
After a senior-play rehearsal, he drove the girl home, professed his love, and promised her a trip to California. The aspiring actress saw some advantages to being involved with an older man who had a brother in television.

In *Harrison High*, Neil Hendry, the dominant image of the high school teacher was fully but negatively drawn. Joanne, on the other hand, reflected a positive stereotype while some of the other teachers at Harrison reflected a negative image.

Curtis L. Johnson's *Hobbledehoy's Hero*, published in 1959, was the story of Edward Quillen, a high school student in Mills, Iowa. Mr. Nolde, the principal of Mills High School and Edward's history teacher, disliked Edward's flippant attitude. Because of his attitude, Edward had been sent to Mr. Nolde several times to be disciplined. For example, Mr. Walters, the band director, dismissed Edward and another boy from band for laughing at him. "There's no room in this band," Walters said to the boys, "for young . . . young little snots who treat music as lightly as you two." Edward thought Mr. Walters pronounced the word "snots" like a girl would say it. To spite Mr. Walters, Edward removed the valve springs from all the cornets left behind when the members of the pep

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72 Ibid., p. 33.
band left the stage between two basketball games.

From Edward's point of view, the teachers were ridiculous, arrogant, and unjust. Mrs. Weyrick, an English teacher, sent Edward to the principal's office because she thought his English theme had been done in "very poor taste." She also considered inattention unforgiveable. Her attitude in class was that she "would cast pearls before swine, but the swine had to be there listening for them to bounce." Mrs. Hunter, the algebra teacher, was very nervous and often forgot about assignments. According to one not-too-bright girl, Mrs. Hunter did not "make things very clear sometimes." While Mrs. Hunter had the reputation for being nervous and Mrs. Weyrick for telling students to "Speak up, don't mumble in your beard," Mr. Nolde was known for droning on and on. In American history, Nolde gave Edward a failing grade. Nolde's comment on the examination paper stated that Edward's answer to the essay question was "about as far from the right answer as he [Nolde] could ever have wished for." 75

Mr. Isern, a science teacher, was one of the few teachers Edward liked. He cracked "unfunny jokes, which were always so unfunny they were laughable and he knew it..." Edward felt that Isern was always "pretty

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73 Ibid., p. 288. 74 Ibid., p. 103.
75 Ibid., p. 235. 76 Ibid., p. 429.
nice, not much like a teacher." Thus, the dominant image of the high school teacher in Hobbledehoy's Hero was a negative stereotype.

While high school teachers were minor characters in Hobbledehoy's Hero, they took a major role in Ethel Erkkila Tigue's novel, Betrayal, published in 1959. The novel covered the events that took place the last week of school in Howell's Bend High, a small-town high school in Howell's Bend, Idaho. Much of the conflict in the novel revolved around Phil Roberson, the principal of the high school.

Phil continually opposed the manipulative policies of Preston Hall, the vindictive president of the school board. Hall, a cattle-and-sheep farmer, manipulated everything related to the school and disliked having his decisions challenged. But Phil was unafraid to challenge them; he had once exposed a "kickback" made to Hall for some plumbing contracts. Vowing to get Phil, Hall made Phil's job as difficult as possible. Hall, who had a sixth grade education, frequently spoke to civic groups in Idaho about what was wrong with American education. He often pointed out "how under his direction 'useless' foreign languages had been eliminated from Howell's Bend curriculum and 'useful' subjects like driver training and work

experience instituted. . . ."  

However, he failed to mention that trigonometry and physics had also been eliminated from the curriculum because of his influence.

With the launching of Sputnik by the Russians in 1957, some critics of the American high school suggested returning to a curriculum of the past in order to elevate American secondary education. Frequently the critics of secondary education wanted to eliminate driver education and courses related to work experience. Phil saw the problem represented by two extremes. He said:

On one side we have the Preston Halls and on the other, those who want to make our education like that of the Russians, toughen the program, make every kid take science and math whether he has the brains for it or not. No matter how you juggle it, kids are still individuals--and you can't pour them into molds, either Hall's or the Russian's.

Teachers' salaries also became a controversial issue between Preston and Phil. Although Hall paid his sheepherder six hundred dollars more a year than a teacher earned in Howell's Bend, he opposed increasing the teachers' salaries. He continually criticized the teachers for not being "good enough for the job" and had the Board set standards requiring all teachers to have their

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78 Ibid., p. 153.


80 Tigue, p. 154.
bachelor's degree and each teacher to earn "a certain number of accepted summer-school credits to reach the top of the salary scale." 81

In 1959, the NEA Research Bulletin reported that thirty-four states had state minimum salary laws. In Idaho, the setting for the novel, the legal minimum salary for a teacher with a bachelor's degree was $2,300 and with a master's degree, $2,500. The article stated that the legally required minimums were "extremely low in all classifications." 82

In Betrayal, Preston Hall wanted to raise educational standards for the teachers, but he was "against a twenty-five-dollar automatic annual raise for each year of service." 83 Phil argued that industries would be ashamed to even suggest such a small increment. He could not understand how the people of Howell's Bend and other towns like it could believe that education should be cheap. "Do you really believe," he asked the School Board, "that education should be so cheap that you can get a good teacher as your children deserve by paying him less--less than you pay a man to herd a flock of sheep?" 84 He maintained that the school had had good and even exceptional teachers, but

81 Ibid., p. 268.
83 Tigue, p. 268. 84 Ibid., p. 270.
the community was unable to keep them because teachers were not given "enough money or freedom so they could live in dignity. . . ." 85

Phil was not only in conflict with Preston Hall, but he was also at odds with Wilbur Byrnes, the superintendent of schools. Most irritating to Phil were Byrnes's speeches which sparkled with such outlandish statements as "I consider the failure of the student the failure of the teacher." 86 Phil saw no easy answers and rejected "false oversimplifications that always sounded so meaningful in a speech." 87 He rejected such euphonious educational clichés as ". . . understand the whole child . . . relate his whole environment to his personality . . . remember he is not a problem child but a child with a problem. . . ." 88

Bernard Leibson, writing in Clearing House in 1959, thought that the prevailing psychological dictum of teaching the "whole child" placed too much burden on the schools. He argued:

The principle of being interested in the "whole child" is sound psychology. It draws the teacher's attention to the fact that the intellectual aspect of a child's life is only one part of it. The teacher must be concerned also with the child's physical and emotional health; he must not forget the child's aesthetic and ethical development. But this cannot mean that the teacher and the school must be concerned with all these things. It cannot mean that the same

85 Ibid.
86 Ibid., p. 148.
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid., p. 149.
teacher, in the same twenty-four hours, must insure the development of all the facets.\textsuperscript{89}

In Betrayal, Phil thought that the teacher could neither change nor cancel the influence the home had and continued to have on the child. The teacher could understand the child's antisocial behavior, but the causes were out of the teacher's reach and scope. "And whatever you call him," Phil thought, "problem child or child with a problem, no matter how you twist the words that tell about it, you are still only changing the words: the child remains basically the same."\textsuperscript{90} Even though "new high-sounding terminology" might change the teacher's attitude, it could also hide the real problem more effectively. "A real teacher," Phil said, "has to believe in processes long before he can see the products. He's got to believe in things that don't yet exist--that are hardly promised."\textsuperscript{91}

Like Phil, Tess Tamminen, a counselor and journalism teacher, had faith in the processes of education. She saw the teacher as a catalyst who had to be content to ferment growth and then never know "what her efforts had actually produced, or how they were remembered."\textsuperscript{92} Like Emily in Miss Mallett, Tess believed that "schools were more than buildings; they were mostly teachers and pupils,

\textsuperscript{89}Bernard Leibson, "Are Our Schools Doing Too Much?" \textit{Clearing House} 34 (September 1959): 49.
\textsuperscript{90}Tigue, p. 149. \textsuperscript{91}Ibid., p. 63. \textsuperscript{92}Ibid., p. 256.
the living responding interaction between the two, 
that exciting ferment and flush that burst so spontaneously 
into being when you got the right combination of each."93 
But Tess thought that teachers were perhaps the "most not-
doing people in a community" because they were always half 
scared. It was obvious to her that the community wanted 
them that way, but the teachers were at fault for not 
wanting the responsibility of real participation. 

Equally concerned with teachers and teaching was 
Lillian Schaeffer, a veteran teacher at Howell's Bend High. 
Lillian found something exciting and revitalizing about 
youth's energy, positiveness, variation, and rebelliousness, 
but she thought that teaching was a split-personality life. 
The teacher, on the other hand, was the final authority in 
the classroom, dispensing "justice or injustice in the 
little matters that seemingly are not important--but which 
actually are very important."94 But outside the classroom, 
the teacher had no authority, not even over her own life. 
Because of "the pressures of both the classroom dictator-
ship and the outside social dictatorship," a teacher could 
"hardly survive in a whole piece--let alone grow and mature 
and have broadening concepts of man's  tolerance and 
dignity."95 

Writing in Educational Administration and Super-

93 Ibid., pp. 51-52. 94 Ibid., p. 241. 
95 Ibid.
vision in 1959, Arthur Blumberg presented information concerning how teachers felt about authority represented in the school administration. Seventy-eight percent of the teachers who took part in the study indicated that "teachers as a group were too pliable and submissive in the face of authority." Content analysis of the responses revealed that a generalized fear syndrome—fear of losing job status, of criticism, of incurring disfavor—most likely accounted for the way teachers perceived themselves.

While the study revealed that teachers viewed themselves as too pliable and submissive, Phil, Tess, and Lillian in Betrayal behaved in ways contrary to the submissive image. The image of the high school teacher was fully and positively drawn in the novel.

Conclusion: 1950-1959

During the 1950's, nine novels portrayed the image of the high school teacher as a main or minor character, but five of the novels reflected a negative image. Of the five novels reflecting a negative image, four of them (I'm Owen Harrison Harding, Some Came Running, Harrison High, Hobbledehoy's Hero) portrayed the high school teacher as a minor character. Depicting the high school teacher as a

96 Arthur Blumberg, "Are Teachers 'Doormats?'", Educational Administration and Supervision 45 (July 1959): 216.
main character, *Sugar on the Slate* reflected a negative image of the teacher. Four novels (*Teacher Lady*, *The Blackboard Jungle*, *Strike Heaven on the Face*, *Betrayal*) portrayed the high school teacher as both a main character and a positive image.

In the Fifties, as in earlier decades, fictional high school teachers were underpaid and overburdened, but their position had become even more difficult because the social behavior of the students had changed. Often the students had a defiant disregard for both education and the school, and most of the teachers were unable to cope with the social change taking place. Only a few inspiring teachers stood out among the members of a fictional high school faculty. Often the few outstanding teachers had to contend with the fear, incompetence, or cynicism of their colleagues.
CHAPTER VII

THE FICTIONAL PORTRAIT DURING THE RADICAL YEARS: 1960-1969

The 1960's ushered in far-reaching political and social changes that affected secondary education in the United States. A significant change came in the extent that the federal government involved itself in education. In 1957 the Russians had shaken America's confidence in its scientific and technological superiority by launching Sputnik. Unwilling to be bested in space, in the Cold War, and in excellence, Americans generally favored increased federal spending in education. In 1958 Congress passed the National Defense Education Act, which was designed to improve the teaching of science, foreign languages, and mathematics. The Act was extended in 1964.

During the 1960's Congress enacted over twenty major pieces of legislation for education. To improve secondary education in America, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 provided high schools with funds for such educational needs as library books, textbooks, and other materials. Other pieces of legislation also aided secondary education.
A second major change during the 1960's was the stepped-up effort of black Americans to obtain the justice and equality which had been promised to them since the Civil War. The militancy of black people contributed to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which placed a ban on federal aid to school districts practicing racial discrimination. In 1955 the Supreme Court had ordered the desegregation of schools "with all deliberate speed," but in 1965 the Court had abandoned its 1955 rule and declared that delays in school desegregation were no longer tolerable.¹ In 1968 the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, called for integration as a national necessity and recommended various means to improve the quality of education in the black community.

The 1960's witnessed riots in inner-city ghettos, the Vietnam war, and the assassinations of political leaders. It witnessed the new power and impact that television was having on American society and education. It witnessed the novelists' dissatisfaction with aspects of American life. In 1960 John Updike's Rabbit, Run depicted American life as dull, vulgar, and stifling in its conformity.² The main character was Harry (Rabbit) Angstrom,

in 1960, the novel exposed false respectability in a small and snobbish town in northern New England. Cooper Station was made up of people who profited from the existence of a nearby factory town named Cooper Mills.

Cooper Station High School "was a beautiful new building, all brick and glass and completely fireproofed and almost everybody in Cooper Station regarded it as the town's monument to free education and its tribute to the American Way."\(^5\) Although talk about building the same kind of school in Cooper Mills came up sometimes, the talk usually ended with several rationalizations such as "most of the kids at the Mills don't really want to go to high school anyway" or "most of them who do go never finish."\(^6\)

The Cooper Station Town Board of Guardians supervised all social and educational matters that concerned the town. Doris Delaney Palmer, a reformed tart who made a respectable marriage and then became one of the town's guardians, thrived on the "poking and prying" that her position allowed her. She was at her best in the selection of new teachers, for she relentlessly probed into the life of each applicant. Because the town was paying the teachers' salaries, Doris believed that she could not be too careful about the kind of person who was to be put in charge of young people. However, Doris's husband could not

\(^5\)Ibid., p. 23. \(^6\)Ibid.
understand how the Guardians ever found "anybody dumb enough to apply for a job" at Cooper Station because of the low salary. Nevertheless, Doris maintained that "to a dedicated schoolteacher there is no such thing as money." 7

When a vacancy arose in the history department at the high school, Arthur Everett, the school superintendent, recommended Christopher Pappas for the position. Although Chris had been highly recommended by the head of the department of education at the university, Doris Palmer opposed Chris's appointment because she suspected that Chris and his wife, Lisa, knew the truth about her unsavory past. When the other Guardians voted against Doris and hired Chris, she initiated a petition to reverse their decision to hire Chris. To keep Chris and Lisa out of Cooper Station, an alleged benefactor of the town donated three thousand dollars to buy Chris's contract. Chris accepted the offer: school superintendents all over New England had heard what the town was doing to Chris, and some of them offered Chris a job.

Chris, who was a World War II veteran, had gone to the university on the GI Bill and graduated from it magna cum laude. During the war, Chris decided to become a teacher because "he had come to realize that the problems of the world could be solved if one taught the children

7Ibid., p. 27.
His first teaching position was in Devon High School where he taught social science. "Neither the members of the P.T.A. nor the principal interfered with his teaching methods and there were enough bright students enrolled in the school to make his job exciting to him." Although he was content to teach at Devon, he became "weary of watching his wife pinch every penny" and he accepted a position at West Farrington where he had been offered more money.

At West Farrington, Chris had problems with the school board and the community. A school board member whose daughter was failing told Chris that the girl had "better pass or else." Some of the townspeople called Chris a Communist because he told his students that "some of the greatest writers in the world were Russians." Moreover, he had not endeared himself to many members of the community by saying that "the Puritans had run away from intolerance only to become intolerant themselves.

Interestingly Chris had the very same problem with the community that Dave Nordhall had in Charles Calitri's Strike Heaven on the Face, published two years before The Tight White Collar. Dave Norhall, like Chris Pappas, had been accused of being a Communist because he told a class

8 Ibid., p. 65. 9 Ibid., p. 71. 10 Ibid., p. 31. 11 Ibid.
that "some of the world's greatest writers were Russians." \(^{12}\) Dave, like Chris, had not endeared himself in the community by saying something about "the Puritans running away from intolerance to become intolerant themselves." \(^{13}\) Obviously these were controversial issues in both communities and to both authors.

In *The Tight White Collar*, Chris Pappas reflected a positive stereotype of the public high school teacher. The *New York Times* said that several of the characters in the novel came "dangerously close to being stereotyped little islands in a formless fictional landscape." \(^{14}\) Chris, however, did not come "dangerously close" to being a stereotype; he qualified for the classification.

In 1963, Benjamin Siegel's *The Principal* recorded the daily events of Robert Evans, the newly appointed principal of Pine Hills High School located in a growing suburb about fifty miles from New York City. \(^{15}\) The School Board hired Robert after the retirement of John Loomis, the easy-going and highly admired principal of Pine Hills High. But Robert had doubts about his predecessor's approach. John Loomis "didn't believe that there could be workable rules

\(^{12}\)Calitri, p. 81. \(^{13}\)Ibid. 


for everyone. Loomis, for example, had a rule that the halls had to be cleared and teachers were assigned to enforce it. But Loomis stopped and chatted with students and said nothing about their being in the hall. Observing this exception to the rule, the teachers soon stopped questioning students wandering through the halls. Loomis also had a theory that a misbehaving student was usually hungry; therefore, Loomis fed misbehaving students in his office. Robert disagreed with Loomis's approach and thereafter alienated many people.

John Loomis and Robert Evans also differed on their philosophical view of the purpose of the school. Loomis believed "the job of the school was to teach those subjects related to the work kids would be doing after they were out of school." Evans, on the other hand, opposed the kind of curriculum that consisted of only "useful" subjects. Although he admitted that it might be silly to teach algebra to a boy who was going "to spend the rest of his life selling shirts and ties," he questioned the omniscience of anyone "to say where and at what" a boy would spend the rest of his life. He believed that the school should shower students with sparks of knowledge without presuming to understand everything that sets the learning process afire.

16 Ibid., p. 155. 17 Ibid., pp. 8-9. 18 Ibid., p. 9.
Explaining to a Board member the school's goals, Robert said:

I hope that our teachers would be able to increase the efficiency with which your child is able to educate himself. Along with that, he would get the information you speak of, and would know where to find more. He would be able to speak, read, and write reasonably well. He would be "informed" in specific areas—science, languages, history. With a little luck he should be ready for some education by the time we get through with him.¹⁹

To establish his own approach in administering the school, Robert initiated a specific set of rules and refused to be accommodating as John Loomis had been during his administration. He refused to change a boy's room assignment because a parent liked one teacher better than another. He demanded that the halls be free of students at all times except between classes. He required all visitors to report to the office and prohibited the students from leaving the school grounds during the course of the day. And he promised prompt disciplinary action if the students failed to observe the rules of the school.

Repercussions came swiftly from the community, especially from the owner of a nearby lunchroom. Since the lunchroom owner depended on the students for his business, he complained to the members of the School Board about Robert's action. At a meeting, "Robert had to listen to himself described as heartless, a tyrannical destroyer of

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 35-36.
the free-enterprise system and the God-given American right to earn a living." 20 Pressured by the Board, Robert rescinded his rule which forbade students to leave the school grounds.

Robert Evans created problems for Fenton Eberly, the superintendent of schools in Pine Hills. Dr. Eberly, a "master of meaningless phrases," saw amicable public relations as a necessity for getting along well in the community and in the school, but Robert disregarded this view in order to put the high school on a sound educational basis. Because Robert disliked mediocrity, a senseless curriculum, and incompetent teachers, he often expressed views that incited hostility rather than covered up shortcomings. He believed that Dr. Eberly achieved only mediocrity by placating parents and members of the School Board. He objected to such meaningless objectives in the curriculum as "To develop right attitudes and patterns of conduct through reading books that reveal characteristics of the good life." 21 He also opposed teacher tenure laws that allowed incompetent teachers to go on teaching, but he was against the arbitrary dismissal of teachers.

Teacher tenure concerned not only Robert Evans in The Principal, but it also concerned researchers of the legal and social status of teachers. In 1963 the Review of

20Ibid., p. 227. 21Ibid., p. 81.
Educational Research reported that a study of tenure court decisions showed that the courts for the last three decades insisted on strict adherence to prescribed procedures for the dismissal of tenured teachers. The courts held that the purpose of the tenure laws was "to improve the school system by protecting competent teachers from dismissal for political, partisan, capricious, or purely personal or malicious reasons." Like Robert Evans, who wanted school problems handled by professional people, the task force of the National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards wanted to create a professional standards commission "to establish and to enforce standards for the admission and retention of qualified persons in teaching and for the separation of the incompetent and unethical." 

In The Principal, Robert Evans thought that "Mr. Chips was rarely found in the schools." He believed that "teachers--like most people--were generally irascible, dull, and incapable of passing on an inspiration that they had either never experienced or had forgotten." But Dr. Eberly thought that teachers should be malleable. He wanted teachers who were imbued with the safe company

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23 Ibid., p. 403.

24 Siegel, p. 63.

25 Ibid.
practices of the State Teachers Association, but he did not want experienced teachers who had been exposed to unionism in New York City.

In the novel, the image of the principal was positively stereotyped, but the image of the other teachers was often ambiguously portrayed. A book review in the Library Journal said the novel had "value as a case study of the school principalship," but "the characters never quite come clear to the readers." 26

In John Updike's The Centaur, published in 1963, the story of Chiron, the half-man, half-horse creature from Greek mythology paralleled the story of George Caldwell, a knowledgeable but erratic high school teacher in Olinger, Pennsylvania. 27 According to mythology, the immortal Chiron, the wise teacher of the gods' sons, gave up his immortality to save Prometheus, the god who stole fire for man. Told on two levels--the realistic and the mythological--the story shifted between two narratives throughout the novel. But only the realistic level concerned this study of the high school teacher.

George Caldwell, a teacher for fifteen years, taught science and coached swimming at Olinger High School. The first glimpse of him came as he left his classroom to

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have an arrow removed from his heel: a student had shot him. When he returned, Louis Zimmerman, the capricious and lecherous principal who tyrannized teachers and ogled young girls, had taken over the class. Deciding to make the occasion the monthly classroom visitation, Zimmerman took a seat in the rear of the room.

Caldwell lived in dread of the supervising principal's monthly classroom visitations. The brief little typewritten reports that followed them, containing a blurred blend of acid detail and educational jargon, had the effect, if they were good, of exalting Caldwell for days and, if they were bad (as they nearly always seemed to be; even an ambiguous adjective poisoned the cup), of depressing him for weeks.  

Addled and unprepared, Caldwell outlined in twenty minutes the evolution of the universe and of life. Zimmerman noted on his monthly visitation report that "the students did not seem well-prepared and the teacher consequently resorted to the lecture method."  

George Caldwell was an unpretentious man who scavenged from the high school Lost and Found department. He was the kind of teacher who had to gather his nerve to return to the classroom, for he felt that the students hated him. His classroom was noisy and disorderly because the students liked rather than respected him. Describing the cruelty of the students, Peter, Caldwell's son, said:

An hour after they had goaded him to the point of frenzy . . . they would show up in his room, anxious

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28 Ibid., p. 31.  29 Ibid., p. 86.
to seek advice, make confessions, be reassured. And the instant they had left his company they would mock him again.30

George's years of teaching had enabled him to guage certain qualities in students: "itchiness, intelligence, and athletic ability."31 Deifendorf was George's "itchiest" student because the boy was a constant irritation in class. When Deifendorf told George that memorizing lists of extinct animals was unnecessary for non-college bound students, George agreed with him. "But that's what they give me to teach," George said to Deifendorf, "and I'm going to teach it to you until it kills me."32 George wanted to be out of the classroom and on the streets, but he had a family to feed and teaching the prescribed subject matter was the way not to lose his job. Explaining his view of school to Deifendorf, George said:

The Founding Fathers . . . in their wisdom decided that children were an unnatural strain on parents. So they provided jails called schools, equipped with tortures called an education. School is where you go between when your parents can't take you and industry can't take you. I am a paid keeper of Society's unusables--the lame, the halt, the insane, and the ignorant.33

During the Great Depression, George had been unemployable because he had no marketable skills. But his father-in-law's nephew got him a job teaching. George did not wish teaching on his worst enemy. He had advised

30 Ibid., p. 79.  
31 Ibid., p. 80.  
32 Ibid., p. 79.  
33 Ibid., p. 80.
Deifendorf to settle down and learn or else resign himself to the possibility of teaching school. George hated teaching, but after fifteen years, he felt, it was too late to get out.

A lack of money was a constant problem with George. In spite of his poor financial condition, he gave a drunk his last thirty-five cents. Explaining to the drunk why the amount was so small, George said, "I'm a public school teacher and our pay scale is way behind that of industry." 34

In reality, the salaries of teachers had caught up with the earnings of employees in manufacturing, but teachers' salaries were still behind the earnings of other professional groups. In 1963, the same year The Centaur was published, the NEA Research Bulletin reported that the average salary for all teachers was $5,670. Men in the secondary school received an average salary of $6,080 which probably reflected a higher level of preparation. 35

In The Centaur, the high school teacher was fully and negatively characterized. A review of the novel in Time said that George Caldwell "does not leave the mind easily" and was Updike's "best creation yet." 36 Of George Caldwell, the London Times Literary Supplement said, "He is

34 Ibid., p. 122.


36 Time, 8 February 1963, p. 86.
one of those rare people in modern fiction, a really convincing good character."\(^{37}\)

In 1964, Bel Kaufman's *Up the Down Staircase* documented in a unique style the problems and defects of a New York City high school.\(^{38}\) The main character in the novel was Sylvia Barrett, a new teacher at Calvin Coolidge High School. The story unfolded through the use of a series of techniques: letters to a college friend, notes between teachers, circulars and memoranda from the office, students' compositions, faculty meeting minutes, and notes from the suggestion box. The novel's school-oriented title came from the note Sylvia received from the administrative assistant, James J. McHabe: "Please admit bearer to class --Detained by me for going Up the Down staircase and subsequent insolence."\(^{39}\)

On Sylvia's first day, she faced overcrowded classes, an overwhelming amount of clerical work, and an endless succession of administrative directives such as "please keep all circulars on file, in their order."\(^{40}\) Like Richard Dadier in *The Blackboard Jungle*, Sylvia received a warning about students: "Never turn your back to


\(^{39}\) Ibid., p. 111.

\(^{40}\) Ibid., p. 28.
the class when writing on the board--learn the overhead backhand." She also received a short lesson on the school's administrative language from her colleague, Bea Schachter. In a note to Sylvia, Bea wrote:

You'll soon learn the language. "Let it be a challenge to you" means you're stuck with it; "interpersonal relationships" is a fight between kids; "ancillary civic agencies for supportive discipline" means call the cops; "Language Arts Dept." is the English office; "literature based on child's reading level and experiential background" means that's all they've got in the Book Room; "non-academic-minded" is a delinquent; and "It has come to my attention" means you're in trouble.

New teachers at Calvin Coolidge received the most difficult assignments. Sylvia was a "floater"; that is, she traveled from room to room to teach her classes. She had Hall Patrol which carried more prestige than Cafeteria Duty but less than Staircase Patrol. All the teachers had one such building assignment each day as well as five teaching classes, a homeroom, and one unassigned period. To call an unassigned period "free" was unforgiveable. "Those who play their cards right," Bea Schachter wrote to Sylvia, "are relieved of homeroom, or even a teaching class, by becoming Lateness Coordinators or Program Integrators or Vocational Counselors or some such thing."

The high school teachers' heavy load was not common

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41 Ibid., p. 36.  
42 Ibid., p. 24.  
to fictional teachers alone. Writing in *Clearing House* in 1964, William D. Hedges, the director of the Division of Education Research at the University of Virginia, criticized the heavy load secondary school teachers had during a day and offered a plan to revamp the working day. Of major significance was his description of the high school teachers' day in school:

The majority of secondary school teachers teach five solids each day, with a study hall, hall-duty, and an extracurricula [sic] activity such as coaching a play thrown in. In some systems the five subjects have been reduced to four, but this is most commonly true only for the head of the department. For three or four minutes between classes the teacher is expected to be standing by the door of his classroom monitoring entering and leaving students, and ten minutes are allowed for a quick smoke if he gulps down lunch and is not on hall duty. Otherwise, the high school teacher is occupied for every minute of every day.44

In *Up the Down Staircase*, Sylvia, an English major with a Master's Degree in Chaucerian studies, was eager to imbue her students with "a love for their language and literature." But she saw that her students were far removed from the students Professor Winters had lectured about in Education 114. "I have met the Adolescent face to face"; she wrote to a friend, "obviously, Prof. Winters had not."45

Sylvia had forty-six students in her homeroom.


45 Kaufman, p. 41.
Standing warily in front of her class, Sylvia had to plead for their attention as they whistled, shouted, drummed on desks, clacked inkwell lids, played catch with board erasers, tried to trip each other in the aisles, and performed all their acts with "an air of vacant innocence." But Sylvia soon discovered that when students were sitting silently in their seats, "the silence had nothing to do with attention"; it was "a glazed silence, ready to be shattered at a moment."46 Later, Sylvia discovered that talking was one of the cardinal sins in the high school.

Administrators and their bureaucratic inanities were considered major handicaps for teachers trying to reach students. Even though Dr. Maxwell Clarke, the principal, was really a Mr., he preferred to be called Dr. "for reasons of prestige." He served generally as a figurehead for the school and "existed mainly as a signature on the circulars." Although the teachers and students saw little of Dr. Clarke, he occasionally materialized to make a speech at an assembly or to conduct important visitors through the school. Clarke's administrative assistant, James J. McHabe, ran the school; he was in charge of discipline and supplies. He had gained the reputation for issuing bulletins filled with educational jargon, for

46 Ibid., p. 42.
hating to part with a paper clip, and for putting a premium on silence in the school.

Up the Down Staircase portrayed good as well as bad teachers. To Sylvia, Bea Schachter represented one of those few good teachers who truly loved young people and who worked a kind of magic in class in spite of the many handicaps in teaching. But Sylvia thought that most of the teachers had either "given up" or were "taking it out on the kids." Describing some of her colleagues in a letter, Sylvia wrote:

There is Mary Lewis, bowed and cowed, who labors through the halls as overloaded as a pack mule, thriving on discomfort and overwork, compulsively following all directions from supervisors, a willing martyr to the system. She's an old-timer who parses sentences and gives out zeros to kids who chew gum.

There is Henrietta Pastorfield, a hearty spinster who is "married to the school," who woos the kids by entertaining them, convinced that lessons must be fun, knowledge sugar-coated, and that teacher should be pal.

There is Fred Loomis, a math teacher stuck with two out-of-license English classes, who hates kids with a pure and simple hatred.47

Thus, Sylvia thought that a major problem in teaching was not "unreachable kids but unteachable teachers," but, her colleague, Bea Schachter, believed teachers were "not so much unteachable as unrewarded."48

Like Richard Dadier in the Blackboard Jungle, Sylvia wanted to reach the students so that she might be able to teach them. From her students' compositions, she

47 Ibid., p. 66.  
received an important revelation. "I saw," Sylvia said, "how desperately they need me, or someone like me. There aren't enough of us." 49 Undoubtedly Sylvia was very idealistic. But eventually she saw that love was what she had wanted from all her students but she had never really loved them back. Sylvia had been not only idealistic but also naive. When a student carrying a switchblade knife was suspended, she disapproved of the suspension because it put the student outside of the school's 'control for a specified period, to roam the streets and join the gangs.' 50

Sylvia Barrett, the dominant image of the high school teacher in *Up the Down Staircase*, was a positive stereotype. Of the novel, *Commonweal* said:

. . . the educationalist's [Kaufman's] felt obligation to be fair and constructive deprives the characters of imaginative life: this begins with the heroine [Sylvia], but once we perceive that she is a receptacle for typical responses to teaching rather than a human being we begin to have doubts about the rest of the characters, about the too-neat way in which they illustrate all the recognized school types. 51

Jessica Courtyard, the main character in Kathleen Kranidas's *One Year in Autumn*, was not a "recognized school type" even though she was not fully drawn. 52 She frater-

49 Ibid., p. 78.  
50 Ibid., p. 178.  
nized with her students, made her house an intellectual center for young people, and fell in love with a man half her age. Published in 1965, the novel was about Jessica's twentieth year as a teacher of English in a Seattle high school. For twenty years, Jessica had inspired her students by valuing "intellectual curiosity and integrity." Then, at forty-two she became emotionally aroused and fell in love with Bud Adams, an older brother of a former student.

The first glimpse of Jessica came when she returned from Riverdale, New York where she had been an exchange teacher for a year. Chester Adams, one of her students in Riverdale, appeared shortly thereafter and Jessica provided him with a room. Bud Adams, Chester's older brother who wanted to be an artist, soon arrived in Seattle and Jessica rented a room to the two of them.

Jessica, Bud, and Chester formed the intellectual core for some of Jessica's students and Jessica's home became a place for young people to exchange ideas. But some parents objected to this exchange of ideas. Jim O'Reilly, for example, telephoned Jessica and said:

Maybe other parents let you get away with it but I'm not about to watch you warp my daughter; she's not going to be turned into a communist and a whore by any red madam of a school teacher.53

In Jessica's house, Jim O'Reilly again protested:

53 Ibid., p. 58.
it's shameful--it's criminal, actually--that an American girl in an American school should be getting these ideas from a teacher who is paid by us taxpayers to teach our kids English. You are not hired to teach these kids sex or politics; you're paid to teach them English.\textsuperscript{54}

For years the goal of right-wing extremists in the United States had been to weed out alleged Communist teachers in the schools. In 1965, \textit{Look} described the many tactics used by right-wing organizations "to rid America's schools of alleged Communist influence."\textsuperscript{55} To achieve their goal, the right-wing groups intimidated and took over some local Parent-Teacher Associations. In Portland, Oregon, for example, the PTA of Wilson High School had scheduled a civil rights speaker. Parents who had arranged for the speaker received numerous telephone calls "which labeled the speaker, the principal, and the PTA president as Communist."\textsuperscript{56}

The PTA received unusual pressure to have a speaker that represented the caller's special interest. The article in \textit{Look} cited similar examples in the vicious war that was being fought. Jim O'Reilly's accusation against Jessica Courtyard in \textit{One Year in Autumn} was only a minor skirmish in a larger war.

In the novel, George Mumford, a school adminis-

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{54} Ibid., p. 86.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Ernest Dunbar, "The Plot to Take Over the PTA," \textit{Look} 29 (7 September 1965): 27.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Ibid., p. 28.
\end{itemize}
trator, warned Jessica to be more cautious in her personal relationships with students and to spend less time on controversial topics in class. But Jessica argued that if she could not teach what was worth teaching, then she would rather not teach. She maintained that students were either free to explore ideas or they were not. "I've always believed," she said, "students should accept the full responsibility for their minds." For Jessica, the search for truth, regardless of where the search led, was integrity.

To her class, Jessica said:

Don't ever be afraid except of a failure to search for truth. You have the intelligence. You have the courage. Nothing is worth the indecency of fear. And nothing good can live juxtaposed with fear: all good things depend on courage. What you read, what you write, what you think—all take integrity.

Jessica, the dominant image of the high school teacher in One Year in Autumn, was generally positive. But Jessica's elevated sentiments often portrayed her as slightly unreal. "Jessica's emotions," said the New York Times, "are represented in such cloudy euphemisms that it is nigh impossible to feel any sense of inner turmoil.

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In 1965 James Leigh's What Can You Do? described Phil Fuller's experiences during his senior year at

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57 Kranidas, p. 100.  
58 Ibid., p. 158.  
Ridgemont High School and his first year in college.  

Believing that he was smarter than 99 per cent of the people around him, Phil smugly "conned" his way through high school. He wrote in his compositions exactly what he thought Mr. Ames, the Senior Problems teacher, would want to read. In describing Mr. Ames and his class, Phil said:

... Mr. Ames felt it his duty to unearth Problems for those of us who didn't produce. There were a lot of liberal lectures about the Responsibilities of Mature Citizens, and the various Problems of Race Relations, Alcoholism, Drug Addiction, and— for dessert— Sex. Naturally, Mr. Ames encouraged Free Discussion: "I want us all to feel free to say anything in this room," he said daily, the result being that no one talked except at gunpoint.  

Once during the semester Phil had become careless and expressed an unorthodox view in his composition on "The Problem of Voter Apathy." In the composition, Phil had written "that people didn't vote in city or state elections because most of them had sense enough to know it wouldn't make any difference." Mr. Ames, who preferred to be called Bob by the students, saw Phil's cynical attitude as a problem that needed to be corrected. He called Phil in to discuss the dangers of becoming cynical. After giving Phil an "I'm-on-your-side" talk, Mr. Ames gave Phil a paperback book about sex and told him to read it. Of this book, Phil said:


61 Ibid., p. 97.

62 Ibid., p. 98.
I gave the thing a three-minute leafing and found there wasn't any interesting sex in it. Then I forgot it for several weeks, until I noticed him giving me a meaningful look every day. So I read it, threw up, and began to wonder what I would tell him I liked about it.63

Although Phil's observations about Mr. Ames were amusing, Phil showed little regard for anyone. He was scornful not only of teachers but also of school counselors. Referring to a school counselor, he said, "You know the type: not smart enough to be shrinker first class, so they play the game in miniature with fourteen-year-olds."64 Phil also had little regard for Coach Wendell "Skeeter" Hurley; he had an affair with Hurley's sex-deprived wife. Phil's smugness and insincerity made him a rather unlikeable character. And Mr. Ames reflected an image of the high school teacher that was generally negative.

John Morressy's The Blackboard Cavalier, published in 1966, was the story of Ernie Quinn, a new English teacher whose tenacity put him in conflict with the established authority of Glen Park High School.65 Although Ernie dreamed of being a "book bum," he settled for being a high school teacher. Wanting to do a good job teaching, Ernie disliked the common practice of game-playing at Glen

63 Ibid., p. 100.
64 Ibid., p. 41.
Park High: a practice that Ernie's colleague, Fred Millard cynically described as:

Having a lot to say at faculty meetings—and making sure you go to them . . . getting all the forms in early; not failing anyone you shouldn't fail, or better still, not failing anyone; being seen around the school after hours giving the kids extra help; volunteering to do anything the office suggests, no matter how absurd it is. . . .

Ernie also disliked such terms as "new challenges," for he "had found that people who spoke eagerly of 'new challenges' usually intended to dump them on someone else at the first opportunity."

Ernie's most formidable enemy in the school was Gregory Peter Mikropoulous, the English department chairman. Mikropoulous "was intelligent, articulate, poised, and altogether charming at first acquaintance; and he was sly, treacherous, shifty, vengeful, and vindictive ever after."

He talked at great length but said little of importance. He made his first classroom visitation after Ernie had been teaching for almost three months. At the post-observation conference, Mikropoulous "placed Ernie in the victim's chair, the one that faced directly into the sun glaring in the window. . . ."

At this first conference, Mikropoulous criticized Ernie for "too much reliance on notes, not enough class participation, questions too

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66 Ibid., p. 43.  
67 Ibid., p. 6.  
68 Ibid., p. 12.  
simple, answers too obvious, voice too low, overdependence on blackboard, and so on. . . ."70 After his second classroom visitation, Mikropoulous criticized Ernie for just the opposite reasons. Ernie worried about Mikropoulous's third and final visit since being observed by the department chairman was "like playing Russian roulette with a fully loaded pistol."71

To Ernie, observations were not only "horrible, hateful things," but they were also dishonest. He felt that when an administrator walked into a classroom, the students behaved differently and the teacher taught differently. He saw no point to the observation because the observation itself changed the situation. He said, "... nobody really knows what good teaching is. They can come into a classroom and watch a teacher perform, and then all they can honestly say is that they liked it or they didn't like it. But they can't really condemn anything."72

Ernie faulted the uniform lesson approach which allegedly assured a certain minimum of instruction. As an alternative, Ernie suggested that a trained and experienced teacher "should be free to teach any way he likes, as long as it gets results."73 From his own school experience, Ernie believed that he had learned more things from

70 Ibid., p. 17. 71 Ibid., p. 100.
72 Ibid., p. 77. 73 Ibid., p. 79.
teachers who struck him as "slightly mad" than from the ones who were the "nice normal mediocrities." Moreover, he argued that having students taught entirely by normal people was doing the students a disservice because life is full of people not quite normal and young people should be exposed to them. "Being taught by an occasional nut," he said, "would act as a kind of immunization program." ⁷⁴

The idea of motivation was as much of an absurdity to Ernie as the idea of observation. For Ernie, fear in one form or another had been the sole motivating force in his own schooling. He did not think a teacher could be "a sort of educational Pied Piper whose mere entrance into a classroom was sufficient to kindle a wild desire for knowledge" in students whose interests at the time might lie elsewhere. ⁷⁵ Even in his graduate school classes, Ernie had yet to see a professor come into class with "a bag of tricks to make students clap their hands, and shriek, and beg to be taught." ⁷⁶ Nevertheless, motivation such as asking the class a stimulating question was what Mikropoulous expected when he made his observation.

While Mikropoulous existed as the visible enemy for Ernie, Dr. Norman Shefin, the principal, existed only as a voice over the public address system. Because of Dr. ⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 81. ⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 93-94. ⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 95.
Shefin's "functional non-existence," Miss Grimm, the assistant principal, was in charge of both student and faculty discipline. Ernie believed that Miss Grimm qualified for this position because "she had a deep-seated resentment of youth, young people, and young ideas and a firm conviction that everyone under sixty ought to be put in his place and kept there." 77

Ernie's co-belligerent against the power structure of Glen Park High was Bob Ferriss. They were "bound by a chain forged of resentments, frustrations, and feeble defiances all directed against the power elite of the Board of Education and Glen Park High School. . . ." 78 Bob Ferriss was often contradictory about his political beliefs, but he believed them strongly and loudly.

Another of Ernie's allies was Fred Millard, a good teacher who would be helpful to his colleagues about everything unrelated to teaching or schools. Ernie believed that Fred was ahead of the game at Glen Park High but "never lost sight of the fact that it was a game." 79 Fred maintained that everyone in the school liked to talk as if they cared about the students but in fact they cared only for themselves.

Being a new teacher, Ernie was given the intel-

77 Ibid., p. 47. 78 Ibid., p. 64.
79 Ibid., p. 43.
lectually slower students. "His typical class," the narrator said, "contained approximately thirty-five sleepy, surly, tenaciously unintellectual students..." But Glen Park High was a good school with mostly good students. They built satellites and cyclotrons, wrote letters to the Pope and Bertrand Russell, and got their pictures in the papers for winning scholarships. However, Steve Hirsh, the son of a school board member, became known for a different reason: he received passing grades without ever doing any work. Always given to a new teacher, Hirsh became the boy who never failed. Ernie failed him and found that his position for the following year was at stake if he did not pass Steve.

The problem of being an unconventional teacher like Ernie was a concern both in fiction and non-fiction. In the article "How to Be an Unconventional Teacher and Stay Hired," published in Clearing House in 1966, Richard W. Fogg, a high school teacher in Riverside, Illinois, outlined eight principles for an unconventional teacher to follow. He maintained, for example, that teachers who were under criticism by the community and administration should examine their own attitudes. He felt that the real reasons for the criticism lie in the teacher's "displaced hostility, excessive need for individuality, disrespect for one's

80 Ibid., p. 96.
critics as people, and desire to be punished."81 Thus, the reason teachers were fired was "usually to be found in their own emotions and values."82 Undoubtedly an unconventional teacher following Fogg's principles would be rehired but perhaps being a lot less unconventional. Had Ernie Quinn in The Blackboard Cavalier examined his "own emotions and values," perhaps he would not have had to look for another teaching position.

The high school teacher in The Blackboard Cavalier was fully and positively drawn. "The characters," said the Library Journal, "are fully fleshed and credible, allowing for pardonable hyperbole."83 Writing about himself and the novel in the Library Journal, John Morressy said, "I have been a high school teacher, . . . but [this novel] is not an autobiography, it's pure fiction based on my observations and experiences in seven years of teaching at a variety of schools."84

The setting for the next novel was Greenwood County in Kentucky. Jesse Stuart's Mr. Gallion's School, published in 1967, was the story of George Gallion's return to

82 Ibid., p. 36.
84 Ibid., 1 February 1966, p. 733.
Kensington High School where he had been the principal twenty years earlier.\textsuperscript{85} Forced into retirement by several heart attacks, George decided to return to the principalship because of the complete breakdown in discipline at Kensington High. "The kids down there," a barber told George, "tell the teachers what to do."\textsuperscript{86}

One of the first problems George faced as the new principal of the high school was to find qualified teachers. Many of the teachers had resigned because they could not stand the job for the low salary they received. Explaining the problem of low salaries to George, John Bennington, the superintendent of schools, said:

\begin{quote}
It's not the school administrators' fault we can't pay teachers enough in Appalachia, one of the poorest parts of America . . . This is the people's fault. About half of the people don't care whether we have good schools or not. While about half of the other half want something for nothing. It takes money to have good schools.\textsuperscript{87}
\end{quote}

But George followed every lead he could get to find teachers. His problem was that "most of the teachers he saw were not qualified or were getting a far higher salary in Ohio and West Virginia than his own state would pay."\textsuperscript{88}

Actually the Research Division of the National Education Association also reported that the average annual salaries


\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., p. 4.

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., p. 19.

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., p. 61.
of instructional staff were lower in Kentucky than in Ohio and West Virginia. While the average annual salary in Kentucky was $5,680 in 1966-67, it was $6,782 in Ohio and $5,917 in West Virginia.\footnote{National Education Association, Research Division, \textit{Estimates of School Statistics}, various issues, quoted in Johansen, p. 365.}

In Mr. Gallion's School, George told his teachers that they should be paid a higher salary but that a higher salary would not guarantee better teaching. "Many of you are here not for better salaries," he said to the teachers, "but because of your love of teaching."\footnote{Stuart, p. 50.} George wanted his teachers to take on other responsibilities in addition to a full teaching load. Since teaching for George was "a many-sided vocation," he expected the teachers to make teaching a passion rather than a routine.

When school opened, George had only thirteen teachers for six hundred twenty-five pupils and he had to use student teachers during some periods. Because of a shortage of classrooms, some teachers taught in unheated pre-fab buildings near the school. The school already had a discipline problem but George handled it immediately by using his "board of education" on the backside of an insolent student. He did not believe in suspending students because the school was a better environment for them.
than a pool hall. To the faculty, George said:

All of these pupils are our future . . . we can't make finished products out of all, but you'll be surprised how our good training, if we can give it, will influence their lives . . . I'm not for kicking them out as long as I believe they have a chance.91

George wanted his teachers to set a good example for their students. He felt it was unfair for teachers to smoke when students were not allowed to do the same thing. Using a loaded question, George asked his teachers: "Now let me ask you if you think it is fair for teachers to smoke and not allow the pupils."92 When no hands went up, George set down a rule that teachers would not be permitted to smoke. Moreover, teachers were not allowed to chew gum.

George's policy was to solve little problems before they became big ones. In the gymnasium, he explained to the entire student body the problems that the school faced and the rules that would be enforced. Comparing the students to planted corn, George told the assembly that the teachers would try to cultivate the students and to spray such obnoxious weeds as "cheating, lying, gambling, stealing, and skipping school." He told the students that they should be working the teachers harder than they were already worked.

With George Gallion's conviction that example and discipline set students right, Kensington High School

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91 Ibid., pp. 90-91.  
92 Ibid., p. 93.
slowly became a model school. "Everywhere it was the same," the narrator said, "Teachers were busy, pupils were well-dressed and serious, and the rooms were neat."93 The football team became victorious, the school band outstanding, and the students' desire to learn all-important. All of these achievements at Kensington High School came as a result of George Gallion's outstanding leadership.

The high school teacher in Mr. Gallion's School reflected a positively stereotyped image. "The characters," said the New York Times, "are merely names attached to the end of speeches. . . . But the greatest failure lies in . . . the character of Mr. Gallion. He turns out to be a Super-principal, a zealot who can say with absolute moral certainty, 'I know I'm right.'"94 Like George Gallion, Jesse Stuart had been a high school principal. Current Biography noted that Jesse Stuart had put "the fear of God into the town toughs as principal of the Greenup County High School."95

In 1968 a clash between local community groups and the teachers closed the New York City school system. At issue was the adoption of a decentralization plan which

93Ibid., p. 205.
95Current Biography, 1940 ed., s.v. "Stuart, Jesse."
gave local boards the power to hire and dismiss teachers. When the local board of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district ousted teachers unacceptable to the community, the teachers' union shut down the schools. Similarly, a clash between the community and the school in Brooklyn closed down Schuyler Colfax Senior High School in Donald Westlake's novel, *Up Your Banners*, published in 1969. At issue was the filling of a faculty opening in the high school with the principal's son, Oliver Abbott.

When Oliver appeared at the high school, the students led by black militant, Prescott Wade Sinclair, boycotted classes. For Sinclair, the specific issue did not matter. "The whole sick structure of society," Sinclair said on television, "is what we got to get at, and we got to get through the fabric any place and any time we can. Right here and now, it's Colfax." However, the issue for Letitia Quernik, a spokeswoman for the parents, was community control of the schools. "We want our chillun and our schools!" she told a television interviewer, "We the people of South Romulus know what is best for our chillun and our schools more than any of those people up in City Hall, so what we want for our schools is control!"

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97 Ibid., p. 54. 98 Ibid., p. 55.
As black demonstrators carrying white picket signs marched in front of the school, Leona Roof, a black physical education instructor at Colfax, grabbed Oliver and hustled him away from the demonstration. Because Oliver had been spending a lot of time at a beach and was unaware of the seething situation in the community, Leona gave him a quick lesson on the political implications of the controversy. Oliver learned from Leona that the push by black people for immediate integration into the white community had "shifted to building up the black community instead, with black curriculum, black teachers, black community control of their own schools."99

The Board of Education and the local community had come to an understanding that whenever an opening occurred, a black person would be given preference if he were qualified to fill the position. The fact that Oliver's father appointed his own son instead of a qualified black man triggered the boycott.

Negotiations for ending the boycott stalled because the interracial love affair between Oliver and Leona became offensive to both sides. After several intimidating experiences, the two teachers renounced their love for the good of the community. The boycott ended when both sides made some concessions.

99 Ibid., p. 63.
The image of the high school teacher in *Up Your Banners* was generally positive. Although Oliver Abbott was not a stereotype, he was too superficial and perhaps too naive to be a convincing character.

**Conclusion: 1960-1969**

In the 1960's eight novels depicted the high school teacher as a main character and two novels as a minor character. The minor characters in *Rabbit, Run* and *What Can You Do?* were negatively portrayed. Of the eight novels depicting the high school teacher as a main character, the fictional teachers reflected a positive stereotype in four novels (*The Tight White Collar*, *The Principal*, *Up the Down Staircase*, *Mr. Gallion's School*), a fully and positively drawn character in one novel (*The Blackboard Cavalier*), a generally positive character in two novels (*One Year in Autumn* and *Up Your Banners*), and a fully and negatively drawn character in one novel (*The Centaur*).

During the decade of the Sixties, the financial plight of the high school teacher again appeared on the fictional scene. Teachers' salaries had risen but the chronic problem of giving too little to teachers was still lingering in many of the novels. Although the novelists depicted the ineffectualness of many teachers, they alluded to the political, social, economic, and administrative conditions that helped to shape the attitude of
teachers. As in the novels of previous decades, the "real" teachers were in the minority.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

In the decades from 1920 to 1970, novelists created many diverse characters to depict the American public high school teacher. The characters played main and minor roles in novels and no doubt served a variety of purposes for the novelist. Still, these characters in the novels reflected an image of the high school teacher to the reader. They gave insight into the picture others had of teachers and into the problems that teachers faced in their professional and personal lives. Even though many of the novels failed to achieve a high degree of literary quality, they depicted with much fidelity the real world of the high school teacher and provided much truth about the contemporary situation which could be supported by non-fictional testimony.

In examining the relationship between the novelists' insights into the public high school teachers' situation and the non-fictional writers' testimony, this study developed a composite image of the teacher and appraised that image in terms of its positive or negative impact on the teacher and the teaching profession. An impressionistic approach, bolstered by book reviews, determined the kind of
image the high school teacher reflected in selected Amer­
ican novels published between 1920 and 1970. Therefore, some
general observations may be made about the fictional high
school teacher for that fifty year period.

This study examined thirty-four novels portraying
the high school teacher as a main or minor character. In
novels with distinctly contrasted images of the teacher,
the dominant image became the significant image. Of the
twenty-two novels depicting the high school teacher as a
main character, eighteen of them portrayed the teacher
positively even though twelve of the positive portraits were
stereotyped. The high number of positive portraits should
not cause optimistic delight since the positively portrayed
teachers were in a minority in America's fictional high
schools. The positive image was usually the main character
or as in the case of contrasting images, the dominant image.
The positively stereotyped images of the high school teacher
generally instructed the reader in educational problems,
issues, or conditions rather than depicted a human being
who taught high school. An uncritical reader would be left
with the idea that everything would be fine in American
education if only teachers could or would be like the ideal­
ized teacher portrayed in the novel.

From decade to decade, the high school teacher ap­
the Twenties, the high school teacher appeared as a main or minor character in three novels; in the Thirties, four novels; in the Forties, eight novels; in the Fifties, nine novels; and in the Sixties, ten novels.

Teachers were also writing novels with the American public high school as the setting. In the Forties, five teachers wrote novels that depicted the high school teacher as a main character. In the next decade, three teachers penned novels about the high school teacher and in the following decade another three teachers wrote novels that depicted the teacher-image. Eleven teacher-novelists portrayed the high school teacher as a main character, but seven of them positively stereotyped the fictional teacher. The wholly negative image of the high school teacher appeared mainly in novels depicting the teacher as a minor character, but only one of these novels was written by a teacher.

Low salaries and exacting demands on the teacher's professional and private life were common grievances running through the novels. The novelists showed that the pressure to conform to community norms often warped the lives of teachers. Generally financial insecurity and administrative repression marked the lives of the fictional high school teachers. Frustrated by school officials who were intimidating or cowardly or incompetent, the high school teacher
often taught under conditions that were demoralizing. Because of these conditions, the fictional picture leaves little doubt that Americans are most fortunate in having teachers as competent as they are in the American public high school.


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APPENDIX
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Main or Minor Character</th>
<th>Kind of Image</th>
<th>Total Impact</th>
<th>Teacher—From Available Information</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The Rampant Age (1928)</td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Treadmill (1929)</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Downfall (1929)</td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>GN</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>T</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>In Tragic Life (1932)</td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>GN</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Beyond the Street (1932)</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>GN</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>The Folks (1934)</td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>The Presence of Everett Marsh (1937)</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>P</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Miss Munday (1940)</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>T</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter (1940)</td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>The Human Comedy (1943)</td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>P</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Friday, Thank God! (1943)</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>P</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>And Thou Shalt Teach Them (1947)</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>The Hickory Stick (1948)</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>FPD</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>T</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>The Invisible Island (1948)</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>P</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>Miss Mallet (1948)</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>PS</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>Sugar on the Slate (1951)</td>
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<td>NS</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>Teacher Lady (1952)</td>
<td>Main</td>
<td>GP</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>The Blackboard Jungle (1954)</td>
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<td>Year</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>I'm Owen Harrison Harding</td>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>NS</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>Some Came Running</td>
<td>1957</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>Strike Heaven on the Face</td>
<td>1958</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>Harrison High</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Minor</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>Hobbledehoy's Hero</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>NS</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>Betrayal</td>
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<td>Main</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>Rabbit, Run</td>
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<td>GN</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td>The Tight White Collar</td>
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<td>PS</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>The Principal</td>
<td>1963</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>The Centaur</td>
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<td>Main</td>
<td>FND</td>
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<td>29.</td>
<td>Up the Down Staircase</td>
<td>1964</td>
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<td>PS</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>One Year in Autumn</td>
<td>1965</td>
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<td>32.</td>
<td>The Blackboard Cavalier</td>
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<td>Main</td>
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<td>1967</td>
<td>Main</td>
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<td>34.</td>
<td>Up Your Banners</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Main</td>
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</table>

aPS--Positive Stereotype; NS--Negative Stereotype; FPD--Fully and Positively Drawn; FND--Fully and Negatively Drawn; GP--Generally Positive; GN--Generally Negative.

bP--Positive; N--Negative.

cT--Teacher.
The dissertation submitted by Gregor Frederick Zellhofer had been read and approved by the following committee:

Dr. Rosemary V. Donatelli, Director
Associate Professor, Foundations of Education, Loyola

Dr. Gerald Lee Gutek
Dean, School of Education
Professor, Foundations of Education and of History Loyola

Dr. John M. Wozniak
Professor, Foundations of Education Loyola

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

January 17, 1980

Director's Signature