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Content analysis of five short stories preferred by a group of college freshmen

Billye Jewel Suber Williams

Atlanta University

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CONTENT ANALYSES OF FIVE SHORT STORIES PREFERRED
BY A GROUP OF COLLEGE FRESHMEN

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

BY
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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale.—One of the most disturbing facts about contemporary life in our country is the realization that our educational processes are not producing as strong and vital a product as is required in the total life of the society. A citizen in a democracy must, first of all, be literate, if he is going to be competent to participate in the great decisions facing his country. Hutchins states:

One thing, we are told, the democratic citizen in the modern world needs first of all, and that is information on every conceivable subject, because his duties as a citizen require him to pass on every conceivable subject.¹

The fact that our society is becoming increasingly more complex is reflected in every field of endeavor. Most jobs today are of such a nature as to require more knowledge and skill than they have ever required before. During the First World War, for example, the army considered a man literate if he could read and write his name. Twenty-five years later the literacy standard has been raised to that of a fourth-grade education. Today persons seeking employment for some menial types of jobs are asked, "Do you have a high school education?" Recently a guide at Oak Ridge Atomic Energy Laboratory jokingly said, "To be a janitor here, one must have a Ph. D. degree." This points to the fact that a basic requirement for living in today's world is a high degree of literacy on the part of all.

An elemental prerequisite for coping with the complexities of the day is the ability to read. Not only do teachers find themselves confronted with the fact that students cannot read, but they are also confronted with students who can read but do not like to read. Reading teachers are brought face to face with the student's dislike for reading in a special way, for they have to work with them in skill building and extension of reading experiences.

The student's dislike for, or perhaps his lack of interest in, reading may be traceable to several causal factors, among which the following can be listed: (1) lack of exposure to reading material; (2) the inability to choose appropriate reading material which would meet the individual's interest; (3) the pressure resulting from other mass media; (4) lack of leisure; and (5) the lack of sufficient emphasis in our culture upon contemplation. Any one or more of these factors might influence the reading habits of a student; to a great extent the first four factors depend upon the emphasis placed on reading in school, at home, or in both. For example, the lack of exposure to reading material may be attributed to the home environment. Some students, before they enter school, have developed a wide background of general interests as well as reading interest. As a rule these students come from families where it is customary to read and discuss books in addition to conversing about current topics of interest. By the time these students reach high school, this cultural environment has usually contributed significantly to their reading interests and tastes. On the other hand, a large majority of students come from homes where books are rare and where parents place little or no emphasis on their children's reading habits. These
students have not been exposed to favorable home conditions and, therefore, have limited interest in reading. It, therefore, becomes the duty of the reading teacher to try to create in these students a desire for, and an interest in reading.

One of the means by which this "sagging" interest in reading may be overcome is that of introducing the student to the short story which has the possibilities of being the most popular type of literature that can be offered a student at the freshman level. Cross and Carney support this idea by saying:

No form of literature lends itself more aptly to study than the short story. Brevity, meaning, literary range and variety of the subjects treated all commend the short story to the teacher who is looking for literary material to present to his students. The qualities of the short story vary so widely that a story can be found to interest almost any ability in any group of students.

If the short story is presented in a meaningful and interesting way, it could be the "stepping stone" to an extensive reading career; moreover, types of short stories can satisfy a wide range of interests through character stories, stories of incident, mystery, detective stories, love and psychological stories. Within these types of stories the interest may lie in action, character portrayal, situation, setting or in reasoning. Whatever the type, it must be striking enough to catch and hold the student's interest.

Many teachers and investigators have not been satisfied with mere identification of preferences among short stories but have probed beneath

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the surface and analyzed elements which may account for their popularity. They have found that a content analysis of short stories preferred by a group of college freshmen is quite informative, for it tends to character-ize and/or determine the effects of certain elements in a given body of literature upon the reader. Content analysis assumes that inferences about the relationship between content (what is said) and effect can be validly made, or the actual relationship established. It seeks to describe a given body of literature (publications of any sort) with primary attention to its influence upon typical readers.\footnote{Douglas Waples, Bernard Berelson, Franklyn Bradshaw, \textit{What Reading Does to People} (Chicago, 1950), p. 146.}

Through analyzing each story, the writer hopes to determine the appealing factors. Groups tend to be interested in people like themselves and in problems and situations with which they can identify themselves. Some students, for example, might be attracted to a certain type of story because of the vividness of the characters involved or the opportunity to identify themselves with the characters, while for others the single happening which the story describes might be the appealing factor. In view of this, the teacher should make use of the short story as a means of improving the reading interests of students.

Among the advantages that the short story reader has is that the sources from which a large bulk of short stories may be drawn are almost without limit. There are, of course, the cheap magazines, popular magazines, inexpensive magazines like \textit{Scholastic}, \textit{Calvacade} and \textit{American Boy}, the high quality literary magazines, as well as anthologies.
Some, but not all, of the magazines of the true confession, sex and gangster types are positively indecent and unfit for reading by young adults. They often fall short in artistic quality, but they are seldom vicious. In such cases, the business of the teacher is not to break the habit of reading the confession and other cheap magazines and leave the student with no reading habits, but rather to open doors to those who have adequate intelligence and sufficient appreciation of the artistic to advance from the lower to the higher levels of story reading. Because many older adults read materials of an inferior type, often the cheaper magazine and the cheaper short story are found in many of the homes and are read by the young adult, while the better types of stories are not found in the home and consequently are not read. Being cognizant of this fact, reading teachers must first build upon the interest which the students have and then present to them as many different types of short stories as possible, so that they will at least have an opportunity to acquire a taste for the types of stories which are considered best by educated readers. "It is felt that if a student is led to read several qualities and kinds of stories he will change his interest from one level to another." Eventually stories will not be read for the sole purpose of filling idle moments, but the student will acquire a feeling for the author's style, his tone and technique.

Statement of the problem.—The problem of this study was to analyze five short stories preferred by a selected group of college freshmen, giving specific consideration to the reactions of the students to the content.

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1E. A. Cross and Elizabeth Carney, op. cit., p. 380.
Purposes of the study.—The purposes of this study were to discover the following:

1. What five short stories of the twenty-five used in the study were most preferred by a selected group of college freshmen?
2. What elements characterize these short stories?
3. What elements prevalent in the stories held highest appeal for the students?
4. What were the reactions of the group to the five short stories?
5. From analysis and interpretations, what implications can be drawn?

Design of the study.—This study was carried on during the second semester of the 1959-60 academic school year at Morehouse College.

Method of procedure.—The procedure used in this study was as follows:

1. Permission was secured from the dean and the reading teachers of Morehouse College to use twenty-five Morehouse freshmen.
2. The writer made a survey of related literature pertinent to the study.
3. The writer read and annotated twenty-five short stories.
4. Five stories of the twenty-five were chosen by the selected freshmen on the basis of the annotations.
5. The writer made and distributed questionnaires to the selected students.
6. As each one of the five stories was read, the freshmen indicated their reaction on the questionnaire.
7. The writer analyzed each story.
8. Data were assembled and interpreted.
Description of data gathering instruments.—In order to secure data for answering some of the questions posed by the purposes of this study, the writer made a questionnaire—checklist, which was carefully criticized and adequately validated. This questionnaire was designed to ascertain information which would answer the following questions:

1. What elements, prevalent in the chosen stories, held highest appeal for the students?

2. What were the reactions of the group to the five short stories?

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part was specifically designed to determine what elements prevalent in the story were most appealing to the students. For this purpose, the students were asked to rate the items under each question by placing numbers or an "X" in the parentheses opposite the item. The rating had the following meanings:

"3" indicated "Highest in Appeal"
"2" indicated "Average in Appeal"
"1" indicated "Limited in Appeal"
"0" indicated "No Appeal"
"X" indicated "No Evidence of Such was in the Story"

The students were instructed to use each rating as often as necessary.

The second part of the questionnaire was designed primarily to ascertain the student's reactions to the short stories—their likes and dislikes. This part of the questionnaire required the students to respond by the use of a check mark and by filling in answers in the
spaces provided. The latter procedure was an effort to give the students
an opportunity to express their personal opinion about a story in their
own words. A copy of the questionnaire may be found in Appendix A.

In addition to the questionnaire-checklist employed to secure data
for this thesis, the writer made use of twenty-five annotated selected
short stories. These annotations were designed to determine what five
short stories the students preferred most to read. In Appendix B samples
of the annotated stories will be found.

Limitations of the study.—Certain limitations were inherent in
this study. First of all this study was limited to twenty-five male
Morehouse freshmen who were enrolled in reading classes. Their reading
levels varied from grades 10.0 to 12.0. Other than reading level, these
students needed no special qualifications. They were chosen by their
reading teacher and the names were given to the writer. The students
used in this study had not been instructed in the short story; their
answers grew out of their own experiences.

The students' choice of selections was determined by the annota-
tions by the investigator. All of the stories used were written in
prose. Nine were taken from George Norvell's The Reading Interest of
Young People; the other sixteen were chosen by the writer from high
school anthologies.

Survey of related literature.—This survey comprised literature
covering three main points: (1) the importance of interest in the se-
lection of reading materials; (2) methods of determining reading pref-
erience; (3) survey of related problems dealing with content analysis.

A survey of related literature reveals that, in the main, authorities
agree that interest is a major factor in the selection of reading material and that there has been increasing recognition of the role played in learning and habit formation by the factor of interest. However, there is much diversity among the authorities as to which selections young adults genuinely enjoy. Numerous experts on young people's reading interest have issued various reading lists; these experts in many instances have been in conflict with one another.\(^1\) Bond and Bond support this conclusion by saying:

> The exact status of reading interests of students is very difficult to determine. Much systematic research has been done on this phase of the reading problem, but for many reasons the results must be interpreted with caution.\(^2\)

George Norvell lists seven factors that affect young people's reading preferences: (1) sex; (2) age or maturity; (3) intelligence; (4) special interest factors, such as adventure, humor, etc.; (5) the classroom situations; (6) the teaching method used; and (7) community influence.\(^3\) Thorndike, as quoted by Norvell, reports that sex is conspicuously more important than age or intelligence in influencing students' choice of reading material. For boys, the more favorable special interest factors are: animals, outdoor adventure, mystery, sports, travel, exploration, war, biography, occupation.\(^4\) Norvell reports

\(^1\)George Norvell, *The Reading Interest of Young People* (New York, 1950), p. 3.


\(^3\)George Norvell, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 87.
Zeller's conclusions, that for boys, "action" (including rivalry, adventure, contrasts, and combat) and humor are the only factors in the forty-eight books examined which exert any influence that is statistically significant.¹

There are several methods by which reading preferences of young people can be determined; among them are: (1) questionnaires; (2) checklists; and (3) inventories. As an example of the use of one of these methods Byrns and Henmon report the results of a study of the reading interest of entering freshmen at the University of Wisconsin. Questionnaires asking for the amount of voluntary reading done during the previous year were given to 1,980 incoming freshmen. The boys reported on the average over a period of a year three and one-third books voluntarily read and the girls five books. One-third of the books reported were either popular fiction or detective stories.²

Various methods have been used to determine the appealing factors in reading material. One such method is that of content analysis. As a possible reason for the increasing use of this method, Waples and others have said:

Valid description and explanation of the effects of particular reading situations require appropriate analysis of the publications read. In particular circumstances the analysis of content shows the kind and degrees of the pressures which the publication exerts upon the reader.³

¹Ibid., p. 87.
³Douglas Waples et al., op. cit., p. 146.
As a technique, content analysis has steadily developed as a tool for the analysis of many and varied forms of communication. An examination of the literature in the field reveals that studies in content analysis have steadily increased over the past thirty years. In the early stages of its development, content analysis was used by students of journalism and sociology to examine the content of newspapers. These early studies using the technique made use of "straight subject-matter categories, e.g., domestic affairs, politics, labor, crime, divorce, sports, etc."¹

Berelson makes the point that during this early period studies in content analysis were made in the field of literature but not with much success.² However, toward the end of the decade of the thirties, there was a revival of interest in content analysis largely through the efforts and studies of Professor Lasswell and his associates. "New Procedures, new problems and categories were introduced by Lasswell. The emergence of radio, increased interest in propaganda and public opinion all helped to revive interest in content analysis."³

Studies in content analysis, as revealed in the literature, concerned themselves, by and large, with problems relating to the social sciences. These studies may be classified under the following main heads: (1) quantitative; (2) qualitative; (3) a combination of the two.

¹Bernard Berelson, Content Analysis in Communication Research (Chicago, 1952), p. 22.
²Ibid., p. 22.
³Ibid., p. 22.
Sorensen and Sorensen define content analysis as "a precise research technique for the objective systematic and quantitative as well as qualitative description of the contents of almost any sort of communication."

There is no strict dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative analysis. Quantitative analysis is more often concerned with the description of the content itself, while qualitative analysis uses the content as a "springboard" to determine the intentions of the communicator or the effects of the content upon the audience or the reader.

While there is no strict dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative analysis, the most widely used of these, however, is quantitative. Many quantitative analyses of school records and reports, textbooks and larger bodies of literature were used to a considerable extent in curriculum development during the 1920's and 1930's. According to Good and Scates,

A common procedure has been to collect a group of record forms or reports from a specified number of school systems for the purpose of noting certain characteristics of the forms and then counting the number of school systems with this characteristic (frequently an item on a blank).

Textbook analysis is one of the simpler examples of quantitative studies.

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One may choose any set of objective characteristics that he considers significant in a group of textbooks and note the extent to which they occur.¹

The various uses to which content analysis has been put indicate the increasing significance of this technique as a means of understanding problems relating to our cultural development in all its aspects. David White and others analyzed nearly 1,000 movie advertisements covering the period from 1935 through 1955. The purpose of the study was to "examine the specific thematic appeal which the motion picture industry thought would be successful in bringing patrons into the theater."² On the basis of their analysis they concluded:

The newspaper ads represent a projection of Hollywood's concept of the most effective appeals to use on the Great Audience.... An increasing proportion of the advertisement dwelt heavily (and heavy-handedly) on themes of sex, violence, and crime (even when the movies they advertised did not themselves focus on these aspects).³

Sorensen and Sorensen did a study on the use of content analysis evidence in literary infringement cases and concluded: "The techniques of content analysis provide both necessary and reliable aids to proof of similarity in copyright infringement cases."⁴

¹Ibid., p. 165.


³Ibid.

Another use of content analysis was made by Wayne who sought to compare the values expressed in the content of major family magazines of the "Picture Weekly" class, one in Russia, the other in the United States, for the purpose of "shedding light" on the different underlying value systems of these two contending nations. The results of applying the analytical categories to the study sample revealed:

The picture-viewer of Ogonek is more fortunate if he is a lover of matters aesthetic. This category illustrates the different function of the state-owned periodical as a bringer of kultur as opposed to the American periodical as a commercial venture depending on sales-appeal.2

His conclusion was that the Russian periodical represents the posed ideal of the Soviet prototype, whereas Life tried to show real behavior patterns.

Berelson and Salter made use of content analysis in a study to investigate the existence and nature of differential treatment accorded various ethnic groups in magazine fiction—short stories. They found that "consistent deprivation of the minority groups is indirect." Readers of short stories in popular magazines are constantly exposed to the prejudices and stereotypes attached to the minority groups in the United States. The American whites received better treatment in the stories, both quantitatively and qualitatively, than the minority and foreign groups; foreign groups received preferential treatment in these

1Life and Ogonek are each in its own country the leading general circulation weekly magazines. Both are family magazines.

stories over the Negroes or Jews. "Of all the distinguishable groups of characters in magazines fiction, the Negroes and Jews were depicted least favorably."¹

Content analysis was also used along with other procedures to help explore the effects of "Voice of America" broadcasting in Communist countries. The analysis of various types of newspaper and journal sources indicated that although there was a considerable diffusion of references to the VOA throughout the non-specialized mass circulation publication, the most intense attack was definitely manifested in the more "specialized politico-ideological publications" read predominantly by the Soviet "Intelligentsia."²

Other illustrations of content analysis have been cited by Good and Scates with annotations:

An analysis and classification of 334 different writings by 233 authors published in forty-two magazines and grouped into the following categories: schools, colleges, teachers, education for veterans, federal aid, schools of other peoples, adult education UNESCO, and miscellaneous.

An investigation of the history of textbooks in arithmetic over a period of 150 years, giving spatial analysis at different periods, covering make-up content, method and written problems.

A content analysis study of the symbolic content of the radio serial and how its symbols stimulate women both as members of society and as individuals with private worlds and private fantasies.³


³Good and Scates, op. cit., p. 673-714.
Berelson surveyed several hundred titles in the area of content analysis to determine their contributions to this technique in terms of definitions, assumptions, history, general rationale; their uses in the social sciences and, to a minor extent, the humanities; and qualitative techniques, categories, sampling and reliability. This, then, points to the fact that:

The procedures and the categories used in content analysis cannot be standardized. However, certain principles of analysis can be stated in order to review the empirical studies and to move toward the development of a satisfactory theory.

It is felt that the survey of these studies highlights the apparent fact that although the general logic of research in content analysis is now pretty well established, the specific procedures utilized must be adopted on an ad hoc basis to suit the date and problems at hand.

Since the writer is concerned with the short story, it might be wise to point out, that in the analysis of this type of literature, the analyst would be attempting to analyze each story in order to determine the appealing factors. Major points would include: (1) the vividness of the characters involved; (2) the possibilities of the reader's identifying himself with these characters; (3) the effectiveness of how the event works itself out; (4) the handling of time and space; (5) the directness or subtlety of the story; (6) the consideration of what happens to the reader in the process of reading the story, that is, the effect of the story on the reader— suspense, amusement, appreciation, sympathy, empathy, etc.

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1 Bernard Berelson, op. cit., p. 220.

2 Douglas Waples et al., op. cit., p. 147.
Chapter II

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Introduction

The general problem of this study was to analyze five short stories preferred by a group of college freshmen, giving specific consideration to the reactions of the students to the content. In subsequent sections each short story was approached in three ways: (1) a summary and content analysis was prepared by the writer of this thesis; (2) a report and interpretation of the students' reactions to the story were given; and (3) there is an interpretative summary wherein the results of the analysis and reactions were used as bases for identifying the elements which made this story highly appealing to these college freshmen.

General Method of Procedure

In order that the selection of short stories used in this study might have appropriateness and validity, nine of the stories were taken from George Norvell's study, The Reading Interest of Young People. The writer chose the remaining sixteen stories from various high school anthologies. All of these stories were chosen because of their apparent appeal to young people. Each story was carefully annotated and passed on to the selected freshmen. After they had indicated their preferences, they were asked to read each story in its entirety. Table I contains the titles of the annotated stories and the number and percentage of students choosing each.

As indicated in the table, the five short stories which were chosen
TABLE 1

TITLE OF ANNOTATED SHORT STORIES AND TABULATION OF CHOICES
MADE BY THE TWENTY-FIVE FRESHMEN COLLEGE STUDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Titles</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. &quot;A Retrieved Reformation&quot;</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. &quot;The Lady or the Tiger?&quot;</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. &quot;The Legend of Sleepy Hollow&quot;</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. &quot;Christy Mathewson's Glove&quot;</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. &quot;The Gift of the Magi&quot;</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. &quot;Miss Hinch&quot;</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. &quot;The Devil and Tom Walker&quot;</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. &quot;The Whirligig of Life&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. &quot;Tony Kytes&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. &quot;Best Hated Man in Town&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. &quot;The Champ of Hariton Road&quot;</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. &quot;Baseball's Hero&quot;</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. &quot;The Affair at 7 Rue de M—&quot;</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. &quot;The Adventure of the Speckled Band&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. &quot;Tale-Tell Heart&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. &quot;Dr. Heidegeer's Experiment&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. &quot;The Secret Life of Walter Mitty&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. &quot;The Black Cat&quot;</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. &quot;The Split Cherry Tree&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. &quot;The Celebrated Jumping Frogs&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. &quot;The Blue Jays&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. &quot;The Monkey's Paw&quot;</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. &quot;Rip Van Winkle&quot;</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. &quot;My Financial Career&quot;</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order of preference were: (1) "A Retrieved Reformation," by O. Henry; (2) "The Lady or the Tiger?" by Frank Stockton; (3) "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," by Washington Irving; (4) "Christy Mathewson's Glove," by Merritt P. Allen; and (5) "The Gift of the Magi," by O. Henry.

In order to analyze each story objectively, the writer set up certain categories which were carefully criticized and adequately validated. In addition, questions were formulated to serve as a guide in the analy—
zation of each story. It should be pointed out, however, that it was
not necessary that every question under each category should receive a
specific answer. This was true, if for no other reason than the fact
that each question was not, in every instance, applicable to the par-
ticular story under examination.

The following are the categories which were considered in this
analysis: (1) theme, (2) characterization, (3) setting, and (4) action.
After an objective analysis of each category, the writer made suggestions
as to its possible appeal to the students. A list of categories together
with the questions relating to each may be found in Appendix C.

The students' reactions to the stories were obtained through the
use of a questionnaire-checklist and were given specific consideration
according to the purposes of this study at the end of each story.

Summary and Content Analysis of "A Retrieved Reformation"

The Summary

A young man named Jimmy Valentine is released from prison after
serving only ten months of a four-year sentence for safe-cracking
(burglary). Having been released, he resumes his old habit, and once
more becomes a wanted man. A few weeks after his latest "job," he
arrives in a little town called Elmore, accidentally meets a young lady
at the entrance of her father's bank and falls in love with her—a case
of love at first sight. Consequently, Jimmy Valentine changed his name
to Ralph Spencer and decided to lead a respectable life. Meanwhile,
Jimmy's many crimes have been brought to the attention of one Ben Price,
a detective, who is by this time "hot" on Jimmy's trail.
Mr. Ralph Spencer, having prospered as a successful business man, is about to become the son-in-law of the banker, when suddenly he finds himself confronted with a difficult decision—that of saving a child who has become locked in the bank safe, and thereby exposing his true identity, or letting the little girl die, and possibly remaining a free man. Jimmy saves the child and thus runs the risk of falling again into the hands of the law.

The Content Analysis

Theme of the story.—This story shows that in the "so-called" worst of us there is something good and admirable and that even a "so-called" bad or evil person will respond to something high and noble if he is confronted with the right circumstances. This point is made clear in a dramatic and suspenseful moment, when Ralph Spencer, the name by which Jimmy Valentine is known in the community, is confronted with the dilemma of a little girl's suffocating or being rescued by his skill as a safe-cracker, which skill, he, as Jimmy Valentine, had developed in the course of his criminal career. Jimmy chooses to save the life of the little girl. In short, the theme highlights the life of a person retrieved and reformed.

Perhaps this would be one of the most appealing elements in this story. There is no doubt that in this instance O. Henry has "hit upon" one of the universal traits of human beings—that of "falling and rising." One may "fall" by himself, that is, of his own will and choice; but the "rise" cannot always be achieved entirely alone. This theme has further appeal in that every human being likes to feel that, if need be, he can have a second chance. Thus, this theme is both universal and true.
Characterization.—Much is contributed to the total effect of this story by characterization. Jimmy Valentine, the main character, possesses in the outset the following traits: selfishness, greed and dishonesty. These he seeks to gratify at the expense of society.

O. Henry uses a combination of methods to reveal the nature of the main character. The most significant of these is action. Jimmy Valentine's action, (safe-cracking) places him behind bars—a convicted criminal. After his release from prison, his action again makes him a "wanted man." Having escaped justice for several months, his action (safe-cracking), this time justified, wins him his freedom.

Unlike many short stories, this story makes use of character development. At the beginning of the story Jimmy is a convicted criminal about to be released from prison. At the end of the story he is an admired and respected hero. There are two instances in which we are able to discern character development. The first occurs when Jimmy looked into the face of Annabel Adams and, seeing her eyes, forgot what he was and became another man. Consequently, "Mr. Ralph Spencer, the Phoenix, arose from Jimmy Valentine's ashes—ashes left by the flame of sudden and transforming attack of love." And the second is evident in a letter to a friend: "I have quit the old business.... I wouldn't touch a dollar of another man's money for a million."

The minor characters, of whom Ben Price, Annabel Adams, and Agatha are the most important, play a significant role in the story also. Ben Price, a detective, was responsible for Jimmy's arrest the first time. After Jimmy's release from prison and the occurrence of several other noted burglaries, the matter is again brought to the attention of Ben
Price, who sets out to capture Jimmy for a second time. It is Ben Price who is on the scene when Jimmy is faced with the problem of saving or not saving Agatha's life. Realizing the tremendous amount of courage it must have taken for Jimmy to risk doing what he did, Ben, even after Jimmy had walked over to him to give himself up, pretended he did not know Jimmy and "turned and strolled down the street." Thus, Ben Price starts out, and remains until this point, a threat to Jimmy's freedom.

Annabel, as has previously been mentioned, was responsible for the "great awakening" in Jimmy. She provided him the reason to live a decent and respectable life; while Agatha provided the test for Jimmy's renewed or reformed will and intention. All the other characters, while needed, are mainly supporting figures.

Perhaps the sex of the character would, to a great extent, account for appeal in characterization. Most teenagers tend to be impressed by strong, individualistic young men, particularly when they are somewhat daring. The development of character by means of action should also be high in appeal, for most young people generally assume that the real test of a character is not what he says but what he does or does not do. Students would likely admire the heroism displayed by the main character at the end of the story. All of the characters are vividly portrayed—presented graphically and without complications; there are no baffling and perplexing characters. The simplicity of presentation enhances the strength of appeal; the reader is led gently into an acceptance of the main character and, perhaps, realistically feels that while there is some bad in the best of us, there is also some good in the worst of us.

Setting.—Although there is no elaborate description of the setting,
it is important in its enhancement of incidents. So that the reader may begin making the proper associations with that setting, O. Henry immediately places his story in space and time.

A glance at the beginning of "A Retrieved Reformation" will demonstrate the rapidity with which the place and time of the action are indicated:

A guard came to the prison shoe-shop, where Jimmy Valentine was assiduously stitching uppers, and escorted him to the front office. There the warden handed Jimmy his pardon which had been signed that morning by the Governor.

The author skillfully weaves together both incidents and setting in such a manner as to give the effect of consistency. As a result of this achievement, the theme, characterization, and action appear more significant and meaningful.

The details of the setting are a main part of the action of the story and might be considered a motivating force upon the characters. For example, the following setting accounts for the final major action in the story:

The Elmore Bank had just put in a new safe and vault. Mr. Adams was very proud of it and insisted on an inspection by everyone. The vault was a small one but it had a new patented door. It fastened with three solid steel bolts thrown simultaneously with a single handle and had a time lock.

Because, as we are told a little later in the story, "the clock hasn't been wound nor the combination set, the door can't be opened." So when Agatha is accidently locked in the safe, it becomes apparent that only the skills of a Jimmy Valentine can save her.
The familiarity of this setting, through movies or television, may account for its appeal. A prison, a cafe and a small town are not "strangers" to most students. They would have no difficulty picturing a small town cafe or a little town with one little bank, several dry-good stores and a hotel.

Action.—The predominant emphasis in this story is upon physical action. As a result of his actions Valentine serves time in prison; having been released, he again commits acts that make him a wanted man. Consequently, he faces a problem of staying ahead of the law and escaping justice. Thus the struggle or conflict occurs as Jimmy versus Society (Ben Price). The crisis is evident when Jimmy is faced with the dilemma of using his skill as a safe-cracker to save the life of a little girl (Ben Price knew quite well Jimmy's style of safe-cracking and would immediately recognize him) or pretending to be helpless and thereby remain a free man.

This line of conflict is ended when Jimmy chooses to save the little girl and thus proves himself to be a man of great courage. The action is well motivated through characterization; it develops the theme and follows logically from the natures of the characters.

For a young person of college age the action in this story should be highly appealing; it is fast, dramatic and woven into the setting. The events are so timed to keep the reader in a subtle state of suspense.

Students' Reaction to "A Retrieved Reformation"

These descriptions of the reactions of the selected freshmen to the short story were based on questionnaire items which sought to ascertain the extent to which the elements just discussed appealed to them.
Responses to these items were organized into these categories: "elements of general appeal," "the appeal of sex and age," "appeal of character traits," "distinguishing features of the characters," and "appeal of story content." The specific items under each of these categories were rated as:

- "High in Appeal"
- "Average in Appeal"
- "Limited in Appeal"
- "Of no Appeal"

Through verbal descriptions and accompanying Tables 2–6, these reactions are reported.

Elements of general appeal.—The first item in the questionnaire was considered as a test between this writer’s content analysis of "A Retrieved Reformation" and the students' reactions to the story. Throughout the preceding analysis there were sections which attempted to identify elements which have accounted for this story's being chosen as one of the top five preferences. To some degree, at least, this report of their reactions was a test of the accuracy of the predictions made within the foregoing analysis.

The specific question was, "How did the following elements appeal to you?" The elements listed were:

1. Vividness of character portrayal
2. Realistic treatment of life
3. The situation or setting
4. The unfolding of the plot
5. The general timing of events
6. The effectiveness of the beginning
7. The effectiveness of the ending

The characteristics are presented in Table 2 with numbers and per cent of students who rated them "high," "average," "limited," or "lacking" in appeal.

From the standpoint of high appeal, the characteristics which received first and second places were "general timing of events" and "vividness of
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>High</th>
<th></th>
<th>Average</th>
<th></th>
<th>Limited</th>
<th></th>
<th>No Appeal</th>
<th></th>
<th>No Evidence</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vividness of Character Portrayal</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic Treatment of Life</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation or Setting</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfolding of the Plot</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Timing of Events</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of the Beginning</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of the Ending</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
character portrayal," with 18, or 72 per cent, favoring the former and 16, or 64 per cent, the latter. It seemed that in this instance the content analysis and the students' indications of main preferences were in substantial agreement in that "timing of action" and "vividness of the main character," particularly, received marked attention in the content analysis.

In terms of modal trends in reactions, it was obvious that the students had at least a fair level of interest in such elements as "situation or setting," "unfolding of the plot," "effectiveness of the ending," and "realistic treatment of life." The first three characteristics were rated high in appeal by 48 per cent of the students, and the last one had at least moderate or average appeal for 60 per cent of them. Again, student reactions and the content analysis were not in opposition, although for this writer, the elements of setting and plot seemed to be capable of arousing more than a moderate reaction within the reader.

In the area of no appeal and/or absence of reactions to certain elements, it was observed that very few students made responses. The highest response was made by 7, or 28 per cent, of the students, who expressed the opinion that "the effectiveness of the ending" of the story was limited. This general absence of reactions was accepted as evidence that in general "A Retrieved Reformation" was appealing to these students and that their reactions placed them in substantial agreement with the main elements of appeal identified in the content analysis.

The appeal of sex and age.—The students were next asked, "What level of appeal did the characters hold for you?" As shown in Table 3, this question was in reference to:

1. A male character
2. A female character
3. A younger character
4. An older character
TABLE 3

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL OF SEX AND AGE IN "A RETRIEVED REFORMATION"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Levels of Appeal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Male Character</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Female Character</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Younger Character</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Older Character</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With reference to high appeal, the students gave first preference to "a male character" and second preference to "a younger character." This kind of reaction was considered reasonable in that the subjects themselves were male and young; furthermore, it substantiates the idea that in attempts to identify the possible appeal of the elements of an analysis, one must take into account the personal predispositions of the reader.

In the general inspection of the data, however, it became obvious that on the average, the subjects did not reject completely any of the characters on the basis of sex or age. Female and older characters ranged from high to lacking in appeal and might be classified as being more a matter of individual differences than a general group trend among the freshmen. In the content analysis it was suggested that the youth of the main character would have special appeal, but there the hypothesis was based more on the fact that his decision was made more crucial in light of the many years that lay before him.

**Appeal of character traits**—Appeal of character portrayal was sought next. The students were asked, "How do you rate the portrayal of the following traits?" The specifics of this item included:

1. Kindness of the character
2. Greediness of the character
3. Sympathy of the character
4. Cruelty of the character
5. Passion of the character
6. Indifference of the character
7. Inhumanity of the character
8. Honesty of the character

As indicated in Table 4, none of these traits received a particularly high rating. From the standpoint of highest appeal, 12, or 48 per cent, of the students chose "sympathy of the character," while 11, or 44 per cent, chose "kindness of the character." It would appear that the first response,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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<th>Average</th>
<th>Limited</th>
<th>No Appeal</th>
<th>No Evidence</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kindness of the Character</td>
<td>11 44</td>
<td>8 32</td>
<td>4 16</td>
<td>2 8</td>
<td>0 0</td>
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<td>Greediness of the Character</td>
<td>8 32</td>
<td>8 32</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>9 36</td>
<td>0 0</td>
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<td>Sympathy of the Character</td>
<td>12 48</td>
<td>10 40</td>
<td>3 12</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
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<td>Cruelty of the Character</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>19 76</td>
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<td>Passion of the Character</td>
<td>6 24</td>
<td>16 64</td>
<td>2 8</td>
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<td>1 4</td>
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<td>Indifference of the Character</td>
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<td>0 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>20 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhumanity of the Character</td>
<td>1 4</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>7 28</td>
<td>5 20</td>
<td>11 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty of the Character</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>14 56</td>
<td>5 20</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>7 28</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
though indirectly, substantiated the writer's predictions in the analysis.

The more typical reactions among the students indicated that they found "kindness of the character," "passion of the character," and "honesty of the character" generally appealing. These three traits were rated average in appeal by 11, or 44 per cent; 16, or 64 per cent; and 14, or 56 per cent, of the students, respectively.

The negative responses to these particular traits were few. Only 2, or 8 per cent, of the students responded negatively to the "kindness of the character." This absence of responses to the other items was accepted as evidence that in general these students found the aforementioned items appealing.

### Distinguishing features of the characters.—Further, the students were asked: "How would you rate the author's description of the character?" The following were listed:

1. Description of the character's appearance
2. Description of the character's mannerisms
3. Speech habits and patterns of the character
4. Description of the character's actions

An inspection of Table 5 revealed that from the standpoint of high appeal the characteristic which received first preference was "the description of the character's actions." As mentioned previously, this selection on the part of the students appeared to be in harmony with the analysis. It might further be mentioned that, in connection with high appeal, 12, or 48 per cent, of the students listed "description of the character's appearance."

In the area of average appeal, it was evident that the students had some interest in the "character's mannerisms" and "speech habits and
TABLE 5
NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CHARACTERS IN "A RETRIEVED REFORMATION"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Levels of Appeal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of Character's Appearance</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character's Mannerisms</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Habits and Patterns</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions of the Character</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first characteristic was rated by 9, or 36 per cent, of the students to have high appeal, while 5, or 20 per cent, rated it average in appeal. The latter characteristic was rated by 4, or 16 per cent, of the students to have high appeal, and by 11, or 44 per cent, average in appeal.

Again the negative responses were few. The highest response was made by 4, or 16 per cent, of the students, who felt that both the "description of the character's appearance" and the "speech habits and patterns of the character" were lacking in appeal.

**Appeal of story-content.**—Finally the students were asked, "How did the following type or types of story-content appeal to you?" These story types were:

1. Adventure
2. Humor
3. Mystery and Suspense
4. Sports or Intense Action
5. Sentiment
6. Romance
7. Tragedy

As revealed in Table 6, the responses to this question were quite inconsistent; however, the writer felt that they were none-the-less important. In the range of high appeal, 20, or 80 per cent, of the students selected "sports or intense action"; 15, or 60 per cent, "mystery and suspense" and 13, or 52 per cent, chose "adventure." It might be pointed out that although many students responded to the various types of story-content, as shown in Table 6, a large majority of them indicated that these types of stories were not in evidence in this particular story. However, the writer is only concerned, for the present, with the type of story-content found in "A Retrieved Reformation," which may well be classified as intense action.
TABLE 6

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL OF STORY CONTENT IN "A RETRIEVED REFORMATION"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Level of Appeal</th>
<th>Level of Appeal</th>
<th>Level of Appeal</th>
<th>Level of Appeal</th>
<th>Level of Appeal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Average</td>
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<td>No Appeal</td>
<td>No Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Per Cent
Other significant information pertinent in this analysis lies in the fact that 22, or 88 per cent, of the students indicated they liked this story. Though their reasons naturally varied, the general appeal seemed to have been in characterization and action. It would appear, then, that the students' comments on "what they liked best about the story" were in agreement with the writer's predictions.

The Interpretive Summary

What were the appealing elements in "A Retrieved Reformation?"
According to the data just presented, it appeared that these elements were:

1. "The general timing of events"
2. A male character"
3. "Sympathy of the character"
4. "Description of the character's actions"
5. "The story-content, "Intense action"

In general, it seemed that the writer's suggestions on the possible appeal of each category analyzed, were in harmony with the students' reactions, although her analysis tended to give more weight to the action in the story than did the freshmen.
A Summary and Content Analysis of "The Lady or the Tiger?"

The Summary

A semibarbaric king had a large public arena built, where criminal cases of sufficient importance to him were brought and tried. From the criminal's place of entrance, two doors were directly opposite him. Behind one a beautiful lady waited and behind the other stood a fierce and hungry tiger. The accused, not knowing their respective positions, had the choice of opening either door.

This king had a beautiful semibarbaric daughter whom he loved dearly. One day he discovered that she was having a love affair with one of his young courtiers. Though very handsome, this young man was of very low station. The king, not at all pleased with the affair, had the youth cast into prison. The tiger—cages were searched for the most savage and relentless beast; the beautiful young women throughout the land were carefully surveyed in order that, if fate permitted it, the youth would have a suitable mate.

The appointed day arrived and the king's daughter took her place beside her father and waited for her lover to enter the court. As he entered, he bowed to the king (as was the custom), but looked straight into the eyes of his lover, who, without anyone seeing her, gave the youth a signal as to which door to open. The youth walked across the floor and opened the door to the right—the one leading to... "the lady or the tiger?"

The Content Analysis

Theme of the story.—The theme of this story may well be: when love
and its opposite, jealousy and hate, are combined, they will drive one to unpredictable actions. The author leaves it to the reader to decide whether love or hate wins out.

Characterization.—The total effect of this story is dependent almost completely upon characterization. The chief characters are: the king, his daughter, and her lover. The author's descriptions of the king as "semibarbaric" is understandable against the background of his cruel and inhuman actions—his manner of determining the guilt or innocence of a man. These traits, cruelty and inhumanity to man, are reflected in the character's actions and in the author's description of him as an individual. For example: "He was a man of exuberant fancy, and withal of an authority so irresistible that at his will, he turned his varied fancies into facts." One of these fancies was his crude method of justice and punishment.

The king's daughter, also, had a moiety of barbarism in her nature. She had "a soul as fervent and imperious" as her father; her traits would best be labeled as jealousy and selfishness. These traits were revealed by the author's description of her thoughts or mental action.

The traits of the daughter's lover were also inherent in the author's description of his actions. That this youth was the brave type was exemplified by the fact that he dared have a love affair with someone so high above his "station" as the king's daughter.

These characters would likely attract the reader's attention for a number of reasons. Perhaps one would be the intensity of the traits which distinguish the characters, while another might be the vivid descriptions of each.

Action.—The action is quite consistent with characterization and
follows logically from the nature of the characters. It is a little
difficult to say under the circumstances whether or not the action
develops the theme; for, as pointed out previously, this story demands
that the reader draw his own conclusions regarding the ending.

Though the king is introduced first, he does not appear to be the
main character, for he neither faces a problem nor goes through struggles
or conflicts. On the other hand, the young man, to whom less description
is given than either of the other two characters, does face a problem.
His actions (a love affair with the king's daughter) causes him to face
a problem—keeping the affair a secret. The struggles occur before we
meet the youth; the result is that the king discovers the secret and the
young man is immediately cast into prison to await his day in the arena.
This line of conflict ends when the young man opens the door leading to
the lady or the tiger.

Perhaps, the action would be one of the most appealing elements in
this story, for in the mind of the reader the author plants a strange
and forceful seed of suspense which grows as the story unfolds. Many
students would probably find it difficult not to complete reading this
story once they had gotten to the point where the young man is placed
in prison.

Setting.—The setting plays a considerable part in this story. The
degree of elaboration with which the setting is depicted signals its im-
portance in relation to the other elements. For example, the author gives
a carefully detailed description of the large public arena, which in part
read: "This vast amphitheater, with its encircling galleries, its myste-
rious vaults and its unseen passages, was an agent of poetic justice."
The story takes place "in very olden times," and thus the time and place would appear to be a motivating force upon the king.

Students would, in all probability, find this setting appealing because of the vivid descriptions. The details of the setting are so picturesque that the reader who has only a little imagination will find it quite easy to lose himself among the crowd of spectators.

The Students' Reactions to "The Lady or the Tiger?"

Elements of general appeal.—The first item in the questionnaire was considered as a test between this writer's content analysis of "The Lady or the Tiger?" and the students' reactions to the story. Throughout the preceding analysis there were sections which attempted to identify elements which have accounted for this story's being chosen as one of the five preferences. To some degree, at least, this report of their reactions was a test of the accuracy of the predictions made within the foregoing analysis.

The first question was, "How did the following elements appeal to you?" The elements listed were:

1. Vividness of character portrayal
2. Realistic treatment of life
3. The situation or setting
4. The unfolding of the plot
5. The general timing of events
6. The effectiveness of the beginning
7. The effectiveness of the ending

The students' reactions to this question are found in Table 7 with numbers and per cent of students who rated them "high," "average," "limited," or "lacking" in appeal.

In reference to high appeal, 21, or 84 per cent, of the students listed "vividness of character portrayal"; while 16, or 64 per cent, chose
<table>
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<th>High</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Limited</th>
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<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
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<td>Realistic Treatment of Life</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Situation or Setting</td>
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<td>64</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Timing of Events</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of the Beginning</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of the Ending</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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</table>
"the situation or setting." It seemed that here the content analysis and the students' indications of main preferences were in substantial agreement in that the "vividness of character portrayal," particularly, received notable attention in the analysis.

In terms of the average response, it was evident that the students had some interest in such elements as "the unfolding of plot" and "the effectiveness of the beginning." These characteristics were rated high in appeal by 12, or 48 per cent, and 11, or 44 per cent, of the students, respectively.

There were no marked negative responses to these particular elements; however, the "general timing of events," and "the effectiveness of the ending" were rated by 11, or 44 per cent, of the students to have no appeal. It might be pointed out here that these negative responses support the writer's contention that the total effect of this story depends almost completely upon the characterization.

The appeal of sex and age.—Next, the students were asked, "What level of appeal did the characters hold for you?" This question was in reference to:

1. A male character
2. A female character
3. A younger character
4. An older character

As indicated in Table 8, "a male character" received first preference, while "a female character" received second preference. These characters were rated high in appeal by 16, or 64 per cent, and 12, or 48 per cent, of the students, respectively.

Though little or no emphasis was placed on "a female character" in the analysis, it was suggested that "a male character" might be highly
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<tr>
<td>An Older Character</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
appealing. It was also obvious that the students had at least a fair level of interest in "an older character," which was rated high in appeal by 11, or 44 per cent, of them.

**Appeal of character traits.**—The students were further asked, "How do you rate the portrayal of the following traits?" The traits were:

1. Kindness of the character
2. Greediness of the character
3. Sympathy of the character
4. Cruelty of the character
5. Passion of the character
6. Indifference of the character
7. Inhumanity of the character
8. Honesty of the character

Inspection of Table 9 reveals, from the standpoint of high appeal, the characteristics which received first and second places were "cruelty of the character" and "inhumanity of the character," with 20, or 80 per cent, favoring the former and 18, or 72 per cent, the latter. Again, student reactions and the content analysis were in agreement.

In the area of no appeal, it was noticed that very few students made negative responses to these items. It might be significant to point out, however, that a large majority of the students indicated that the other characteristics listed were not in evidence in this story.

**Distinguishing features of the characters.**—The fourth question to which the students responded was, "How would you rate the author's description of the characters?" These descriptions were:

1. Description of the character's appearance
2. Description of the character's mannerisms
3. Speech habits of the character's actions
4. Description of the character's actions

In regard to high appeal, the characteristic which received first preference was "the description of the character's actions," which was rated high
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<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
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<td>Per Cent</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>52</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>80</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56</td>
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<td>Inhumanity of the Character</td>
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<td>72</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>76</td>
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in appeal by 23, or 92 per cent, of the students. This was the only item which received marked reactions from the students. Here again, it seemed that the students' responses and the content analysis were in harmony.

The more typical reactions among the students indicated that 9, or 36 per cent, rated the "description of the character's appearance" average in appeal, while 11, or 44 per cent, chose the "description of the character's mannerisms."

The highest response in the area of no appeal was made by 7, or 28 per cent, of the students. Table 10 reveals that the other characteristics did not receive any noticeable negative reactions.

Appeal of story-content.—Finally, the students were asked, "How did the following type or types of story-content appeal to you?" The following types were listed:

1. Adventure
2. Humor
3. Mystery and suspense
4. Sports or intense action
5. Sentiment
6. Romance
7. Tragedy

It was noted that throughout the content analysis, the responses to this question were rather inconsistent. Nevertheless, the reactions might be indicative of the fact, that the students were aware of the absence of a certain type of story-content from this particular story. To cite one example, 11, or 44 per cent, of the students rated "adventure" high in appeal, while 17, or 68 per cent, indicated no evidence of this particular story-content was found in this story.

In reference to high appeal, it was noted that 20, or 80 per cent,
TABLE 10

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CHARACTER IN "THE LADY OR THE TIGER?"

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<thead>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>Per Cent</td>
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<td>Per Cent</td>
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<td>Description of Character's Appearance</td>
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<td>1 4</td>
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<td>7 28</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11 54</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 24</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Habits and Patterns</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 12</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 24</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions of the Character</td>
<td>23 92</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 8</td>
<td></td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of the students gave first place to "mystery and suspense." It seemed that in this instance the content analysis and the students' indications of main preference were in substantial agreement in that the element of suspense, particularly, received marked attention in the content analysis.

"Mystery and suspense" was also rated by 4, or 16 per cent, of the students to be average in appeal, while only 1 student rated this story type limited in appeal. In general it seemed that "mystery and suspense" was highly appealing to the group. These story types are presented in Table 11.

Further significant data revealed that 22, or 88 per cent, of the students said they liked this story. The most frequent answer to, "What did you like most about the story?" was: "I liked the suspense." Only 3, or 12 per cent, of the group responded to the question, "What did you dislike about the story?" Their answers were unanimous, "the end."

The Interpretive Summary

What were the appealing elements in "The Lady or the Tiger?" From the data just presented, it seemed that these were:

1. Vividness of character portrayal
2. A male character
3. Cruelty of the character
4. Description of the character's actions and
5. Type of story-content, mystery and suspense

In general it appeared that the students' reactions to "The Lady or the Tiger?" and the writer's analysis were in substantial agreement.
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<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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<td>Student No.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Mystery and Suspense</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports or Intense Action</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentiment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tragedy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7</td>
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</table>
Summary and Content Analysis of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"

The Summary

Ichabod Crane, a lean and lanky school master, was quite a favorite in the little community of Tarrytown, generally admired and respected by everyone, that is, everyone except Brom Bones. Both Brom Bones and Ichabod were interested in the same young lady—Katrina Van Tassal, the daughter of a very prosperous farmer.

One evening Ichabod received an invitation from the Van Tassals to attend a quilting frolic. This excited him to no end; dressing up in his only attire, he borrowed an "old broken-down plow horse" and made his way to the Van Tassals.

On his arrival, he found his competition, Brom Bones, gallantly showing off his "favorite steed Daredevil." However, Ichabod was not to be out-done. "He prided himself upon his dancing" and he managed very well to stay in or near the company of Katrina, with whom he danced frequently. Amidst the frolicking, eating and dancing, many of the older men had gathered and were telling tales of war and ghost stories. "When the dance was at an end," Ichabod was attracted to this knot of sager folks and went over to listen. Many dismal tales were told about funeral trains and mourning cries and wailings heard and seen. However, the chief part of the stories turned upon the favorite spectre of Sleepy Hollow, and the headless horseman, who had been heard several times of late, "patrolling the country." Meanwhile, Brom Bones joined the group and added "thrice marvelous adventure." He affirmed that he had seen the trooper.

Finally, the revel broke up and everyone started for home. Ichabod stayed behind to have a tete-a-tete with Katrina; however, things didn't
go so well and he, too, finally started for home on his old broken-down pony. Travelling along slowly and heavy-hearted, Ichabod now began to think about all the ghost stories he had heard that night. To make it worse, he was about to approach the very spot where the headless ghost was said to have been seen. He tried to overcome his fear by whistling, but to no avail. Then suddenly Ichabod spotted a headless horseman mounted on a black horse on one side of the road. He immediately tried to speed up his old horse; the stranger, however, quickened his horse to an equal pace. In the excitement of everything, Ichabod's horse took the wrong turn and headed for the "hollow." The results of this ride is that Ichabod is "seen no more." However, Brom Bones, who, shortly after his rival's disappearance, took Katrina to the altar, "was observed to look exceedingly knowing whenever the story of Ichabod was related."

**Theme.**—This story would appear to be purely for enjoyment. It is the writer's opinion that there is no theme.

**Characterization.**—The total effect of this story relies almost completely upon the humorous and vivid description of the characters. The main character is Ichabod Crane, who is vain, but kind and sympathetic. His vanity is revealed in several statements made by the author. One such statement was, "It was a matter of no little vanity to Ichabod, on Sundays, to take his station in front of the church gallery, with a band of chosen singers."

Ichabod's other traits are revealed by his actions: at school, he administered justice with discrimination. "Your mere puny stripling that winced at the least flourish of the rod, was passed by with indulgence." After school hours Ichabod helped the farmers with some of their lighter
chores, and "helped the mothers around the house."

Brom Bones, the most important minor character, was "reckless and daring," and jealous. These traits are discerned, through the author's description of his actions:

Brom Bones, however, was the hero of the scene, having come to the gathering on his favorite steed Daresdevil, a creature, like himself, full of mettle and mischief.... He was noted for preferring vicious animals, given to all kinds of tricks, which kept the rider in constant risk of his neck.

Brom Bones's jealousy is revealed in his attitude toward Ichabod and Katrina's dancing. "Sorely smitten with love and jealously, he sat brooding by himself in one corner."

Katrina, who is the cause of the confusion, is loved by Ichabod and Brom Bones. Both she and her father, Mr. Van Tassal, are important supporting characters.

Students would likely be attracted to this story, primarily because of the vivid descriptions of each character. Not only are the characters very amusing, but they are to a great extent, realistic and characteristic of the early nineteenth century.

**Action.**—The action is both mental and physical. The mental action is evident in Ichabod's great anticipation of a life of luxury with Katrina Van Tassal—"Thus feeding his mind with many sweet thoughts and 'sugar supposition,' Ichabod's fancy presented to him the blooming Katrina, with a whole family of children, mounted on the top of a wagon." As a result of this mental action, Ichabod faces the problem of trying to win Katrina. This problem becomes greater as Brom Bones engages in a silent scheme to try to "get rid of" Ichabod; the crisis results as Ichabod
travels homeward and encounters the "headless ghost." The solution is that Ichabod is "disposed of" and Brom Bones marries Katrina. The action would possibly appeal to students because of its humorous aspects. The action is both amusing and suspenseful.

Setting.—The total effect of this story is enhanced by the detailed description of the setting. Sleepy Hollow is the perfect surroundings for the "breeding" of ghost stories. The community is "set down" in a valley; the life is typical of the early 19th century of rural farmers; the brooks and vales and distances between farm houses are just far enough to make night travel weird and frightening.

The setting does not have any particular motivating force upon the characters; however, it does provide a perfect locus for the kinds of action in which the characters are engaged. Because this setting is so vivid and picturesque it would perhaps appeal to many students.

Students' Reactions to "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"

Elements of general appeal.—The first item in the questionnaire was considered as a test between the writer's content analysis of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and the students' reactions to the story. Throughout the preceding analysis there were sections which attempted to identify elements which have accounted for this story's being chosen as one of the five preferences. To some degree, at least, this report of their reactions was a test of the accuracy of the predictions made within the foregoing analysis.

The first question was, "How did the following elements appeal to you?" The elements listed were:

1. Vividness of character portrayal
2. Realistic treatment of life
3. The situation or setting
4. The unfolding of the plot
5. The general timing of events
6. The effectiveness of the beginning
7. The effectiveness of the ending

The students' reactions to this question are found in Table 12. These data revealed that from the standpoint of high appeal, the characteristics which received first and second preference were "vividness of character portrayal," "realistic treatment of life" and "the situation or setting." Twenty-two, or 88 per cent, of the students chose the first characteristic, while 17, or 68 per cent, chose the latter two characteristics. In each of these instances, it seemed that the students' responses were in agreement with the writer's predictions, in that each of these characteristics received notable attention in the analysis.

In terms of the approximate median trends in reactions, students evidenced interest in "the general timing of events," "the unfolding of the plot" and "the effectiveness of the ending." The first element was rated high in appeal by 13, or 52 per cent, and the latter two elements were each rated by 11, or 44 per cent, of the students to have high appeal.

"The effectiveness of the beginning" was the only element that received any noticeable negative response. In this instance 11, or 44 per cent, of the students found this element to have no appeal. Also in the area of negative response, it was found that 5, or 20 per cent, of the students indicated "the effectiveness of the ending" was lacking in appeal. The absence of negative responses to the other items led the writer to conclude that, generally, these elements were fairly high in appeal for all the students.

The appeal of sex and age.—Secondly, the students were asked, "What level of appeal did the characters hold for you?" This question
TABLE 12
NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF APPEAL IN "THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Limited</th>
<th>No Appeal</th>
<th>No Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Student</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vividness of Character Portrayal</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic Treatment of Life</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation or Setting</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfolding of the Plot</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Timing of Events</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of Beginning</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of Ending</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
was in reference to:

1. A male character  
2. A female character  
3. A younger character  
4. An older character

As revealed in Table 13, at the point of highest appeal, the students chose "a male character" and "an older character." This was understandably so, since not only were the subjects themselves male, but the main and minor characters were male. Only 3, or 12 per cent, of the students found "a female character" high in appeal; while 11, or 44 per cent, considered this character lacking in appeal. It might be significant to point out here that in four of the five stories chosen by the students the chief characters were male. These selections themselves might then be indicative of the fact that, on the whole, male students tend to favor male characters.

Appeal of character traits.—Further the students were asked, "How do you rate the portrayal of the following traits?" The choices were as follows:

1. Kindness of the character  
2. Greediness of the character  
3. Sympathy of the character  
4. Cruelty of the character  
5. Passion of the character  
6. Indifference of the character  
7. Honesty of the character

Data pertaining to this question will be found in Table 14. These data revealed that from the point of high appeal, 17, or 68 per cent, of the freshmen chose both "kindness of the character" and "sympathy of the character." Again, the reactions of the students and the content analysis were not in opposition, in that both of these characteristics received marked attention in the analysis.
TABLE 13

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL OF
SEX AND AGE IN "THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Levels of Appeal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Male Character</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Female Character</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Younger Character</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Older Character</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**TABLE 14**

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL OF CHARACTER TRAITS IN "THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Limited</th>
<th>No Appeal</th>
<th>No Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Per</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Per</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Cent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Cent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindness of the Character</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greediness of the Character</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathy of the Character</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruelty of the Character</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passion of the Character</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifference of the Character</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhumanity of the Character</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty of the Character</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In terms of the typical reactions, the students expressed moderate interest in "greediness of the character" and "passion of the character." The first was rated high in appeal by 11, or 41 per cent, of the group, and the latter one was rated high in appeal by 12, or 48 per cent.

Two of these elements received a negative response. These were "kindness of the character," which was rated by one student to have no appeal, and "sympathy of the character," which was rated lacking in appeal by 5, or 20 per cent, of the students.

**Distinguishing features of the characters.**—The fourth question asked the students was, "How would you rate the author's description of the characters?" The descriptions were:

1. Description of the character's appearance
2. Description of the character's mannerisms
3. Speech habits and patterns of characters
4. Description of character's action

Table 15 reveals that in the area of high appeal, 21, or 81 per cent, of the students chose "the description of the character's appearance." Similarly, 22, or 88 per cent, rated "the description of the character's actions" high in appeal. Here again, the writer noted the vivid description of characters and action in the analysis and pointed out that these characteristics might be capable of arousing marked interest.

In terms of the typical reactions, it was evident that the students had at least a fair level of interest in the "description of the characters' mannerisms." Eleven, or 41 per cent, of the students rated this characteristic high in appeal; while 10, or 40 per cent, found it average in appeal. There were no negative responses to these particular characteristics.

**Appeal of story-content.**—Finally, the students were asked, "How did
### TABLE 15

The number and per cent of students reacting to the distinguishing features of the character in "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>1/2 Average</th>
<th>Limited</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Student Number</td>
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<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
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<tr>
<td>Description of Character's Appearance</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character's Mannerisms</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Habits and Patterns</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions of the Character</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the following type or types of story-content appeal to you?"

1. Adventure  
2. Humor  
3. Mystery and suspense  
4. Sports or intense action  
5. Sentiment  
6. Romance  
7. Tragedy  

Table 16 reveals that the responses to this question throughout the analyses were inconsistent, in that many students noted the absence of various story-contents but also reacted to them. At the point of highest appeal, 21, or 96 per cent, of the students rated "humor" high in appeal, while, though absent from this particular story, "adventure" was rated 14, or 56 per cent, to have high appeal. Similarly, "mystery and suspense" and "sports or intense action" were also reacted to, and rated high in appeal by 9, or 36 per cent, and 7, or 28 per cent, of the students, respectively.

The Interpretive Summary

What were the appealing elements in the "Legend of Sleepy Hollow?"

From the data just presented, it seemed that these elements were:

1. Vividness of character portrayal  
2. A male character  
3. Kindness and sympathy of the character  
4. Description of character's actions  
5. Description of the character's appearance and  
6. Story-content, humor

Further, it might be significant to note that although 21, or 96 per cent, of the students indicated they liked this story, none of them indicated why, or what they liked or disliked about it. In general, it seemed that the writer's predictions and the students' reactions were in substantial agreement, although, in a few instances, the students reacted more favorably to certain elements than was suggested by the writer.
TABLE 16
NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL OF STORY-CONTENT IN "THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Limited</th>
<th>No Appeal</th>
<th>No Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery and Suspense</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports or Intense Action</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentiment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tragedy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary and Content Analysis of "Christy Mathewson's Glove"

The Summary

This is the story of a young high school student who learned a great lesson from his coach. Cal Underwood was the captain of the "not too good" Barryton High School baseball team. Now, just before the most important game of the season was to be played, Barryton lost five of its "so-called" best men—some because of illness and others because of accidents and poor grades. Cal was so dejected he was ready to quit the team, that is, until Mr. Wade, the coach, told him the story of Christy Mathewson.

Christy Mathewson was a famous baseball star, who, along with Mr. Wade and others, had played for the New York Giants. Christy was always an inspiration and a friend to the team; he was a good sport in victory and defeat; he played his best and never grumbled, feeling, it seemed, that it took a better man to lose than to win.

Mr. Wade became very sick and was told he could no longer "stand the big-league pace." Christy was the first to offer his services. Mr. Wade, knowing he would probably never see Christy again, simply asked him for an "old glove," and he had kept that glove through the years. When the going got tough he would put the glove on, and somehow "gain strength that way."

Cal had listened attentively to this story but was inclined to doubt the reviving efficacy of a piece of leather. However, at Mr. Wade's suggestion, he accepted the loan of the glove.

Then the big game of the season came—Shornwall versus Barryton.
Everyone knew Barryton would lose, even Cal; but somehow he "felt better about the whole thing." As the game progressed, Cal Underwood sparked the team to renewed effort and they "fought to the very last pitch." Although Shornwall won the game, Barryton won the plaudits of the spectators, and was therefore triumphant in defeat. Perhaps it was the magic of "Christy Mathewson's Glove."

**Theme.—**This story shows that winning does not always consist in making the highest score or coming out on top, but rather in the complete giving of the self to the struggle. Such a theme should appeal to young people because it is true to the life experiences about which they should know.

**Characterization.—**The main characters in this story are Mr. Wade and Cal Underwood. Mr. Wade is kind and sympathetic, which is apparent in his attitude toward Cal. His traits are further characterized by the true story about Christy's glove. Mr. Wade is, of course, significantly cast in the role of a teacher, who leads Cal, a younger man, to understand more of the deeper meaning of life's struggles. He uses a baseball star to teach this lesson. On the other hand Cal, the student, is inexperienced, and despondent. This is quite evident in his attitude and his actions. The author reveals the natures of both characters through a description of their actions; both are individualized.

The development of character is shown in Cal's growth or change in attitude toward life. The growth is seen when Cal plays his last game of the season "with his whole being," and sparks the team with renewed energy, even though he knew they could not win.

These characters would undoubtedly appeal to young men, particularly
Cal, who, like many college freshmen, is a teenager. Cal is engaged in a type of sports activity which most young men enjoy playing or seeing. Many students would perhaps identify themselves with Cal, while for others the brief story about Christy Mathewson might be the appealing factor.

**Action.**—Throughout this story, the action is both mental and physical. These two dimensions of action follow logically from the nature of the characters and develops the theme. The mental action is evident when Cal ponders over the problem of whether to quit or not to quit Barryton's baseball team. The physical and mental action occurs when Mr. Wade tells Cal the story of Christy Mathewson's Glove and Cal thinks the situation over and finally decides to try it. The final action, mental and physical, is the playing of the last game of the season. Cal's mental attitude expresses itself in new physical action on the baseball diamond.

The most important problem evolves around Cal's attitude—he would rather quit than play with a sorry team. The struggle or conflict occurs mentally, that is, within Cal himself. Then the conflict is resolved as Cal plays the last game of the season.

The students might find this action appealing because of its emphasis on sports. Some of the students would perhaps recall similar experiences that they had while playing baseball on their high school team.

**Setting.**—The total effect of the story is enhanced immeasurably by the setting. A high school and a baseball diamond provide the place of action; the time is the spring of the year. Thus, the setting might be said to be a motivating force upon the characters. Both setting and action are woven together, so that each helps to develop the theme and thus makes more effective the outcome of the story.
This setting should be highly appealing to young people, because school is an everyday and pleasant sight for most of them; and young men, particularly, are usually attracted to the athletic field.

The Students' Reaction to "Christy Mathewson's Glove"

Elements of general appeal.—The first item in the questionnaire was considered as a test between this writer's content-analysis of "Christy Mathewson's Glove" and the students' reactions to the story. Throughout the preceding analysis there were sections which attempted to identify elements which have accounted for this story's being chosen as one of the five preferences. To some degree, at least, this report of their reactions was a test of the accuracy of the predictions made within the foregoing analysis.

The first question was, "How did the following elements appeal to you?" The elements listed were:

1. Vividness of character portrayal
2. Realistic treatment of life
3. The situation or setting
4. The unfolding of the plot
5. The general timing of events
6. The effectiveness of the beginning
7. The effectiveness of the ending

It might be significant to note that the appeal of most of these elements was fairly high. In this area of high appeal 19, or 76 per cent, of the selected students gave first place to "realistic treatment of life" and second place to "vividness of character portrayal." "The effectiveness of the beginning" and "the effectiveness of the ending" were also highly appealing in that each was rated high in appeal by 17, or 68 per cent, of the students. "The situation or setting" was also rated high in appeal
by 15, or 60 per cent. Here, the students' reactions and the content analysis were fairly close together, although the students tended to place more emphasis on some of these elements than did the writer.

Table 17 revealed that there were no negative responses to these particular elements; in general it was felt that the students had a fair level of interest in all of them.

**Appeal of age and sex.**—Secondly, the students were asked, "What level of appeal did the characters hold for you?" The characters listed were:

1. A male character
2. A female character
3. A younger character
4. An older character

In regards to high appeal, Table 18 reveals that the students gave first preference to "a male character" and second preference to "a younger character." This kind of reaction was considered reasonable in that the main character was both young and male, as were the subjects. Furthermore, this points out the importance of the reader's predisposition when attempting to identify possible appealing elements. It was also noted that "an older character" was rated high in appeal by 18, or 72 per cent, of the students. Though there were absence of reactions, none of the students responded negatively.

**Appeal of character traits.**—The third question to which the students responded was, "How do you rate the portrayal of the following traits?"

These were:

1. Kindness of the character
2. Greediness of the character
3. Sympathy of the character
4. Cruelty of the character
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Limited</th>
<th>No Appeal</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vividness of Character Portrayal</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic Treatment of Life</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation or Setting</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfolding of the Plot</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Timing of Events</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of the Beginning</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of the Ending</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>No Appeal</td>
<td>No Evidence</td>
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<td>-----------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Male Character</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>A Female Character</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Younger Character</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Older Character</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Passion of the character
6. Indifference of the character
7. Inhumanity of the character
8. Honesty of the character

From the standpoint of high appeal, the characteristics which were rated highest in appeal were "kindness of the character" and "sympathy of the character," with 12, or 48 per cent, of the students favoring the first and 14, or 56 per cent, the last. These same two characteristics were rated average in appeal by 4, or 16 per cent, of the students. Table 19 reveals that there were no negative responses to these items, while there were no reactions, negative or positive, to the other items in the table. Furthermore, it might be pointed out that the two characteristics to which the students responded received marked attention in the content analysis, which was generally in agreement with the students' reactions.

Distinguishing features of the characters.—The next question to which the students were asked to respond was, "How would you rate the author's description of the characters?" The following were listed:

1. Description of the character's appearance
2. Description of the character's mannerisms
3. Description of the character's action
4. Speech habits and patterns of the character

The responses to this question are found in Table 20. As indicated in the table, the only characteristic to which the students reacted was the "description of the character's actions," which was also the only item among the four considered in the content analysis. Twenty-four, or 96 per cent, of the students rated this item high in appeal; similarly, this same characteristic received marked attention in the analysis.

Appeal of story-content.—Finally, the students were asked, "How did the following types of story-content appeal to you?" The types were:

1. Adventure
2. Humor
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>High</th>
<th></th>
<th>Average</th>
<th></th>
<th>Limited</th>
<th></th>
<th>No Appeal</th>
<th></th>
<th>No Evidence</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindness of the Character</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greediness of the Character</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathy of the Character</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruelty of the Character</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passion of the Character</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifference of the Character</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhumanity of the Character</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty of the Character</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 20

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CHARACTER IN "CHRISTY MATHEWSON'S GLOVE"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Appeal</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Limited</th>
<th>No Appeal</th>
<th>No Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of Character's Appearance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character's Mannerisms</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Habits and Patterns</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions of the Character</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Mystery and suspense
4. Sports or intense action
5. Sentiment
6. Romance
7. Tragedy

Inspection of Table 21 reveals that the reactions to this question followed the regular pattern of inconsistences for this particular question throughout the analyses. With reference to high appeal, it might be significant to note that 25, or 100 per cent, of the students rated "sports or intense action" high in appeal. This type of story-content also received marked attention in the analysis, and it was suggested that in all probability it would rate high with the students.

Although the other types of story-content were not in evidence in this particular story, many students reacted to them. As shown in Table 21, 17, or 68 per cent, of the students rated both "humor" and "mystery and suspense" high in appeal. These same story types were indicated by an even larger per cent of the students to be absent from this story.

Of further significance is the fact that 23, or 92 per cent, of the students indicated they liked this story, although no reason was given.

An Interpretive Summary

What were the appealing elements in "Christy Mathewson's Glove?"

The preceding data revealed that these elements were:

1. Realistic treatment of life
2. A young male character
3. Sympathy of the character
4. Description of the character's action, and
5. Story-content, sports or intense action

On a whole, these reactions were in considerable agreement with the writer's analysis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Levels of Appeal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery and Suspense</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports or Intense Action</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentiment</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tragedy</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary and Content Analysis of "The Gift of the Magi"

The Summary

This is the story of a very poor young couple who was rich with one of the greatest virtues there is—love for each other. Mr. and Mrs. Young each had a possession in which they both took great pride: James's gold watch, a family heirloom, and Della's beautiful long hair.

One Christmas Eve, Della sat pondering over the problem of having only $1.87 with which to buy James a Christmas gift. Suddenly, the thought occurred to her that by selling her hair, she could get enough money to buy "something fine and rare and sterling—something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honor of being owned by James."

Having sold her hair, Della rushed out and bought James a "platinum fob chain, simple and chaste in design," to go with his beautiful watch. Then she hurried home to await his return from work. On entering the house, James looked at Della's head, stunned, and with disbelief. She soon learned why James was looking so peculiar—he had sold his watch to buy her the set of combs that she had long wanted, only now she had no hair in which to wear them and now James had no watch on which to wear the chain.

Theme of the story—"The Gift of the Magi" is a story which shows that no sacrifice is too great to make when love is involved. It further emphasizes the fact that love is the greatest gift of all.

Characterization—The characters in this story were well chosen. Della Young, the chief character, was kind, considerate, good natured, and deeply in love with her husband. These traits were exemplified by her actions. It was because of her deep and devoted love for her husband
that she sacrificed her one and only treasured possession to buy him a Christmas gift.

James Young, like his wife, was a virtuous man. He possessed primarily the same qualities as Della. His traits were revealed both by the author's descriptions—"quietness and value," and his actions—his willing sacrifice to sell his most valued possession in order that he might buy his wife a Christmas gift.

The characters in "The Gift of the Magi" would perhaps attract the reader's attention primarily because of the vivid description of each. Most students could not help admiring Della and Jim for the love they shared.

**Setting.**—The setting played a considerable part in the total effect of this story. The young couple was very poor, so much so that each had to sell the only valuable thing he owned to buy the other a gift. Therefore, the following setting contributed to the total effect of the story. The Youngs lived in:

A furnished flat at $8.00 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the look out of the mendicancy squad. There was a pier glass between the windows of the room, which Della used for a looking glass or mirror.

Thus, not only was the setting in time (Christmas Eve) and place (a poor shabby apartment) a motivating force upon the characters, but the setting can not be divorced from the action.

The time in this setting would likely be the appealing factor. For most people, young and old, Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year. Therefore, if for no other reason than the seasonal aspect, the setting should have appeal.
Action.—"The Gift of the Magi" is a story in which the action may, more properly, be termed reaction in that the characters react to love. This response is mental and physical. The mental action, however, is predominant and takes place when Della, the wife, and James, her husband, ponder very hard and long over the problem of how each will be able to buy a Christmas gift for the other. The action on this level is resolved in the decision of Della to cut her long precious tresses and sell them, and in the decision of James to sell his treasured watch. When they are face to face, they are both surprised to discover what great sacrifice the other has made. The action ends here in an embrace of deep and continuing love and affection.

Action is probably one of the most appealing elements in this story. For many students, the characters' actions might have caused the students to become introspective and ask themselves whether or not they would have made such a sacrifice for a loved one. On the other hand, they might have identified this story with some sacrifice made for them by a mother or father.

Students' Reactions to "The Gift of the Magi"

Elements of general appeal.—The first item in the questionnaire was considered as a test between this writer's content analysis of "The Gift of the Magi" and the students' reactions to the story. Throughout the preceding analysis there were sections which attempted to identify elements which have accounted for this story's being chosen as one of the five preferences. To some degree, at least, this report of their reactions was a test of the accuracy of the predictions made within the foregoing analysis.
The first question to which the students responded was, "How did the following elements appeal to you?" The choices were as follows:

1. Vividness of character portrayal
2. Realistic treatment of life
3. The situation or setting
4. The unfolding of the plot
5. The general timing of events
6. The effectiveness of the beginning
7. The effectiveness of the ending

In the area of high appeal, the characteristics which received first preference were "vividness of character portrayal" and "the effectiveness of the ending." Both of these characteristics were rated high in appeal by 18, or 72 per cent, of the students. In this instance, it was evident that the students' reactions and the content analysis were in substantial agreement in that "vividness of the character portrayal" received particularly marked attention in the analysis.

The more typical reactions among the students revealed that they had a fair level of interest in the "situation or setting," "the unfolding of the plot" and to a lesser extent "realistic treatment of life." These elements were rated high in appeal by 11, or 44 per cent; 7, or 28 per cent; and 8, or 32 per cent, of the students, respectively. "The unfolding of the plot" was also rated average in appeal by 11, or 44 per cent, of the students, while "realistic treatment of life" and "the situation or setting" were rated average in appeal by 8, or 32 per cent, of the students.

Generally, the students' responses and the content analysis were in agreement; however, for this writer, "realistic treatment of life" seemed capable of arousing more than a moderate reaction within the reader.

Concerning the point of no appeal, it was noted that very few students
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Limited</th>
<th>No Appeal</th>
<th>No Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vividness of Character Portrayal</td>
<td>18 72</td>
<td>6 24</td>
<td>1 4</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic Treatment of Life</td>
<td>8 32</td>
<td>8 32</td>
<td>9 36</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation or Setting</td>
<td>11 44</td>
<td>8 32</td>
<td>6 24</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfolding of Plot</td>
<td>7 28</td>
<td>11 44</td>
<td>5 20</td>
<td>2 8</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Timing of Events</td>
<td>5 20</td>
<td>9 36</td>
<td>5 20</td>
<td>6 24</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of Beginning</td>
<td>18 72</td>
<td>6 24</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of Ending</td>
<td>3 12</td>
<td>16 64</td>
<td>1 4</td>
<td>5 20</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
made responses. As revealed in Table 22, of the elements just discussed, only 2, or 8 per cent, of the students indicated that "the unfolding of the plot" had no appeal.

Appeal of sex and age.—The second question asked the students was, "What level of appeal did the characters hold for you?" The characters listed were:

1. A male character  
2. A female character  
3. A younger character  
4. An older character

Table 23 reveals that 14, or 56 per cent, of the students rated "a female character" high in appeal; while 11, or 44 per cent, rated "a male character" high in appeal. The former character was also rated average in appeal by 9, or 36 per cent, of the students, and the latter character by 6, or 24 per cent. These reactions were understandable in that the main character in this story was female. It might be further pointed out that while both of these characters were rated limited in appeal by 5, or 20 per cent, of the students, neither of these received a negative response.

Appeal of character traits.—The next question to which the students responded was, "How do you rate the portrayal of the following traits?" The traits listed were:

1. Kindness of the character  
2. Sympathy of the character  
3. Passion of the character  
4. Cruelty of the character  
5. Indifference of the character  
6. Inhumanity of the character  
7. Honesty of the character

The responses to these items are revealed in Table 24. As indicated in this table, the students gave first preference to "kindness of the character" and second preference to "passion of the character" and "honesty
TABLE 23

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL OF SEX AND AGE IN "THE GIFT OF THE MAGI"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Levels of Appeal</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>No Appeal</td>
<td>No Evidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Male Character</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Female Character</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Younger Character</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Older Character</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>Levels of Appeal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>No Appeal</td>
<td>No Evidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindness of the Character</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greediness of the Character</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathy of the Character</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruelty of the Character</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passion of the Character</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifference of the Character</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhumanity of the Character</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty of the Character</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of the character." The first of these items was rated high in appeal by 15, or 60 per cent, of the students and the latter two items, by 11, or 44 per cent.

In terms of average appeal, 10, or 40 per cent, of the students favored "kindness of the character," 11, or 56 per cent, "passion of the character" and 2, or 8 per cent, "honesty of the character."

The lack of negative reactions to these characteristics was accepted as evidence that, in general, the students found the aforementioned items appealing.

**Distinguishing features of the character.**—The fourth question the students were asked was, "How would you rate the author's description of the characters?" The following were listed:

1. Description of the character's appearance
2. Description of the character's mannerisms
3. Speech habits and patterns of the character
4. Description of the character's actions

In Table 25 the reactions of this question are found. These data revealed that in the realm of high appeal, 22, or 88 per cent, of the students rated "description of the character's actions" high in appeal. This response received marked attention in the content analysis, and it was suggested in the analysis that it should be one of the most appealing elements in the story.

The more typical reactions among the students indicated that they found the "description of the character's appearance" generally appealing. This trait was rated high in appeal by 11, or 44 per cent, of the students and average in appeal by 6, or 24 per cent; while 7, or 28 per cent, of them found this item limited in appeal. However, it was obvious that this characteristic held at least a fair level of interest for most of the students.
TABLE 25

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CHARACTER IN "THE GIFT OF THE MAGI"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Levels of Appeal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of Character's Appearance</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character's Mannerisms</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Habits and Patterns</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions of the Character</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appeal of story-content.—The last question to which the students responded was, "How did the following type or types of story-content appeal to you?" The following types of stories were listed:

1. Adventure
2. Humor
3. Mystery and suspense
4. Sports or intense action
5. Sentiment
6. Romance
7. Tragedy

Table 26 reveals the inconsistency of the students' reactions to this question. In the area of high appeal, 20, or 80 per cent, of the students gave first place to "sports or intense action"; 15, or 60 per cent, chose "mystery and suspense," although these types of story-content were not found in this story. However, in terms of modal trends in reactions, it was obvious that the students had at least a fair level of interest in such story types as "adventure," "sentiment," and "romance." The first two story types were rated high in appeal by 10, or 40 per cent, of the students, and the latter by 7, or 28 per cent; furthermore, the latter story type had at least moderate appeal for 48 per cent of the students, which might account for the story being chosen among the five.

The Interpretive Summary

What were the appealing elements in "The Gift of the Magi?" According to the data just presented, it appeared that these elements were:

1. Vividness of character portrayal
2. The effectiveness of the ending
3. A female character
4. Kindness of the character
5. Description of the character's action

Generally, it seemed that the suggestions in the analysis on the possible appeal of each category were in agreement with the students' reactions.
### TABLE 26

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF STUDENTS REACTING TO THE APPEAL OF STORY-CONTENT IN "THE GIFT OF THE MAGI"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Limited</th>
<th>No Appeal</th>
<th>No Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Student Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery and Suspense</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports or Intense Action</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sentiment</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tragedy</td>
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CHAPTER III

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary.—In the outset of this study, the writer pointed out that the importance of reading in today's world cannot be stressed too much. Reading teachers find this particularly true when confronted with students who not only cannot read, but who have no desire for or interest in reading. In such cases, the reading teacher's job is twofold—developing reading skills and developing reading interest.

The writer suggested that the short story be explored as a possible means of motivating reading interest. This suggestion was made because of the wide variety of subjects treated in this type of literature and because of its easy accessibility. With this in mind, the study was made.

This study was an intensive content analysis of five short stories preferred by a group of college freshmen, giving specific considerations to the reactions of the students.

This investigation proposed to determine the appealing elements in five short stories which might account for their being preferred by college freshmen. More specifically, this investigation had several purposes. First, it sought to determine what five short stories of the twenty-five used in the study were most preferred by the selected group of college freshmen. Second, it proposed to determine the elements which characterized these stories. Third, it was designed to ascertain what elements in these stories held highest appeal for the students. Fourth, it sought to ascertain the reactions of the group to the five
short stories. And finally, it had as its purpose to draw significant implications from the findings.

This study was made during the second semester, 1959–60, at Morehouse College. The procedure involved several steps which are discussed below.

Having surveyed related literature, the writer secured permission from the College dean and the reading teachers to use twenty-five freshmen who were taking reading. The nature of the study was then discussed with them. Following these steps, the writer commenced to select short stories from George Norvell's *The Reading Interest of Young People*, and from high school anthologies. After twenty-five representative stories had been chosen, the writer annotated each. These annotations were passed on to the students, who then selected the five that they preferred to read. The students were given the five stories that were chosen and asked to read each in its entirety. They were then given questionnaires that had been prepared by the writer to indicate their responses or reactions. In connection with the writer's objective analysis of each story, the questionnaire data were presented and interpreted. Finally, implications and conclusions were drawn from the data, and then the recommendations were made.

The related literature pertinent to this study revealed that this was essentially a pioneer study in so far as content analyses of short stories were concerned. The literature related to this problem dealt with these three factors: (1) the importance of interest in the selection of reading materials; (2) methods of determining reading preference; and (3) related literature dealing with content analysis. Studies showed that
there was an increasing recognition, on the part of all, of the role played in learning and habit formation by the factor of interest. However, there was much diversity among the authorities as to which selections young adults genuinely enjoyed. The most frequent methods used to determine reading preferences were: (1) questionnaires; (2) checklists; and (3) inventories.

Although it seemed that some writers had made use of content analysis to a minor extent in the humanities, the most frequent and extensive use of this technique had been made by the social scientists.

There were also limitations inherent in this study. First, this study was limited to twenty-five male freshmen who were enrolled in reading classes. Second, these students' reading levels varied from grades 10.0 to 12.0. Third, the students' choice of selections was determined by the annotations. Fourth, all of the stories were written in prose. Finally, the students used in this study had not been instructed in the short story; their answers grew out of their own experiences.

Basic findings of the study.—As a result of the analysis and student reactions to each story chosen for this study, the following findings are reported:

A content analysis of "A Retrieved Reformation" suggested that there were numerous appealing elements. These were: (1) "the general timing of events"; (2) "a male character"; (3) "sympathy of the character"; (4) "description of the character's action"; and (5) type of story content, "intense action."

In reference to "The Lady or the Tiger?" the appealing elements appeared to be: (1) "vividness of character portrayal"; (2) "a male
character"; (3) "cruelty of the character"; (4) "description of the character's actions"; and (5) type of story content, "mystery and suspense."

The appealing elements in "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" appeared to be: (1) "vividness of character portrayal"; (2) "a male character"; (3) "kindness and sympathy of the character"; (4) "description of the character's actions"; (5) "description of the character's appearance"; and (6) type of story content, "humor."

An analysis of "Christy Mathewson's Glove" revealed that its appeal lay in the following: (1) "realistic treatment of life"; (2) "a young male character"; (3) "sympathy of the character"; (4) "description of the character's actions"; and (5) type of story content, "sports or intense action."

An analysis of "The Gift of the Magi" suggested that its appeal lay in: (1) "vividness of character portrayal"; (2) "the effectiveness of the ending"; (3) "a female character"; (4) "kindness of the character"; and (5) description of the character's actions."

Conclusions.—From this study the following conclusions were drawn:

1. From the twenty-five stories used in this study, the five most preferred were: (1) "A Retrieved Reformation," by O. Henry; (2) "The Lady or the Tiger?" by Frank Stockton; (3) "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," by Washington Irving; (4) "Christy Mathewson's Glove," by Merritt P. Allen; and (5) "The Gift of the Magi," by O. Henry.

2. These stories were characterized, primarily, by strong and vivid characters, who were for the most part, male and fairly young. The total effect of these stories depended, to a great extent,
upon the character's actions. With the exception of "The Lady or the Tiger?" all of these stories were typical of the American scene and were fairly realistic.

3. It appeared that the elements in these stories which held highest appeal for the students were: (1) strong and vivid character portrayal; (2) vivid descriptions of the character's actions; and (3) male characters.

4. Generally, the subjects reacted quite favorably to these stories; however, it was obvious from some of the reactions that many of the students had not taken this study seriously and, therefore, the writer was hesitant about placing too much value upon certain specific responses to some of the questions.

5. Although many students indicated they liked these stories, they could not tell why they liked them.

6. Many students were not able to respond intelligently to the questions asked.

Implications.—As a result of this study, the following implications were drawn:

1. Many students do not read one type of short story, either of the mystery, adventure or the humorous kind; they read and like many types for different reasons.

2. It is difficult to distinguish whether some readers are drawn to a particular short story because they identify directly with the characters or because for them, the stories are pure escapist. Many students seem to derive different kinds of satisfactions from the same story.
3. Many times, students' preferences of short stories can be understood only in terms of the individual story.

4. The quality of vividness in portrayal of scenes, actions, and characters would appear to rank high with college freshmen.

Recommendations.—The recommendations which are made here should be applied to the college level since that was the level on which this study was made.

1. Any study dealing with student reactions to preferred short stories would best be undertaken after the subjects being studied had had some instructions in this type of literature. This seems desirable because one who has no familiarity with the terms of the short story cannot give his best response to questions which are phrased in the language of this type of literature.

2. The short story should be introduced to the students early in the school year, as a means of motivating reading interest.

3. Further study should be done in this area, particularly the following:

   A. The reading interest of young men in the freshman class
   B. Content analysis of short stories preferred by freshman college women
   C. A comparison of the reading interest of freshman men and freshman women
   D. A follow-up study and comparison of the reading interests of college freshmen and college seniors
   E. A similar study under more controlled conditions
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Articles


APPENDIXES

A. SAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRE
B. ANNOTATED SHORT STORIES
C. CATEGORIES AND QUESTIONS
Appendix A

Sample of Questionnaire
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR REACTIONS TO SHORT STORIES

To the Student

This Questionnaire is designed to find out why you like a certain short story. If you will answer to the best of your ability you will be helping in a specific research study and also providing more information about the kinds of stories that appeal to students on your age and interest levels. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

The following questions are divided into two main sections which have directions immediately preceding them. Please be certain that you understand what you are to do.

Section I

In the first set there are several items listed under most of the questions. In each instance you are asked to rate them by placing numbers or an "X" in the parentheses. The ratings have the following meanings:

"3" means "High in Appeal"
"2" means "Average in Appeal"
"1" means "Limited in Appeal"
"0" means "No Appeal"
"X" means "No evidence of such is in this story."

Note: You may use a given number more than once in responding to the same list of items. Similarly, you may use an "X" whenever you did not recognize a given characteristic within the short story.

Name of the story __________________________________________

Have you read this story before? Yes ___________ No ___________

1. How did the following elements appeal to you? (Remember that a given number or the "X" may be used as often as you wish.)

Vividness of character portrayal ( )
Realistic treatment of life ( )
The situation or setting
The unfolding of the plot
The general timing of events
The effectiveness of the beginning
The effectiveness of the ending

2. What level of appeal did the characters hold for you?

A male character
A female character
A younger character
An older character

3. Did the sex of the character have any bearing on your choice?

Yes_________ No_________

4. Thinking now, in terms of how well the author did the character portrayal, how do you rate his description of any one or all of these traits?

Kindness of the character
Greediness of the character
Sympathy of the character
Cruelty of the character
Passion of the character
Indifference of the character
Inhumanity of the character
Honesty of the character

5. How would you rate the author's use of these traits in bringing out the descriptions of the character of characters?

Description of the character's appearance
Description of the character's mannerisms
The speech habits and patterns of the character
The description of the actions of the character

6. How did the following type or types of story-content appeal to you?

Adventure
Humor
Mystery and suspense
Sports or Intense Action
Sentiment
Romance
Tragedy

7. Do you remember basing your selection of the story on a given type as listed in number 6? Yes_______ No_______

8. If so, which type had most appeal? _____________
Section II

In this section of the questionnaire you are requested to respond to these questions by the use of check marks _____ or by filling in answers in spaces provided.

9. Which of the following descriptions describes the tone of the story?
   (1) comical _______ (2) sad _______ suspenseful _______

   Please list any other adjective which seems more accurate. _______

10. Was your emotional response to the story affected by its tone?
    Yes _______ No _______

11. Was the main character a villain _______ a hero _______ or neither of these ________? (Please check one.)

12. What did you like most about this story? __________________________________________

13. What did you dislike about the story? _____________________________________________

14. Would you recommend it to a friend? Yes _______ No _______

15. If you would recommend it, what would you say if he or she asked why you think it is a good story to read? ____________________________________________

Appendix B

Annotated Short Stories
The following are twenty-five annotated short stories. Read each annotation carefully. Then decide which five out of the twenty-five given you like best. In the space after each story indicate 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, choice for five stories.

Write the title of each story in order of preference in the spaces below.

First Choice
Second Choice
Third Choice
Fourth Choice
Fifth Choice
Annotations of Short Stories

1. **Retrieved Reformation**: A young man who has recently been released from prison resumes his old occupation until he's financially secure. Having decided to go straight, one day he has to decide between saving a little girl's life and going back to prison.

2. **The Adventures of the Speckled Band**: Sherlock Holmes is visited by a young woman who wishes the mysterious death of her sister investigated. Plenty of excitement and adventure are ahead for Mr. Holmes as he sets out to unravel the mystery.

3. **The Masque of the Red Death**: An unusual story about a young Prince's efforts to avoid a deadly plague. He invites all of his friends to his court and shuts out the rest of the world. To his horror he discovers he has shut in death.

4. **Tale—Tell Heart**: An unusual murder story about a man who felt he had to kill; his secret was revealed by the beating of his victim's heart.

5. **The Monkey's Paw**: A famous ghost story about the strange things that take place in an old couple's home after they are given a monkey's paw.

6. **Lady or the Tiger?** A semi-barbarous king discovers a unique method of punishment; the convicted criminal had to decide which of two doors to open — one leading to a beautiful prospective bride and the other to the tiger.

7. **Tony Kytes**: A delightful story about a young "lady's man" who becomes practically engaged to one girl and then discovers he has two more to deal with.

8. **Rip Van Winkle**: Rip goes to the woods one day; while he is there strange things happen and he falls asleep. When he awakes he discovers he has been asleep for 20 years.

9. **The Celebrated Jumping Frogs**: A man who would bet on anything, bet on a frog and discovered someone had played a trick on him.

10. **Dr. Heidegger's Experiment**: Dr. Heidegger invites four old friends to his study to experiment with water from the fountain of youth.

11. **Christy Mathewson's Glove**: A young discouraged baseball player finds strength in a glove that once belonged to a famous Giant baseball star.
12. *Baseball's Hero*: An interesting story about a young man who had fame, money, popularity, love and companionship. And then somehow came to him the courage with which he was to meet that last tragic chapter of his life.

13. *Best Hated Man in Town*: An old man who grumbled about everything became the "best hated man in town" — then he died and became the most respected.

14. *The Devil and Tom Walker*: One of Irving's fine stories about early America. It is a very exciting story about a man who met the devil and made certain arrangements with him.

15. *The Affair at 7, Rue de M*: An exciting story about a little boy who loved to chew bubble gum. Then one day he found that he could not get rid of the gum. No matter what he did with it, it always managed somehow to plant itself back in his mouth.

16. *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*: A man who is dominated by his wife finds comfort in day dreaming.

17. *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*: A delightful story about a young schoolmaster who is confronted with the usual problems of a village schoolmaster — and more besides; he falls in love with a certain young lady who is also loved by one of the brave and boastful men in the village; a wild midnight ride through a graveyard determines the winner.


19. *The Whirligig of Life*: Having paid his last five dollars to the Judge for a divorce, a young hillbilly learns he has to pay his wife five dollars for alimony.

20. *The Black Cat*: An unusual murder story about a man who's love for pets eventually turned to hate. He finally kills the cat but soon finds another the exact image of the first. In an attempt to kill this one, he kills his wife.

21. *The Split Cherry Tree*: A young boy who is kept after school to work in order that he might pay a debt finds it hard to explain to his father; with his gun in his pocket the father visits the school the next day for further clarification.

22. *Miss Hinch*: A very suspenseful story about a woman killer who disguises herself and for a time baffles the police.

23. *The Gift of the Magi*: A story about a couple who were very much in love with each other. Both knew what the other wanted most for Christmas; but both of them forgot that Christmas is a time when wonderful and unexpected things happen.
24. The Champ of Harlton Road: A story about a young man who was champion of the hot-rodgers until one day he found courage to make a decision.

25. Blue Jays: One of Mark Twain's delightful but humorous stories about the human-like characteristic of the blue jays.
Appendix C

Categories and Questions
Categories and Questions

The following categories and questions were used in the objective analysis of each story:

Theme

1. What is the theme of the story?
2. Is the theme true or false?
3. Is the theme universal?

Characterization

1. Who is the main character?
2. What do their actions reveal about them? (traits)
3. Is the action consistent with the character's traits?
4. What method does the author use to reveal the nature of the main character?
5. Who are the important minor characters, and what are their functions?
6. Do the characters seem to be individuals, or individualized types?
7. Is there any development in the main character?

Action

1. Does the action in the story develop the theme and follow logically from the nature of the characters?
2. Is the action physical, mental, or emotional?
3. What is the most important conflict in the story?
4. What kind of conflict is it?

Setting

1. What does the setting contribute to the total effect?
2. Is the setting a motivating force upon the characters?
3. Does the author weave the setting into the action?