

THE TEACHER IN FICTION AND SOCIOLOGY

THE TEACHER IN FICTION AND SOCIOLOGY

By

COLM HARTY, B.A.

A Project

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree
MASTER OF ARTS (Teaching)

McMaster University

(c) Copyright by Colm Harty, November 1993

MASTER OF ARTS (TEACHING) (1993)
(English)

McMASTER UNIVERSITY
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: The Teacher in Fiction and Sociology

AUTHOR: Colm Harty, B.A. (University of Toronto)

SUPERVISORS: Dr. J. Synge, Dr. J. Ferns

NUMBER OF PAGES: v, 133

ABSTRACT

This project examines the portrayal of the teacher in novels and the extent to which sociological research supports the image of the teacher in fiction.

The Introduction discusses a widely used approach to literary criticism and offers examples of scholars who have adopted a more sociological thrust in their work. It is suggested that the combining of literary and sociological methods enlarges our understanding of the classroom teacher.

Chapter 1 deals with four novels in which female teachers are the principal characters. The characters are examined with an emphasis on their lives as teachers. Salient characteristics are identified and some sociological implications are briefly discussed.

The second chapter deals with male teachers. These teachers work in a variety of schools ranging from the English public school system to the inner cities of New York and London. Some points of comparison are drawn among the various teachers and the schools in which they teach.

Chapter 3 introduces the sociological material on teachers. There is an historical assessment of the position of the female teacher during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The chapter proceeds with an examination of the woman teacher's character and her relations with her community. Reference is made to both fictional and actual teachers throughout.

The last chapter deals with the male teacher using the points of reference employed in the previous chapter. Contrasts are indicated between male and female teachers in their views of teaching and the ways in which they interact with their peers and their community.

The conclusion describes marked differences in the treatment of male and female teachers in fiction and sociology. Some under explored aspects of the teachers' professional lives are examined and some suggestions for further study are made.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr. Jane Synge of the Department of Sociology, and Dr. John Ferns of the Department of English.

My typists, Mrs. Pat Berquist and Mrs. Brenda Orgar provided invaluable assistance and remarkable patience with my handwriting.

Special gratitude is due to my wife, Judy, whose support and encouragement brought a high school drop-out to this level.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: THE FEMALE TEACHER IN FICTION	9
CHAPTER 2: THE MALE TEACHER IN FICTION	44
CHAPTER 3: THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE: THE FEMALE TEACHER	75
CHAPTER 4: THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE: THE MALE TEACHER	100
CONCLUSION	122
BIBLIOGRAPHY:	130

INTRODUCTION

i

Much of the literary criticism carried out in the modern university is characterized by a reluctance to stray very far from the text at hand. Terry Eagleton, in his book Literary Theory (1983), finds the root of this trend in the analytic, closely textual method of criticism developed by I.A. Richards (1893-1979) the English critic.¹ Eagleton believes that when the ideas of Richards were adopted by the leaders of the American New Criticism concentration on text, to the exclusion of other relevant information, became over-emphasized, thus limiting the parameters of sources which could be drawn upon to explicate a work of literature. The New Criticism effected a separation of "the text from rational discourse and a social context".² What Engleton is saying is that this approach may be at odds with the broader concerns of humanity which inspired the work of literature in the first place.

There has been a reaction against the New Criticism since its inception in the 1930s. For example, Leo Lowenthal, a behavioural scientist and literary critic, addressed the problem in his sociological study of the European drama and

¹ Terry Eagleton, Literary Theory (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

² Eagleton, 52.

novel, Literature and the Image of Man (1957).³ In his book he examines the works of authors ranging chronologically from Cervantes to Ibsen. His aim is to maintain a humanistic approach to both the literary and sociological critical skills which he brings to bear on the works. He sees the dramatists and novelists (he avoids poetry) as presenters of characters whose principle quality is that they interact with other characters and also the forces of society. The be effectively drawn, these characters must have some relevance to the experience and concerns of the reader. Lowenthal agrees that the social scientist has a similar aim. However, the social scientist:

often depersonalizes the reaction of the individual to other individuals and to society in order to reveal the broader political, economic and social forces at work.⁴

This project explores the lives of nine teachers who inhabit that least "depersonalized" branch of writing, the novel. In the novel the presentation of character is crucial to sustaining the interest of the reader. This may be done with varying degrees of success, depending on the ability and intention of the writer. Joyce's portrait of Leopold Bloom in Ulysses differs substantially from Ian Flemin's approach to James Bond, but the reader is intended to be interested in each of them. There are even a few novels in which the

³ Leo Lowenthal, Literature and the Image of Man (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1957).

⁴ Lowenthal, Introduction

scenery, the social forces or the events are memorable in isolation from a character. Fiction can, in fact, present more memorable events and characters than the real world.

In his study Character and the Novel, W.J. Harvey reflects on an author's ability to give us a more intimate knowledge of fictional characters than we can have of people we know.⁵ We each realize that no matter how close our relations with other people, our knowledge of them, and theirs of us, does not extend to the inner individual self. Harvey writes of the "discrete identity" which we apply to other people's characters. We know them by perceiving in them a uniqueness which separates them from others. We do this because our knowledge of ourselves is also of this kind. We assume that our own uniqueness is a quality which others also experience. Whether or not we think we have something in common with a character, we share the unexpressed knowledge that another's private self is essentially unknowable. Based upon this single premise, the writer of fiction invites us to "draw parallels between our experience of life and of fictional characters".⁶ To do this, the author presents a structure of events and contexts which we are able to accept or reject in the light of our own experience.

⁵ W.J. Harvey, Character and the Novel (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965).

⁶ Harvey, 31.

ii

In the novel we are asked to blend ourselves and our experiences with those of others. This is surely the quality which makes the academic humanities humane. The compartmentalization of disciplines and efforts to maintain their integrity and individuality should not alter their common humanity. Allan Bloom, arguing for a return to a traditional liberal education, attempts to bring the humanities and the social sciences into a closer relationship by reducing the university's pursuit of knowledge to its simplest division of study. He writes, "All is human, all that is of concern to us, lies outside of natural science".⁷ This project may be viewed as an effort to explore what is human in the school teacher through the use of the disciplines of Sociology and English.

"And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche". With this line Geoffrey Chaucer closes his description of the Clerk in the General Prologue to The Canterbury Tales (c.1386).⁸ The Clerk had been attending Oxford University at the time of the pilgrimage to Canterbury. But he would not necessarily have become a cleric at the completion of his studies. He was currently unemployed, falling short of a religious "benefice",

⁷ Allan Bloom, The Closing of the American Mind, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987).

⁸ Geoffrey Chaucer, The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. F.N. Robinson, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961).

yet too spiritually inclined for a more worldly office. He might easily have become a tutor.

Chaucer's description of the Clerk imparts an image of the teacher that lasted at least until the nineteenth century and still casts a weak shadow today. The Clerk's cloak was "threadbare", indicating both his poverty and probably his desire to impart the impression of scholarly disdain for appearances. His face is "hollo" no doubt because of his reclusion from the common society and disregard for bodily health. He has no money apart from what he can glean from friends. The Clerk's mood is sombre. He only spoke when he had something of "heigh sentence" to impart. He is altogether a harmless well-meaning type who is being gently satirized by Chaucer.

In the nineteenth century, it would appear that the entire population of American teachers had much in common with the Clerk. Writing in a popular medical journal in 1865 a Dr. Holbrook provided the following distressing information:

The country is full of broken down teachers, most of whom are of that age when they should be in the prime of life. Their throats give out, they have dyspepsia, liver complaint, torpidity of the bowels, coldness of hands and feet, muscular disability, consumption and nervous disorders.⁹

Teaching was a role for the injured, disabled and delicate. Real men worked outdoors. The nineteenth century

⁹ M.L. Holbrook, "The Health of Teachers" in The Herald of Health, (New York: Miller and Wood, 1865), 42.

also offers us an image of the teacher counter to that of the Clerk and Dr. Holbrook's rather sickly practitioner of the craft. Of all the writers of that or any other era, Dickens has given us the widest range of fictional teachers ranging from the gentle Clerk-like Marton of The Old Curiosity Shop (1840) to Mr. Wackford Squeers of Nicholas Nickleby (1839). At first reading one might be forgiven for thinking of Squeers as a monstrous caricature. Philip Collins, however, in his book Dickens and Education (1963) makes a painstaking sociological investigation of Squeers and finds that Squeers had an exact model in real life.¹⁰ Further, William Shaw, the real Squeers, was only one of dozens of private school owner-headmasters of the time. In their schools, children were beaten, starved and allowed to die without medical attention. It was the suspicious death of a child that brought about the downfall of both Shaw and his fictional counterpart. The schools and their masters served the purpose of keeping unwanted children out of view at a bargain price. The slogan "No Vacations" was an important selling point. Collins' study, with its complementary employment of literary and sociological methodology, suggests the approaches used in this project.

The four chapters which comprise the project have two

¹⁰ Philip Collins, Dickens and Education (London: Macmillan, 1963), 98-124.

different emphases. They are intended to complement each other. The first two chapters will explore two groups of novels with female and male teachers as their principal characters respectively. The novels were chosen mainly because they were very popular and might have affected the public image of teachers. Seven of them were made into successful films.

In the first two chapters, the personalities of the teachers and the social milieu which impacts upon them are explored. Subsidiary characters, also teachers, will be examined insofar as they are important professionally to the central character. An effort will be made to keep summary of plot to a minimum, although in some instances it will be necessary to closely examine incidents which have a bearing on the experience and character of the classroom teacher.

An attempt will be made to keep the focus of the project trained on the classroom teacher. All of the novels were written before the expansion throughout the 1970s and the 1980s of the "middle-management" sector of public education which includes consultants, coordinators and resource teachers. Administrators -- principals and vice-principals -- and their influences on the lives of the teachers will also be examined.

It is hoped that the juxtaposition of the chapters will effect a symbiotic interplay between the literary and the sociological chapters which complete the project. The issues

raised in the novels will be pursued in the sociological studies. Two works of sociology will receive particular attention. The first, Schoolteacher by Dan C. Lortie (1975) has become a classic. Lortie explores all of the aspects of teachers' lives that are raised in the novels. The second study used is Teachers in Canada (1992) by King and Peart, which was commissioned by the Canadian Teachers' Federation. This study addresses the same broad spectrum of issues. It is recent and has the advantage of containing many direct quotations from interviews with teachers focussing on their lives and professional experiences.

The themes of the sociological discussion are organized under the rubrics of "The Individual Teacher" and "The Teacher in the Community". The former deals with the personality of the teacher in relation to choice of profession and marital status. In the latter, the teacher's social position and patterns of interaction with students, administrators and colleagues will be explored.

CHAPTER 1
THE FEMALE TEACHER IN FICTION

Rachel Cameron

The image of the female teacher since the 1960s owes much to the following four novels which were all made into popular films. They are A Jest of God (1966) by Margaret Laurence¹; The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie (1980) by Muriel Spark²; Looking for Mr. Goodbar (1977) by Judith Rossner³; and Up the Down Staircase (1966) by Bel Kaufman⁴.

Margaret Laurence's novel was originally called A Jest of God but was retitled, Rachel, Rachel to coincide with the release of the movie version. Directed by Paul Newman and starring Joanne Woodward, the film Rachel, Rachel brought Laurence's work to a wider audience. Incidentally, the film did little to bolster the public perception of the female teacher. Although only obliquely relevant to the main themes of the novel, the profession of the central character is used effectively to establish her personality. Margaret Laurence

¹ Margaret Laurence, A Jest of God, (New York: Popular Library, 1966).

² Muriel Spark, The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie (New York: Penguin Books, 1980).

³ Judith Rossner, Looking for Mr. Goodbar, (New York: Pocket Books, 1977).

⁴ Bel Kaufman, Up the Down Staircase, (New York: Avon Books, 1966).

has said "my themes and everything else, arise out of the characters"⁵ -- a statement that is especially true in this book which is realized exclusively through the first person narrative of the main character.

Rachel Cameron lives in the small town of Manawaka where she teaches second grade in the local public school. She is single, thirty-four years of age, and lives with her mother. Life with mother has not changed very much during Rachel's arrested development to adulthood. She still sleeps in the second floor room she had as a girl. She is surrounded by the same furniture and pursues a social life of stifling regularity, much of it dominated by the whims of her mother. Laurence piles detail upon trivial detail to emphasize the numbing repetitiveness of Rachel's existence. The image of Rachel as isolated, brushing her hair in front of the mirror in her upstairs room, suggests a maid imprisoned by an unidentifiable curse. She reminds one of Tennyson's Lady of Shalott. "I always brush my hair a hundred strokes" (20) she muses as she continues the lonely ritual.

Rachel is painfully aware of her limited emotional life; her introspective dissection of all aspects of her condition

⁵ Robert Duncan, Margaret Laurence: First Lady of Manawaka, National Film Board of Canada, 1987.

form much of the novel's first person narrative. A constant source of dissatisfaction is her physical appearance -- "My arms, wrapped around myself for warmth, seem so long and skinny" (9), "My own hands, spread out on the desk are too large" (13), "I can't succeed in avoiding my eyes in the mirror, the narrow angular face stares at me, the grey eyes too wide for it" (20). Her self-image is that of the conventional spinsterish school marm, typified in the lean Miss Grundy caricature of the perennially popular Archie comics. Rachel does, in fact, worry about becoming a caricature. She is given to self-dramatization -- "I dramatize myself. I always did" (10). She does this to such an extent that she fears that her profession and its attendant peculiarities are beginning to impose upon her individuality. After fourteen years of teaching the second grade she faces the possibility that she may be adopting the demeanour of one who has spent too long in the same position. She frets:

Am I beginning to talk in that simpler tone, the one so many grade-school teachers pick up without realizing? At first they only talk to the children like that, but it takes root and soon they can't speak any other way to anyone. (8)

Rachel fears the onset of this occupational hazard all the more because she has not developed an internal sense of self with which to balance the stereotype she fears that she is becoming.

Like her biblical counterpart, Rachel is destined to remain childless, at least through her most fertile years.

She is resigned to this at the end of the book; "It may be that my children will always be temporary, never to be held. But so are everyone's" (175). She has usually been able to keep her childlessness from influencing her dealings with her students, with one notable exception. She is aware, though, that she has adopted the female teacher habit of referring to the students as her own; "I must stop referring to them as my children, even to myself" (8). Her concern has deeper, more complex motivations than mere professionalism. The girls in her class, "so anxious to please", present no problem; "I feel at ease with them in a way I don't with the boys, who have begun to mock automatically even at this age" (10). This discordance becomes manifest in her dealings with the student, James Doherty.

The son of a former school mate of Rachel's, James appears to her to have superior character and potential. However, all this is lost on his wholly unworthy mother; "Grace Doherty is all but moronic" (11). Rachel fancies that she alone has the ability to fully appreciate James. Her convoluted reasoning -- she feels she must be careful not to display favouritism -- prevents positive expression of her belief in the boy and eventually serves only to violently alienate him. When he does a particularly advanced drawing she praises him but then quickly neutralizes the effect by repeating it to the next pupil whose work was of "appalling unoriginality". Rachel thinks that a blatant compliment from

her would cause him to be jeered at by his friends and that this would cause him to resent her. He would then find "some means of being scathing".

James' truancy causes Rachel to arrange an interview with his mother. James has been seen playing in public when he was supposed to have been sick. It transpires that the mother was well aware of his absence and had, in fact, been with him. Mrs. Doherty explains:

"The weather was so warm and fine, on those two days, and he was much better but still not quite himself. I thought it would do him more good than school, just those few times to go out around the river that's all." (48)

Rachel's veneer of teacher authority is shattered by the realization that, while James' school life is central to her relationship with him, it means little in his world. She is shocked by the self-assurance the "moronic" Grace gains from the love that binds her and her son. Such a correspondence of symbolic strength could never happen in pupil-teacher interaction. Observing mother and son together, Rachel realises:

She has the right to touch him, at least sometimes. She puts an arm around his shoulders and he squirms away, frowning. She smiles not displeased that he wants to be his own and on his own. (48).

Mrs. Doherty is seen in stark contrast to the relentlessly nagging, quietly domineering mother who has made such an emotional and physical recluse of Rachel. The incident also contributes to the development of a central theme in the

novel, that is Rachel's inability to touch others affectionately. Following the interview with Grace Doherty, Rachel goes to bed exhausted with one of her headaches. Next morning in school she realizes that this is one of those days when the slightest misconduct will cause her to lose her temper. James is seated, doing his arithmetic. He is covering the paper with his arm while he is working. Rachel mistakenly thinks that he is writing something about her. She stands over him, ruler in hand, but he refuses to move:

Crack!
 What is it?
 What's happened?
 The ruler, From
 his nose the thin
 blood river traces its
 course down to his
 mouth. I can't have.
 I can't have done it. (50)

Rachel is shocked by her action but quickly isolates her inner reaction from her visible response. Her turmoil is masked by the priority of keeping the class in order: "If I capitulate, they will fall upon me like falcons" (51). Thus, her unexpressed tenderness towards James is perverted by its physical expression in violence. Ironically, James appears unmoved by the incident, thinking perhaps that this is what can be expected in school. His emotionally complete home life provides him with a resilience that is unavailable to his teacher.

The principal of Rachel's school, Willard Siddley, is a pompous bore. With her usual microscopic dissection of

character, Rachel sees through his forced professionalism. He compensates for his small build by being briskly officious -- "He calls this efficiency". She is repulsed by his reptilian looks yet experiences a morbid sexual attraction to him. Following a classroom visit from him, Rachel recalls:

When Willard Siddley's spotted furry hands were on my desk, I wanted to touch them. To see what the hairs felt like. Yet he repulses me. (13).

Later Rachel timidly objects when Willard finds it necessary to strap James Doherty, a task he obviously relishes. However, her status as an unmarried childless woman undermines her confidence: "He has two of his own. Could I be expected to know what is best" (27). She feels she has betrayed James by not being firmer in her objections. Dejectedly she broods as she leaves the school, and wonders: "How is it I can still be so afraid of losing my job" (28). Rachel's insecurity dominates her school life which, apart from her repressed homelife, is the only existence she has. Her colleague, Calla Mackie, is also a spinster. However, Calla has developed a coping mechanism that enables her to survive the frustrations that threaten to dominate Rachel.

Calla, named for the Easter lily, has turned to religion for consolation. Rachel is aware of the irony of Calla's name and thinks she looks more like a brash sunflower than a lily. Calla is frankly eccentric. She wears outlandish clothes, cuts her own hair "like a Shetland pony's", and douses herself in cheap cologne. Her religious expression is vented at the

local fundamentalist tabernacle. In this she reaches unashamedly toward something outside herself. Rachel finds this embarrassing. Rachel's own religious heritage, Scottish Presbyterianism, is firmly rooted in the temporal and only grudgingly allows for devotion to the spiritual -- "the Scots knew how to be almightier than anyone but God" (61). Rachel accompanied Calla to the tabernacle on a couple of occasions and "did not know where to look" when the emotionally expressive service got underway. Calla convinces her to go with her to another service which has a profound and unnerving effect on Rachel. The preacher leads the congregation in a gradually escalating series of hymns, exclamations and exhortations which culminate in emotional, unintelligible outbursts from the assembly. Unwittingly Rachel is swept into the cacophony and loses consciousness. She awakes to find herself being comforted by Calla whose quiet solicitude is rivalled by Rachel's cold denial of the experience. Calla's subsequent kiss on the mouth provides Rachel with the pretext for rejecting the depth of both experiences. Rachel calmly and deliberately generates a feeling of anger to avoid an emotional response: "My anger feels more than justified, and in some way this is a tremendous relief" (38). Toward the end of the novel, when Rachel undergoes an operation, it is Calla who stimulates her emotional recovery and new self-assurance. Rachel's social and emotional development is thus strongly influenced by a friendship which begins on the professional

level within the school.

Rachel's initial reaction to the other teacher in the novel, Nick Kazlik, affords an example of the sense of inferiority felt by many elementary level teachers, with regard to their secondary school colleagues. At their first meeting, she tells him apologetically that she "wouldn't want to cope with high school" thus demeaning the position of elementary school teachers. When she eventually embarks on an affair with him, her deep frustration regarding her own job gains expression. Discussing the students she says:

"But mine are only seven, and I see them around for years after they've left me, but I don't have anything to do with them. There's nothing lasting. They move on and that's that. It's such a brief thing. I know them for only a year, and then I see them changing but I don't know them any more." (96)

Teachers of the very young can see tremendous development in a child during one school year. This is a development that is also spurred on by the home, the peer group and mother nature. Nonetheless, it may sometimes be difficult for a teacher to believe she may be simply a witness to this natural process of development and growth; personal attachment to the students can be difficult to avoid. Rachel's specific experience with James Doherty and the cumulative effect of fourteen years of changing groups of children have taken their toll on her.

Margaret Laurence opens the novel with Rachel recalling her own first year in school. She was in awe of the "tin giant" teacher. Being a teacher "seemed a power worth

possessing then". Rachel learns during the course of the book that the relinquishing of power and control may also lead to power, the power to continue with life. The professional image -- the caricature she worried about -- will remain but now she can allow external, unpredictable influences to move her:

The wind will bear me and I will drift and settle
and drift and settle. Anything may happen, where
I'm going. (175).

Whether or not her new experience will make Rachel a better teacher is difficult to predict. However, viewed from the narrow parameters of this study, it is certainly valid to say that in her case it was impossible to keep the private and the professional personae apart. She can easily survive the demands of the classroom by becoming a "tin giant". However, her new-found self may allow her to become something finer than that.

Jean Brodie

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie (1961) by Muriel Spark was a popular play in both London and on Broadway. It also became the basis of a film which won Maggie Smith the Motion Picture Academy Award for best actress in 1964. The much richer novel on which these successes were based was the subject of a Scottish television series in 1980, with Geraldine McEwan in the title role. Although the various treatments of the story offer interesting portrayals of the central character, only the novel explores the intellectual and cultural setting which moulded Miss Brodie.

Miss Jean Brodie teaches junior level children in a semi-private day school in Edinburgh, Scotland. The school, Marcie Blaine, is based on a real school which offers its programme to the sons and daughters of the middle and lower-middle class. Mrs. Blaine, who endowed the school in the nineteenth century, was the widow of a successful bookbinder and an admirer of the Italian republican, Garibaldi. Her favourite biblical text was: "O where shall I find a virtuous woman, for her price is above rubies". She was a woman who would have found much in common with Miss Brodie in the next century. Jean Brodie, though operating in her "prime", at the school in the mid-nineteen thirties, draws much of her intellectual sustenance from the previous century.

Miss Brodie is a striking woman physically. The "Brodie girls", recalling her later:

"had to admit, at last and without doubt, that she was really an exciting woman as a woman. Her eyes flashed, her nose arched proudly, her hair was still brown, and coiled matriarchally at the nape of her neck." (116)

The basic features of her character are presented to us primarily in sociological and religious terms with no psychological speculation. The text is silent on her family and childhood. Every person with whom she interacts in the novel belongs to the school. Her contemporaries are the many spinsters left in the wake of the First World War who expended their energies in "new ideas and energetic practices in art or social welfare, education or religion" (42). Miss Brodie is slightly apart from this group in that she chose to enter teaching as a profession rather than be one who merely had reforming ideas about it. The narrator tells us that, in the Edinburgh of her time, teaching was the choice of the less adventurous young woman "living with aged parents and taking walks in the hills" (43). This was perhaps the refuge of the Rachel Camerons of the world. Miss Brodie eschewed the vibrant feminist society available in Edinburgh beyond the confines of the classrooms. Paradoxically, she brings the ideas of the intelligentsia into the school where they are thoroughly out of place. Miss Brodie has a definite propensity for swimming against the tide.

Her religious practice -- if not her belief -- is the Protestantism of her heritage. The admiration she professes for the Italian political and artistic spirit does not extend

to its Roman Catholicism. She says of the school art master, Mr. Lloyd, whom she loves:

He is a Roman Catholic and I don't see how you can have to do with a man who can't think for himself.
(123)

This commonplace objection to Catholicism is supported by concomitant action. We are told that on a trip to Rome she had an audience with the Pope, but recoiled at the prospect of kissing the Papal ring. The traditions of religious choice and personal independence implicit in the Protestant theology are valuable to her; she is not racked by adherence to the guilt-charged obedience which marked Catholic practice at the time. Alternatively, the world-bound puritanical doctrines of Scottish Calvinism are completely out of step with the side of her character which embraces the romantic ideal. In a rare passage of narrator analysis, Spark, a convert to Roman Catholicism, writes of Miss Brodie:

In some ways her attitude was a strange one, because she was by temperament suited only to the Roman Catholic Church; possibly it could have embraced even while it disciplined, her soaring and diving spirit, it might have even normalized her.
(85)

Miss Brodie, indeed, is basically non-religious. Her faith in God would meet only the most minimal requirements. Her brilliant student and nemesis, Sandy, remarks"....she thinks she is the God of Calvin, she sees the beginning and the end." Miss Brodie has "elected herself to grace" and believes herself to be more God-like than God-serving. Ironically, her Calvinistic distrust of the perceived

superstition and docility of the Roman Catholics may in its wider application have lost her to all organized religion, including the Protestant sects.

The organized environment of the school presents Miss Brodie with an equally unsatisfactory intellectual environment. Nonetheless, since she spends most of her time at school in the company of children, she is able to give her daunting personality relatively free rein. She teaches in the junior level dealing with girls from the ages of ten to twelve. She relishes imprinting the vagaries of her personality on the emerging minds sent to her for development. In a paraphrase of the Jesuit dictum she declares: "Give me a girl at an impressionable age and she never is mine for life". This is a self-delusion that she never quite relinquishes. Her teaching style is comprised mostly of egocentric monologues based on her romantic notions of life's purpose and on summer holidays she has taken on the Continent. Her educational "philosophy" does not sit well with the headmistress, Miss Mackay, who is Miss Brodie's inferior in eloquence and intelligence. Miss Brodie's entire career has been marked by numerous attempts to have her removed or transferred. She has managed to survive by cultivating the support of influential parents and by forceful argument presented with the full power of her buoyant self-confidence. She enjoys dramatizing her clashes with authority to the class and especially the "set" of six girls who become her regular

companions during and after school hours. The students enjoy this view into the fractious grown-up world which had hitherto presented an implacable facade. They are flattered by the apparent equal footing on which Miss Brodie deals with them while drawing them into her problems: "I have to consult you about a new plot which is afoot to force me to resign". (9)

Miss Brodie is about forty years old and feels she has reached her peak as a woman. Her notion of this "prime" is as vague as her principles of education:

"....my prime has truly begun. One's prime is elusive. You little girls, when you grow up, must be on the alert to recognize your prime at whatever time of your life it may occur. You must then live it to the full." (11)

She fancies her strength as a teacher is at its peak and that her philosophy is mature and soundly based. Education for her has little to do with the mind and everything to do with the soul. She explains to her set:

"....I follow my principles of education and give of my best in my prime. The word education comes from the root e from ex, out, and duco, I lead. It means a leading out. To me education is a leading out of what is already there in the pupil's soul." (36)

Miss Brodie couples this idea with the notion that if the "leading out" operates properly it will provide the world with an educated elite, at least in terms of sensibility and devotion to the arts. This elite she calls her "crème de la crème". She tells Sandy, "I fear you will never belong to life's elite or, as one might say, the crème de la crème" (23). The political progression of these ideas leads her to

an enthusiasm for the fascist regimes of Mussolini and Hitler. She regards Hitler as a "prophet figure like Thomas Carlyle, and more reliable than Mussolini" (97). There are very few professions in which one can emulate the dictatorial control of fascism; Miss Brodie has chosen one of them. It is her political ideas which eventually provide Miss Mackay with the pretext for forcing the early retirement of Miss Brodie.

Miss Brodie's opinions also seem curiously rooted in the intellectual milieu which prevailed a hundred years earlier. In comparing Hitler to Carlyle, she is invoking a fellow citizen of Edinburgh with whom she has much in common. Like him, she is of hardworking Calvinist lineage: "I am a descendant, do not forget, of Willie Brodie, a man of substance" (97). Carlyle's assertion "Literature is but a branch of religion" ⁶ parallels Miss Brodie's educational priorities -- "Art and religion first; then philosophy; lastly science" (86). Carlyle was largely responsible for popularizing Goethe in England, a service Miss Brodie would heartily endorse since Goethe's ideas on education exactly mirror her own. She might easily have framed in her classroom the following quotation from Elective Affinities (1820):

⁶ Thomas Carlyle, Critical and Miscellaneous Essays (London: Chapman and Hall, 1894), 20.

The teacher who can arouse our feelings by a single good deed, a single good work of art, achieves more than one who passes on to us in form and name whole rows of inferior natural creatures....⁷

Apart from a belief in the power of the individual, Miss Brodie shares with Carlyle his eloquence, a talent which sustains her through lapses in logic and consistency. When the headmistress attempts to promote a league of competitive games among the four houses of the school, Miss Brodie dissuades her set from involvement:

Ideas like the team spirit she said, ought not to be enjoyed on the female sex, especially if they are of that dedicated nature whose virtues from time immemorial have been utterly opposed to it. Florence Nightingale knew nothing of the team spirit. (78)

While ridiculing the idea of group action, Miss Brodie nevertheless expects her "set" to act as one in their devotion to her; she expects that as a moral duty they will rally to her defence in her battles with the school administration. She becomes obsessed with the idea of "betrayal" before and after her removal from the school. She laments in a letter to Sandy, "One of my own set betrayed me" (126). In the same letter she vents her resentment towards members of the set who have become individually successful. She suspects Jenny, now a well known actress. "Do you think she minded my telling her she would never be a Fay Compton, far less a Sybil Thorndike?"

⁷ Johann von Goethe, Elective Affinities (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), 216.

(126) Like the fascists she admires, Miss Brodie spreads her confused ideas through eloquence and the strength of there personality. As her set matures, their personalities develop outside of her sphere of influence. The one exception is Sandy, who remains Miss Brodie's prisoner even as she clutches the grill in the visitors' room of her sequestered convent.

Sandy, whom Miss Brodie has consistently misjudged, became the lover of Miss Brodie's "obsession", the art master Teddy Lloyd, when she was sixteen. A brief passionate kiss in the storeroom was all the romantic experience that Miss Brodie could tolerate. She subsequently placed Mr. Lloyd at a safe romantic distance. When the class visited Mr. Lloyd's senior art room, she "smiled back as would a goddess with a superior understanding smile to a god away on the mountain tops" (50). Rather than embark on a romance with Mr. Lloyd, she encourages her former pupil Rose to be the surrogate lover. Meanwhile, Miss Brodie sets her sights on Mr. Lowther, the church warden, who personifies the conformity she despises. She is content to enjoy vicariously and without commitment the relationship of her real love and her student. Miss Brodie is more interested in controlling, in a predestining Calvinistic way, the love affair than experiencing it herself.

As usual, Miss Brodie did not have the control she imaged because it was Sandy who eventually became Lloyd's lover. The quiet analytical Sandy understands Miss Brodie better than anyone. Her understanding subsequently makes her feel that it

is her duty to "put a stop to Miss Brodie" (125). She felt "an unfinished quality about Miss Brodie" (71). This trenchant observation diminishes Miss Brodie in many ways. Miss Brodie is "unfinished" educationally because she is still attending night classes at the first year university level. She enthusiastically reveals to her class the content of her comparative religion course the night before. She is "unfinished" emotionally in that she does not have a passion strong enough to pursue Mr. Lloyd herself. She is "unfinished" religiously in that she rotates through the available Protestant churches every Sunday without any belief in their efficacy -- "'John Knox,' said Miss Brodie, 'was an embittered man'" (33). Miss Brodie is "unfinished" philosophically in her confused romanticism which emerges as fascistic self-indulgence. She is also acutely aware, as was Rachel Cameron, of the superior -- perhaps "finished" -- status of the teachers in the senior school. She worried lest any of her girls "should become personally attached to any one of the senior teachers" (83). She says of the popular Miss Lockart, who eventually marries Mr. Lowther:

"I leave her to her jars and gases. They are all gross materialists, these women in the senior school...." (107).

As in her emotional and religious dimensions, Miss Brodie also falls between two areas in her professional life. She sneers at her colleagues in the junior school as "the half-educated crowd in the junior department" (107), although we gather she

is not educated enough herself to teach beyond that level. She is the romantic hero alone against a world which cannot live up to her ideals. She cannot allow herself those endearing frailties which inspire affection. Sandy recalls that she never felt more affection for her "....than when she thought of Miss Brodie as silly" (111). Teddy Lloyd agrees that Miss Brodie is "ridiculous" but this does not prevent him from loving her. Miss Brodie would be shocked at these assessments and would not understand that they need not necessarily have a diminishing effect. The novel does not disclose the reasons for the development of these personality traits. We do not know if the romantic persona is a defence against society at large or a misguided effort to maintain interest in the classroom. Regardless of the reason, the image has consumed the person.

The effects of this eccentric influence on the students, excepting Sandy, appears to be minimal. One feels that most of her charges get on with their lives in the manner of the well adjusted. For example, Rose "shook off Miss Brodie's influence as a dog shakes pond-water from its coat" (119). However, the pensive Sandy becomes obsessed with what she feels is her teacher's dangerous romantic flamboyance to the extent that she must eventually destroy Miss Brodie. The adult Sandy, the brilliant psychologist nun in the cloistered order, calls her magnum opus The Transfiguration of the Commonplace, a title which describes in large measure Miss

which schools are mandated to uphold above all else. Miss Brodie's romantic bravado obscured from her the formidable strength which lies at the centre of the established system.. Her glorious "prime", which was to last twenty years, was rendered unfinished by her dismissal and early death. She was remembered by her students for her remarkable self rather than for the *mélange* of ideas she naively hoped would shape their lives.

Theresa Dunn

Looking for Mr. Goodbar (1975) by Judith Rossner occupied the bestseller lists for six months, selling four million copies according to the publicity stated on one paperback edition. The film, directed by Richard Brooks, starred Diane Keaton and was very successful. Theresa Dunn's sordid story has undoubtedly reached a wider audience than that of any other fictional teacher of the past twenty years. It is based on an actual murder in New York City in which the victim was a teacher. That a teacher is the central character in this prurient tale of self-destruction undoubtedly enhanced its shock value.

Theresa Dunn is an emotionally unstable Roman Catholic of a working class Irish-American family in New York City. She is unable to sustain long term relationships with men and embarks, instead, on a social life centered on one night pick-ups in bars. She is eventually murdered by one of these men.

As a child Theresa was "good" in school:

She was one of the first to learn to read and preferred reading and solitary make-believe to playing with others. (24)

When she was four years old she was paralyzed by polio and on her recovery she was left with a slight curvature of the spine. In school she could not sit straight because of back pain. She compensated by sitting with a book under her, and suffered in silence until a teacher finally discovered the problem. Theresa spent the following year in a cast. She

survives these experiences by retreating into imagination -- "in her fantasies, she was beautiful" (33). After high school she enters the teachers' school at City College, New York. A sarcastic professor of English captivates her there. His tawdry intellectual arrogance could only be tolerated by dependent first-year students. Nevertheless Theresa is drawn to him. He holds members of the teachers' school in contempt, reflecting a widespread attitude in the college:

They were the object of general derision, she'd discovered and not just of his scorn. They were the ones, who, when a teacher veered off on one of those interesting sidetracks that brought your attention back to class, interrupted to ask if this would be on the exam. (16)

Theresa knows instinctively that she will never have children of her own, and has no desire for the experience. She is supremely happy in her grade three classroom, developing a well-balanced teaching style, "authoritative in some ways, loose in others". She loves the children and, like Rachel Cameron, thinks of them as her own:

Her biggest problem in teaching was the knowledge that she would part from her children at the end of year. (125)

Theresa finds a level of comfort among the children that eludes her in adult society.

Like Rachel Cameron, Theresa is introspective and analytical to a neurotic degree. She worries that she may be a racist. She considers this almost hereditary among Irish-American Catholics. Working in an inner city, racially mixed school disabuses her of the racist fears. She finds instead

that she has the happy ability to integrate readily with her "ethnic" colleagues. The composition of the teaching force in the city is in a state of flux when she joins the school board. The older teachers are mostly white working-class people who have used teaching as a step toward middle-class security. These teachers know that they and their jobs are protected by the centralization of power in the school board. However, the centre can no longer hold; the lobby for greater community control has gained ascendancy. A strike on the issue of community-centered administration divides the teachers. Theresa and the younger teachers join the Blacks and Hispanics and walk through their older colleagues' picket lines every day. Although aware of the security they have gained from the profession they are adamant that "it was not now going to limit them in their sympathies, their perceptions of justice" (192). While there are always differences in generational cultures between older teachers and their more recent colleagues, it may be noted that this group of older teachers was undergoing profound changes in educational philosophy and methodology as a result of the influx of students from the "baby boom" generation. Added to this was the well-established civil rights and social justice groups who saw education as a vehicle to save their children from the cycle of poverty and despair which characterizes inner city American life. Unfortunately, Rossner does not explore the educational and social issues which form the background of the

novel.

Theresa Dunn occasionally meets men who would like to begin a relationship with her, but she withdraws hastily from them. She also feels threatened by men who enjoy women on an intellectual level. For her the emerging women's movement is somehow anti-feminine; in her view, "...men must surely dislike women who were so demanding" (242). Her world is divided into categories of "real" and "unreal". Her parents are real, her rejected suitor is real, and school is real. With the exception of school, Theresa can only deal with her real world by staying away from it. The "unreal" world, the addictive quick sex of the "pick-up" bars, affords her freedom which she cannot find in conventional life. In school and through the children, she seems to attain an untroubled adjustment to reality.

Rossner's flat prose allows us little sympathy with Theresa Dunn. The novel is a rather clinical examination of an unfortunate, sick life. The prurience of the book was its original appeal. This quality was undoubtedly enhanced by the fact that the scandalous main character was a teacher of young children. There is a public expectation that teachers adhere to acceptable standards of morality in their private as well as their professional lives. With the exception of the clergy no other occupation is open to such public scrutiny. The sensationalist quality of Rossner's novel would be considerably reduced if her protagonist was, for instance, a

secretary of a nurse. Teachers who flout the accepted mores, however vague, in their private lives run the risk of endangering their careers.

Sylvia Barrett

With considerable relief we turn now to the study of a teacher who is intelligent, capable, good looking and well adjusted. She may not be typical of the usual fictional female teacher. However, it is to be hoped that she is closer to the reality. Bel Kaufman's Up the Down Staircase was the best selling American novel of 1964. The novel was adapted to the theatre and has since been a staple of high school drama clubs. The play provided the plot for the popular 1967 film, starring Sandy Dennis.

Epistolary in form, the novel is comprised of a series of letters, memoranda and school announcements. These are augmented by occasional snatches of unidentified dialogue. It is set exclusively in a New York City high school, and follows the career of Sylvia Barrett during her first semester of teaching. She is a middle-class graduate of Fordham University, where she took a master's degree in English literature.

Sylvia enters the profession honestly idealistic:

I had come eager to share all I know and feel; to imbue the young with a love for our language and literature; to instruct and inspire. (41)

She finds very quickly that her preparation at the teachers' college is inadequate and out of touch with the current reality of the classroom. Her lectures on the psychology of the adolescent for instance, are particularly irrelevant; "I have met the adolescent face to face; obviously Prof. Winters

had not" (41). Her well-prepared initial lesson on first impressions would have been successful in her college educational methods class, but the vicissitudes of opening day in an actual school prevent her from getting beyond her opening statement. Her first day, indeed her first week, is consumed by demands for administrative minutiae. These emanate from the office, and demand precedence over everything else. The title, Up the Down Staircase, is derived from an office memorandum and serves as a metaphor for all the contradictions and incongruities which contribute to the absurdity of life in the school.

The question of the internal administration of schools is an important theme in the novel. The principal of Calvin Coolidge High is Maxwell E. Clarke, a shadowy figure who emerges from his office only for assemblies. He maintains his presence mainly through a series of bombastic messages extolling the mutuality of education and democracy, reflecting perhaps the influence of John Dewey. Ironically, Dewey's "key notion of the unity of knowledge and experience"⁸, directed toward the goal of democratizing the classroom to reflect the larger democratic society, seems hopelessly lost in the harsh reality of this modern inner city environment. Dr. Clarke has

⁸ Brian Hendley, Dewey, Russell, Whitehead: Philosophers as Educators, (Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 37.

chosen a slightly episcopal role for himself. His speeches resemble sermons and illustrate his mistaken belief that one well chosen word is made double effective if followed by its synonym:

Your education has been planned and geared to arm and prepare you to function as mature and thinking citizens capable of shouldering the burdens and responsibilities which a thriving democracy imposes. (58)

Like Miss Brodie, Dr. Clarke "is fond of explaining that education is derived from "e duco" or "leading out of ". Unlike Miss Brodie, who wanted to lead while in a follower's position, Dr. Clarke, in a leader's position, wants to be left alone. The distance between Dr. Clarke and the people he is meant to serve is wide. Sylvia Barrett's students are financially, socially and often emotionally deprived. The older teachers with whom she shares the staff room are at best, cynical, and at worst, burnt-out misanthropists. The office of the principal on the fourth floor is as remote from the workings of the school as is that of the president of a multi-national corporation from an assembly line worker.

It is left to the vice-principal, Mr. McHabe, to organize the school. He does this through a confetti of memoranda, which include an injunction as to which desk drawer must be used to store memoranda. Sylvia replies with a note that her desk drawers are missing, prompting the response that "no purpose is served in blaming defective equipment for failure to comply with instructions". The denial of reality

that is implicit in this exchange characterizes the attitude of non-practitioners to the actual circumstances in the front lines of the profession. Denial is perhaps the only defence that can be adopted against the lack of adequate funding, the apathy of parents and the vagueness of public and educational expectations. Denial, however, is something that is learned gradually. It has no place in an idealistic first year teacher's vision.

Sylvia's immediate superior is Mr. Bester, the head of the English department. Widely admired in the school for his equanimity and grasp of his subject, Mr. Bester was "promoted right out of the classroom". He is now occupied in arranging curricula and inspecting teachers. Mr. Bester personifies an irony in North American public education. The very best teachers are the ones who are most likely to be removed from the classroom through promotion; they then become administrators -- a role for which they may be neither trained nor suited.

In this incongruous world, Sylvia feels very much alone during her first day. Unlike Miss Brodie and Theresa Dunn, who could not develop mature friendships, and Rachel Cameron who does not ultimately appear to need them, Sylvia welcomes them. She soon develops an easy professional friendship with an older teacher. Beatrice Schachter becomes Sylvia's mentor through her readiness to help, her wry approach to the school and her abiding conviction that the students are worth the

effort. She alerts Sylvia to the caprices of the administration, the use of the waste basket as a filing cabinet and shows her how to adjust to a lunch period given at 10:15 in the morning. Her advice is practical; her criticisms are urbane. This professional friendship is the single most important factor in dissuading Sylvia from taking a position in a leafy suburban private school. The idea of friendship among staff members has lately been formalized into "mentorship" programs by some school boards. Although there are no payments made to the "mentors", they are rewarded through professional recognition. One wonders if Sylvia and Mrs. Schachter would have met at all in these circumstances.

Paul Barringer, who is Sylvia's immediate associate, does not have Beatrice Schachter's solicitude and enduring optimism. He is a failed writer who now composes witty doggerel based on Gilbert and Sullivan patter songs. The descent to the level of the classroom is obviously painful for him. His condescending insensitivity to the students is not just self-indulgent. It is also dangerous. The adolescent sensibility is more fragile than Mr. Barringer is willing to recognize. This is exemplified in his dealings with the student Alice Blake. She is a girl of average ability "lost in a dream of True Romances" who develops an infatuation with Barringer. She writes him a pathetic love letter which he reads and returns with cold comments and with the spelling and grammatical errors indicated. The girl subsequently jumps

from a second floor window and narrowly escapes death. The teacher feels no responsibility whatsoever for this tragedy. There is no doubt, indeed, that legally Mr. Barringer is blameless. However, the incident illustrates both the potential of influence that a teacher may have in areas that are not solely educational and the difficulty of assigning "teacher responsibility".

Sylvia, too, has a student who relates to her on a personal level. Joe Ferone is on probation. When he is accused of stealing a wallet, Sylvia supports him. Her intervention draws her closer to him and she feels she must make an extra effort to help him because, though "flunking every subject....he is very bright". Joe, in turn, seems aware of her concern and responds with adolescent distrust, inviting the rejection he has grown to expect from the system. Sylvia's compassion grows until they are alone in the classroom one afternoon. He has obviously misinterpreted her attention and backs her against a wall expecting a sexual response. She touches his face tenderly"

I wanted to comfort him as if he were a child, for everything that had been done to him. (314)

Joe has never learned to respond to a concerned touch and rushes from the room cursing her.

Sylvia's encounter with Joe is a striking antithesis to that of Rachel Cameron who, when driven by similar emotions, brought down the ruler on James Doherty's face. The reflection with which Sylvia treats the incident is honest and

constructive. This is an important juncture in the development of her personal and professional self.

I wanted to make a permanent difference to at least one child. "A Teacher I'll Never Forget". Yes I wanted to share my enthusiasm with them; I wanted them to respond. To love me? Yes. I wanted to mould minds, shape souls, guide my flock through English and beyond. To be a lady-God? That's close. (325)

The novel was published before the rise of the current feminist movement. However, the encounter with Ferone prompts analysis from a feminist perspective. When Mr. Bester, the head of English, inspects Sylvia's teaching he advises her that "there are certain hazards in looking too attractive". He would no doubt feel that his advise was thoroughly justified by the Ferone incident. However, the rakishly handsome Mr. Barringer, who was implicated in the suicide attempt of Alice Blake, never received, and never would receive, a similar admonition. A double standard was in operation.

Of the four popular novels chosen for this section, Up the Down Staircase displays the greatest knowledge of the system. The loneliness of the classroom, the need for colleague support, the nature of personal involvement with students and the pressures from administration are all intimately documented. Although set in the early sixties, the novel merely records conditions which have since become more widespread.

Sylvia Barrett, like Theresa Dunn, was a first year

teacher. Both have positive personal experiences in the classroom. Jean Brodie and Rachel Cameron were in late and mid-career. The classroom for them is less important than the crisis which have developed in their lives. Of the four women, only Sylvia could be called well-adjusted. Rachel Cameron carries the ghost of the repressive Mrs. Grundyism of a previous age and is, as she fears, very close to becoming a stereotype in her professional life. Jean Brodie is frankly eccentric. Many of her attitudes date from a previous age. She is, in many ways, a displaced person. Theresa Dunn has a serious, deeply rooted psychological problem which she can forget in the company of her students.

Little would be gained from trying to create a composite character from these four fictional teachers. The emphasis on the profession varies greatly in each case, ranging from its almost incidental importance in Looking for Mr. Goodbar to the central position it takes in Up the Down Staircase. However, one is not surprised that Laurence chose a teacher as her frustrated spinster. Theresa Dunn's behaviour is all the more shocking because of the very fact that she is a teacher. Jean Brodie's experience indicates that the school can be a relatively protected environment that allows the development of individual eccentricity. It is apparent that the personality that one brings to teaching is of critical importance. Sylvia Barrett will certainly be a successful teacher.

CHAPTER 2

THE MALE TEACHER IN FICTION

Mr. Chips

The male teacher in fiction is generally presented as being more remote psychologically from his students than his female counterpart. This may be a result of the motivations, or lack of them, that the male teacher has on entering the profession. Most of the fictional male teachers examined in this study took up teaching by accident or because they could not fit in anywhere else. The trend has begun to change, partly because of an emergent educational philosophy which encourages personal interaction with students. Such involvement is presented in positive terms, rather than as a result of some psychological need on the part of the teacher.

The group of teachers presented here range from the faintly pathetic through the ludicrously ill-suited to the self-sacrificing hero. On balance, it will be found that the male teacher is not deliberately vindictive in the classroom, has an uncomplicated life and interacts well with his peers. This image has been brought to the public through a handful of enormously successful books, most of which became popular films.

Although most of the works cited in this study deal with teachers in North American state-supported schools in the post-war era, two novels set in British public schools have

had wide readership. These are Goodbye, Mr. Chips (1934),¹ by James Hilton, and Decline and Fall (1928),² by Evelyn Waugh. Waugh's book, though published earlier, remains the classic satire on the world presented by Hilton.

Goodbye, Mr. Chips was first published as a book in the United States. It originated in Britain as a Christmas supplement to the popular British Weekly in 1933. It was filmed in 1939, starring Robert Donat who received the Academy Award for best actor. Thirty years later, a rather bland musical version was made with Peter O'Toole.

The story opens with Mr. Chipping ("Chips") living in late retirement near the public school of Brookfield, where he has been a schoolmaster for over sixty years. He has become one with the school. Even in retirement, he regulates his life by the bells which divide the school day -- "dinner, call-over prep., and lights out". Brookfield, "established in the reign of Elizabeth", is a successful public school of the second rank, catering to the sons of upper middle-class merchants and professionals. Many of its students are following a family tradition of two or three generations. Mr. Chips himself does not appear to share the privileged

¹ James Hilton, Goodbye Mr. Chips (London: Hodder Paperbacks, 1969).

² Evelyn Waugh, Decline and Fall (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976).

background of the students. He seems to have come from a somewhat reduced middle-class background. The novel is silent on his early schooling and there is no mention of a social or monetary inheritance. He has graduated with an indifferent degree in Classics and must seek employment. He finds a position at a high-powered progressive school but only survives there for a year. He was "ragged" there, which suggests that even in his twenties, he was something of a figure of fun. There is also an implied criticism here of the intolerance of progressive movements toward those who do not fit the mould. The older mould of Brookfield suits Chips more comfortably.

Hilton conveniently records the milestones in Chips' life at intervals of ten years or so. After a decade at Brookfield, Chips abandoned the limp ambitions he had of becoming a housemaster and settled contentedly into a life of classroom teaching. He almost overcame his earlier problems with discipline. In an unconvincing incident in which he quells a study hall of five hundred resentful students by giving one of them a hundred lines, he creates an atmosphere of respect. It is little wonder that there is resentment among the students. In one encounter, fondly remembered by Chips in his dotage, a rather flippant lack of sympathy for the plight of young boys living separated from their parents is displayed. Scolding an errant pupil Chips says:

"Colley, you are -- umph -- a splendid example of -- umph -- inherited traditions. I remember your grandfather -- umph. He could never grasp the Ablative Absolute. A stupid fellow, your grandfather. And your father too -- umph -- I remember him -- he used to sit at that far desk by the wall -- he wasn't much better, either. But I do believe -- my dear Colley -- that you are -- umph -- the biggest fool of the lot." (21)

The laughter provoked by these remarks enlivens the old Mr. Chips' reveries. However, one wonders at the effect on Colley and the effect such sarcasm has when repeated over and over again.

The edwardian boom decade brings a new headmaster to Brookfield. A child of his age, Ralston, "glittering with Firsts and Blues", brings with him the latest progressivism. Aside from his educational role, Ralston is engaged to address the recurring problem of the inadequate funding. Ralston's espousal of the latest educational fashions and his toadying to the nouveau riche leaves Chips isolated. Ralston takes Chips to task for using the same lessons for thirty years and for looking untidy when upwardly mobile parents come to visit:

"Modern parents are beginning to demand something more than a few scraps of languages that nobody speaks." (78)

As a general comment on the school, Ralston was probably right. The introduction of certificates of achievement showed that Chips' students did not know enough to pass to a higher level. For Chips, and perhaps for the previous tradition of public schools, education itself had a rather low priority. A few Latin phrases and the odd quotation from Caesar would enable the graduates to converse at clubs and garden parties.

Brookfield, and other such schools existed to pass on a vague tradition of gentlemanliness, which Chips thought of as a "sense of proportion":

"And it was a sense of proportion, above all things, that Brookfield ought to teach -- not so much Latin or Greek or Chemistry or Mechanics." (79)

It is difficult to see how a "sense of proportion" could be maintained in the isolated male dominated monastic life at Brookfield. The outside world is allowed little influence in the life of the school. The parents of the Edwardian era, "vulgar....ostentatious....all the hectic rotten-ripeness of the age", who find their spokesperson in Ralston, are eventually defeated. The nature of their defeat is a triumph of the "old school tie" system over more democratic "vulgar" forces. Ralston, himself a self-made social climber, tries to fire Chips. However, he does not know that the chairman of the board of governors, Sir John Rivers, was a former pupil of Chips. The result is that "the toughness of Brookfield tradition" wins out. While the school can successfully ward off the world outside, Chips, luckily, has one brief broadening experience. This may account for his espousal of the temperate "sense of proportion" as opposed to absolute belief in the masculine engendered "Brookfield tradition". He marries.

Chips' bride, Kathie, is twenty years his junior. She is a vivacious liberal-minded modern who challenges his mechanical conservatism and jolts him out of the "dry rot of

pedagogy that is the worst and ultimate of the profession" (44). He develops a sense of humour; he inspires respect; his view of the world broadens:

"....now come love, the sudden love of boys for a man who was kind without being soft, who understood them well enough, but not too much, and whose private happiness linked him with their own." (45)

Kathie dies in childbirth two years after the wedding, and Chips returns to bachelorhood more enlightened and humane. He does not share the "general jingo bitterness against the Boers" during that war. While the railway strike of 1900 is in progress, he introduces the students to the striking signal box operator at the local station, informing his socially insulated charges, "you've put your life in his hands many a time" (69). The personal happiness of Chips' brief marriage imbues his professional life with a deep benevolence based on his new-found ability to love his students. The intimate interchange of love and ideas has counteracted the fate of the public school bachelor schoolmaster so trenchantly identified by Isabel Quigley in The Heirs of Tom Brown:

The fictional schoolmaster has often been celibatebecause the school has become his religion and his whole life and there is no room or energy for other interests and affections; and because a lifetime among schoolboys and in a school atmosphere has made him unfitted for the adult world,³ unable to talk anyone else's language.

³ Isabel Quigley, The Heirs of Tom Brown (London: Chatto and Windus, 1982), 270.

Chips marriage gives him the confidence necessary to embrace life and people outside the barricaded enclave of the public school. During the First World War, one of Chips' former colleagues, a language teacher, is killed in action fighting for the Germans. Chips, now Acting Headmaster, adds his name to the honour list at the Sunday service.

The British public school system, which continues to thrive, has long been the butt of novelists from Dickens (Nicholas Nickleby [1839]) to post-war writers such as John Wain (Hurry On Down [1953]). John R. Reed in his book, Hold School Ties, observes that:

....it seems that most intelligent and accomplished writers who chose to refer in their writings to public schools found them to some extent, if not thoroughly, distasteful and harmful.⁴

The role of the schoolmaster is often seen as that of a tyrant intent on breaking the spirit of the boy so that it can be rebuilt according to the prerequisites of a public school "gentleman". In Goodbye, Mr. Chips, Hilton presents a frankly idealized portrait of a schoolmaster who represents many of the shortcomings of the system while attaining the gentle caring of one who is capable of giving the institution a human and humane face. Since most novels dealing with British public schools show the boys' view of one schoolmaster, it is rather a pity that Hilton could not find room to explore in

⁴ John R. Reed, Old School Ties (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1964), 84.

more detail the master's view of the student. The aging Chips again becomes more concerned with the institution than with the individual students. As he guides the school through the war, he sees his duty as ensuring that the ideals of the past are conserved for posterity:

"Yes, he still had 'em -- those ideas of dignity and generosity that were becoming increasingly rare And he thought Brookfield will take them too, from me: but it wouldn't from anyone else." (99)

Preserving the flame in Brookfield seems far removed from general teaching practice today in private or state-supported schools. Yet there is a sense in which teachers of the young are constrained to reflect the general standards and ideals of society. Occasionally, as in the case of Chips, teachers must maintain beliefs and values which may be in a state of flux in society at large. Only at the stage of the resolution of a societal or ideological upheaval can teachers leave the established path. By then, new "guidelines" have been set by the authorities.

Llanabba

The established path is sometimes not what it seems. In Decline and Fall by Evelyn Waugh, the way of a public school is presented as not always what we would be led to believe at Brookfield. Waugh's novel also deals with the school from the view of the teacher, focussing on the foibles, or worse, of the masters of Llanabba school. The school, "a model of medieval impregnability", is not in England but in Wales. This geographical fact removes it physically, as well as in reputation, from the best or second best public schools of England. The impregnability of Llanabba is useful, not, as Chips' Brookfield, in providing a tabernacle for the high ideals of the past, but as a means of keeping out the normal world which surrounds it. Dr. Fagan, the headmaster, feels he is living in a savage colony. As befits an intellectual, he has taken the trouble to formalize his contempt for the people into a treatise:

"From the earliest times the Welsh have been looked upon as an unclean people. It is thus that they have preserved their racial integrity. Their sons and daughters rarely mate with human-kind except their own blood relations." (66)

It is to this headmaster and school that the young Paul Pennyfeather comes as a beginning schoolmaster. Waugh, himself, taught at three private schools after failing at Oxford. These included one prep-school in North Wales. There he was sacked "allegedly for assaulting the matron at a school

for backward boys at Aston Clinton." ⁵

Pennyfeather is the first of the three schoolmasters we will meet in the novel who have joined the teaching profession because nothing else was available to them. At this point their similarity to Mr. Chips ends. Paul Pennyfeather is sent down from Oxford because of "indecent behaviour", a charge concocted by the exclusive Bollinger Club to make him into a scapegoat for the Club's evening of drunken vandalism at Scone College. On his way out of the university college, the hapless Paul is advised by the porter:

"I expect you'll be becoming a schoolmaster, sir. That's what most of the gentlemen does, sir, that gets sent down for indecent behaviour." (14)

Subsidiary industries of the British public school system are the employment agencies which are used to supply staff to them. It is to one of them that Paul applies. The description of the post that he is offered captures in condensed form the entire façade of pretence and pomposity which characterizes the public school:

Private and Confidential Notice of Vacancy. Augustus Fagan, Esquire, Ph.L., Llanabba Castle, N. Wales, requires immediately junior assistant master to teach Classics and English to University Standard with subsidiary Mathematics, German and French. Experience: essential; first-class games essential. (16)

Each clause of the notice contains an aspect of public school

⁵ Jacqueline McDonald, Evelyn Waugh (London: Macmillan, 1988), 2.

teaching which Waugh wishes to satirize. Dr. Fagan, whose namesake taught pickpocketing in Oliver Twist, is a bogus scholar. He resurfaces later in the novel as the head of a private nursing home. The junior assistant master is called upon to teach six subjects, including the most important one which is emphasized by isolation in its own clause -- "first class games". Paul, who was studying for the clergy and has no qualifications whatsoever in relation to the requirements, is eagerly hired by Dr. Fagan because he agrees to work cheaply. This is the overriding, though unspoken, qualification. This indirectness is neatly contrasted in the owner of the employment agency, the Jewish Mr. Levy, who has an extroverted honesty about making money -- "'Five percent of ninety pounds is found pounds ten shillings', said Mr. Levy cheerfully." (19)

On arrival at the school, Paul strikes up a friendship with his colleague, Captain Grimes, who is a candid pederast. Grimes represents the triumph of the public school system over basic morality. Until his expulsion at sixteen, he had attended a public school. On the strength of a letter of recommendation by the headmaster, he has been able to keep his precarious life afloat through recurrent embarrassments. He tells Paul:

"There's a blessed equity in the English social system....that ensures the public school man against starvation...They may kick you out, but they never let you down." (28)

The phrase, "blessed equity" reminds us that Waugh sees a close association satirically between education and religion. During his teaching days Waugh, himself, applied to be an Anglican clergyman.⁶ In the novel, Paul's career begins and ends in divinity studies. The remaining teacher at Llanbba, Mr. Prendergast, is a former minister. He has resigned from the clergy because of "doubts" and has found a refuge in teaching. His ineptitude as a teacher is of little interest to Dr. Fagan. His concern for the school is "tone". Prendergast is useful for saying grace and offering prayers in "tones that testified to his ecclesiastical past" (35).

Both Paul and Prendergast are ineffectual, diffident types. Pauls' guardian is "abysmally bored by his company" (11). Like Mr. Chips, he is, in his early twenties, already a creature of middle-aged habit:

He smoked three ounces of tobacco a week -- John Cotton, Medium -- and drank a pint and a half of beer a day, the half at luncheon and the pint at dinner, a meal he invariably ate in Hall. (11).

Chips was liberated from his monotonous existence by marriage; in Paul's case, freedom is presented in the form of the faun-like Grimes. Paul proves a good pupil. During his first week of classes, he decides to follow Grimes' advise to avoid teaching the students anything. To cope with discipline, he

⁶ Jacqueline McDonald, Evelyn Waugh (London: Macmillan, 1988), 2.

pays the class to be quiet -- "you will all write an essay on self-indulgence. There will be a prize of half a crown for the longest essay, irrespective of any possible merit" (38). Grimes also disabuses him of any notions of gentlemanly behaviour which might prove impractical. When one of Paul's former colleagues at Oxford offers to send twenty pounds as a conscience payment for having him expelled, Paul agonizes over whether to take it or not. Eventually he decides against this "test case of the durability of my ideals" (28). Nevertheless, he is happy to learn that Grimes has wired acceptance on his behalf. He and Grimes subsequently drink one of their many pints together to the "durability of ideals".

Through the efforts of the despicable Grimes, Paul escapes the fate of the schoolmaster discussed by John Reed. According to Reed, the fictional public school-master, rather like Chips, becomes a prisoner of the institution he serves. He is broken by the abuse of the pupil, becomes socially isolated, and eventually becomes a paralyzed type, incapable of change or growth.⁷ The tutelage of Grimes provides the impetus for Paul to leave education for a far more rewarding career in the white slave trade.

Paul's entry into the exclusive world of procurement comes as a result of a meeting with the richest of the

⁷ Reed, 80-81.

school's parent body, Mrs. Beste-Chetwynde. It transpires that the foundation of her fortune is the provision of white prostitutes to the brothels of Brazil. Chips' most daunting fears of the newly rich are realized by Waugh in Llanabba. It is clear that Mrs. Beste-Chetwynde's son, Peter, is being sent to boarding school to keep him out of the way. He finds no meaning anywhere in his life and by the end of the book has become a hopeless alcoholic. Another esteemed pupil, little Lord Tangent, is treated like a pet who no longer amuses. His mother, Lady Circumference, is non-plussed by the fact that her son is shot in the foot by a drunken Mr. Prendergast who is starter at the annual sports. We learn incidentally that Lord Tangent Dies, suggesting that the individual is not an important entity in this system. It is the institution itself that is prized. In 1929, shortly after the publication of Decline and Fall, Waugh was engaged to write a series of articles under the general title, "Careers for Our Sons". He commented explicitly on the status of the public school student:

From their (parents) point of view the advantages of education are direct and wholly delightful. By one simple expedient they are relieved of the moral responsibilities and physical inconvenience of having us about the house. When we end up in prison they can say, "Well, well, we did all we could. We gave him an excellent education." ⁸

⁸ Donat Gallagher, ed. The Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh. (London: Methuen, 1983), 51.

If Waugh was correct, public schools in England must have been strongholds of the most abysmal juvenile unhappiness and alienation. They could not be, as Chips fondly believed of Brookfield, depositories of a tradition of urbane enlightenment. John Reed, in his far reaching study, corroborates Decline and Fall, in all its details from homosexual assaults on students to an overriding concern with promoting the institution and its vague ideals. While the students are the first casualties of the system, the masters are also victimized by it. In Waugh's words:

The private schools of England are to the educated classes what the Union Workhouses are to the very poor The early hours, the close association with men equally degraded and lost to hope as yourself, the derision and spite of indefatigable little boys all these and many minor discomforts too numerous to mention are the price you must pay for bare subsistence.⁹

This virulent denunciation leaves little room for a man like Chips. Yet the public schools must surely provide a symbiotic home for inadequate scholars such as Chips who have some belief in the system and its heritage and learn, as Chips did, to ameliorate its harsh oppressive nature. As John Reed avers, if such people actually exist, they are seldom found in fiction.¹⁰

A recent motion picture, Dead Poets Society, which is set in a private school in the United States, illustrates the

⁹ Gallagher, 51

¹⁰ Reed, 48

impossibility of breaking through the established teaching methods and attitudes towards students in such a school.¹¹ Certainly the weight of fictional evidence would discourage most sensible young teachers from entering the private school system with any thought of making a career there. Even a sympathetic character such as Chips emerges as a pathetic appendage to the institution with no real life outside it. Yet, despite Waugh's warning of 1929, the public schools of Britain still flourish and manage to find staff.

The Inner City Teachers

Since Goodbye, Mr. Chips, the most successful film about a male teacher has been The Blackboard Jungle (1955).¹² The film was seminal in many ways. it marked the directorial debut of Richard Brooks, introduced Sidney Poitier as a rebellious student, was based on a first novel and brought rock music to the world at large. Teenagers of the time attended the film repeatedly just to hear the music which accompanied the titles. The song, "Rock Around the Clock" by Bill Haley, established rock as the music of youthful alienation, violent revolt, and sullen suspicion of the rest

¹¹ N.H. Kleinbaum, Dead Poets Society, (New York: Bantam Books, 1989).

¹² Evan Hunter, The Blackboard Jungle, (London: New English Library, 1970).

of society.¹³ In the self-righteous Hollywood rhetoric of the fifties, the film opens with a printed statement of society's concern with juvenile delinquency and the hope that , through the movie, the public might become more informed. This implies that one needs this kind of input to arrive at a solution to the problem. At least one reviewer voiced the fear that the movie might easily incite the condition it purported to be alleviating.¹⁴ The publicity for the film included a poster showing a crowd of dangerous looking teenaged boys clawing through the prison-like bars of a high school fence at a tightly-sweatered girl. The general reaction to the film by the older generation was profound shock. Bosley Crowther in The New York Times wrote, "It gives a blood-curdling nightmarish picture of monstrous disorder in a public school." ¹⁵

The author, Evan Hunter, had spent a couple of years teaching in a New York City vocational high school prior to writing the novel. Under the pseudonym Ed McBain, he went on to write dozens of detective novels set in the 87th Precinct. The Blackboard Jungle reflects his ability to build authenticity by rendering the internal workings of an

¹³ Peter Wicke, Rock Music: Culture, Aesthetics and Sociology, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 44-45.

¹⁴ New York Magazine: unsigned review (New York: March 26, 1955).

¹⁵ The New York Times (New York: March 21, 1955).

institution in precise detail. He is less successful in the areas of character development and plot resolution.

The protagonist of the book, Rick Dadier, represents a rare example in fiction of a talented, well-adjusted man who chooses willingly to be a teacher. Initially, he sees the job in two ways. Firstly, he sees the actual process of teaching as an outlet for creativity:

He could not paint, or write, or compose, or sculpt, or philosophize deeply, or design tall buildings. He could contribute nothing to the work creatively, and this had been a disappointment to him until he'd realized he could be a big creator by teaching. (114).

He would not merely be the creator of a lesson with a unique way of expressing a fact or concept. His view of the process goes beyond this. The object of his lesson, the student, is to be the medium of his expression. He thinks his creative needs will be met "if he could take the clay of undeveloped minds" and shape it into "thinking, reacting, responsible citizens". He soon learns that North Manual Trades High School is infertile ground for his theories and that he has very little power to change the situation. As the newest teacher on staff, he automatically gets the worst timetable and the most difficult classes to teach. This tests his second view of the teaching profession as a catalyst of social action and change. The creation of "responsible citizens" proves to be a difficult task in the inner city. Dadier, the creative potter, soon learns that the clay does not come to him fresh and malleable; it has already been worked upon in

the world outside the school and the shape that it has already taken is probably permanent.

He holds onto his ideals during his first weeks of teaching, refusing to see the painful reality of the situation:

Mr. Chips was a nice enough old man but Rich was not ready to say goodbye yet. (47)

He holds onto his conviction that the wisdom he has to give is of such importance that initial rejection must be endured patiently. They will surely come to appreciate the message and the messenger over time. After he intercepts the rape of a teacher by a student and encounters the contempt of his class as a result, he begins to lessen his grip on his educational fantasies. His subsequent brutal beating by students as he walks home provides further enlightenment.

Part of Rick's problem lies in the type of school in which he is teaching. Since the Second World War, there had developed in North America an attitude of disdain for people who work with their hands. The dignity of tradesmanship which grew up in the guild system of European countries was not transferred to the New World. By the nineteen-fifties, it had become the ambition of most parents to have their children educated for a career in which their hands would not get dirty. However, not every student had academic strengths, so a system was devised to absorb the non-achiever. This was the vocational high school system. It was sold to the public as the perfect answer to the question of practical education.

Rick wryly imagines the guidance department counselling the student:

They explained patiently and fully that perhaps a vocational school, since you are so good in shop, and since your academic grades haven't been so good lately, might be the best for you after all. The picture painted was a pleasant one A school where someone could learn a bread and butter trade... The answer to the working man's prayer. (169)

The reality turned out to be that these schools became holding tanks for unmanageable teenagers until they became sixteen and could leave school legally. This aspect of the system had been carefully hidden from Rick while he was doing his teacher training. In fact, denial of reality reached into the school as far as the principal's office. When Rick is being interviewed for his position, the principal snaps in answer to a question -- "There is no discipline problem here" (13)

Solly Klein, Rick's elderly cynical colleague, who has taught for twenty years, has a view of the vocational school which is a marked departure from the official one. Referring to the student he says:

So some bright bastard figured a way to keep them off the streets. He thought of the vocational high school. Then he hired a bunch of guys with fat asses, a few with college degrees, to sit on the lid of the garbage can. That way, his wife and daughter can walk the streets without getting raped. (52)

The staff lunch room, where these comments are made, provides Rick with an oasis of adult interaction. The tenor of conversation is always negative and earthy. The teachers do not seem to think of themselves as professionals who have

been trained academically to perform a largely intellectual service. On the day Rick went to the pre-school organizational meeting, he noticed the older teachers "lined up like bums at the Salvation Army waiting for their August cheques" (27). One day in the lunch room, Solly envies the construction workers he sees from the window. When a teacher is finally broken and quits after the students smash his record collection, the principal adopts the attitude of a nineteenth-century mill foreman. He disregards the plight of the teacher altogether and concentrates on doling out punishment for the braking of a record player during the incident. He does not consider calling in the police because of the necessity of protecting the institution and his own authority (146-147). The self-image of the teacher as worker rather than professional may be generated by the dual nature of the school which combines trade and academic instruction.

As a teacher of English, Rick has difficulty in convincing the students of the importance of his subject in the working world. Only on one occasion does he feel the exhilaration of actually teaching and eliciting a response. He has read the class an allegorical story about a knight who kills a dragon because he has confidence in himself. The passionate discussion which ensues is a surprise to Rick. The students argue about every aspect of the story, relating it to their own lives. Here at last Rick experiences the thrill of teaching. He has experienced the "teachable moment" so prized

by educational theorists. It was not to happen again, but it was enough to carry Rick through to the end of the year. Up to this point, he had been trying every avenue to break through to the class. He had studied their I.Q. ratings which he felt sure would help him and had used the latest educational gimmicks of the teachers' college such as tape recordings, all to no avail. Suddenly with an ill-prepared lesson, he had achieved success.

Another positive aspect of his experience is his relationship with the black student, Miller, who is bright but antagonistic. During his first week, Rick makes the mistake of following the ancient credo of the teachers' college -- "find the most dangerous student and flatter him into becoming a positive leader in the class". This patronizing approach is clearly visible to Miller and only encourages further alienation. Rick endures a beating and charges of racism. But he never gives up the hope that Miller will change. Towards the end of the school year, Rick's wife loses a baby in childbirth because of stress brought on by anonymous notes accusing Rick of having an affair. Although he suspects Miller, Rick continues to teach every day. In a final showdown in the classroom involving a knife attack on him by another student, he finds out that Miller was not to blame for the letters. At the resolution of the fight, Miller allows Rick to take the culprit to the office.

The superhuman persistence exhibited by Rick places the

novel in the realm of fantasy. In this respect it is a portrait of a teacher as cowboy hero. One can almost hear the strains of "High Noon" in the final lonely confrontation. Rick's devotion to duty borders on the irresponsible, especially after he learns that his wife is getting poison pen letters.

Nevertheless, Hunter has the distinction of contributing a colloquialism to the English language. In MacLean's Magazine (March 16, 1992), a news story entitled "A Blackboard Jungle" outlines the conditions in present day, inner-city high schools. It is reported that:

....one U.S. student in five carries a weapon of some kind and one student in twenty carries a gun almost three million crimes occur in or near U.S. schools every year -- one every ten seconds.¹⁶

At a time when there is no money in the city budget for textbooks and salary increases, New York Mayor Dinkins announces a "\$32 million plan to more police in high school corridors and metal detectors at the doors". Obviously the problems are not being resolved and no effective prescription is being offered. Rick, as an individual teacher, temporarily solved his own problem by being a better fighter than the student with the knife. Only in the contrived dramatic confrontation was the teacher effective. His efforts to show

¹⁶ Macleans Magazine (Toronto: Maclean Hunter, March 16, 1992), 24.

the students that a better way existed fell on deaf ears. The latest "solution", metal detectors, is a stark admission of defeat rather than an improvement. The "nightmarish picture" of The Blackboard Jungle now seems relatively bland.

Following the publication of The Blackboard Jungle and far reaching success of the movie version, a spate of novels dealing with inner-city juvenile delinquents appeared. These included Evan Hunter's own novel, A Matter of Conviction (1959), filmed under the title The Young Savages. Michael Gordon, in Juvenile Delinquency in the American Novel, finds that over forty novels of this type were published between 1950 and 1965.¹⁷ However, it was not until 1967 that a novel of this genre, which concentrated on a teacher's experience, had a wide commercial success. Set in the east end of London rather than New York, To Sir With Love ¹⁸ recounts the experiences of a black teacher in a predominantly white school. The successful film version starred Sidney Poitier, this time in the role of the teacher.

The autobiographical first novel by E.R. Braithwaite combines the theme of systemic racial discrimination and petty bigotry with the adjustment of a lone black teacher confronted with a class of morose, white teenagers. The teacher, Rich

¹⁷ Michael Gordon, Juvenile Delinquency in the American Novel (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Press, 1971), 10.

¹⁸ E.R. Braithwaite, To Sir With Love, (Scarboro: New American Library, 1967).

Braithwaite, has grown up in British Guyana and received a British colonial education. This included a strong History component directed pointedly at glorifying the "British Way of Life". His faith in British tradition has sustained Rick through the Second World War in the Royal Air Force. He is confident that, as an experienced technologist with a degree in science, he will soon find employment after the war. However, he is thwarted by racial prejudice and is deeply shocked when he realizes the insidious nature of the forces against him. Hanging onto his belief in the "British Way" eventually becomes impossible. He finally admits that the belief in Britain which has shaped his development has been largely a sham: "Yes, it is wonderful to be British -- until one comes to Britain" (31).

A chance acquaintance prompts him to try teaching as a career because there is a shortage of teachers. He discovers that he does not need teacher training because he already has a degree and accepts a position teaching adolescents at Greenslade Secondary School. His experiences at the school closely follow the pattern of The Blackboard Jungle at the outset. Whereas the structure in the New York school is frankly authoritarian, there is a softer approach at Greenslade. While he receives some of the same negative advice on how to view the students, Braithwaite also received comments such as, "we try to give them affection, confidence, and guidance" "they're not bad when you get to know them"

(24,47).

The solicitous approach towards the students is partly the result of the principal's philosophy. However, it is mostly due to the attitudes of the individual teachers. The principal, Mr. Florian, is generally inconsequential to the daily workings of the school. He emerges occasionally to offer his liberal views on education. He believes that since the children come from a socially, economically, and often emotionally deprived background, it falls to the school to bolster them. Education itself is secondary to the positive development of the individual. Although many of the children are dangerous delinquents, he does not believe in punishment for misbehaviour or for academic failure:

A child who has slept all night in a stuffy, overcrowded room, and then breakfasts on a cup of weak tea and a piece of bread, can hardly be expected to show a sharp, sustained interest in the abstractions of arithmetic, and the unrelated niceties of correct spelling. Punishment (or the threat of it) for this lack of interest is unlikely to bring the best out in him. (23)

His ideas represent the beginning of a student-centered approach to education which is now being blamed for the high illiteracy rate. Braithwaite bristles slightly at the litany of abuses the students suffer. As far as he is concerned, they are white and that is a prime advantage. The other teachers accept the principal's ideas, but must themselves shoulder the practical task of putting them into action in the crucible of the classroom. An older teacher, Miss Clintridge, puts the problem into perspective for Rick. She points out

that while the students may receive violent punishment at home, the freedom of the school with no threat of reprisal for misbehaviour, can exacerbate their innate rebelliousness "and the poor teacher has to stand there and take it" (43). She advises Rick never to touch a student, especially a girl, for fear of being charged with molestation. All of this does not help Rick in handling his class, the worst in the school. He is left to survive on his own with no outside help. His lack of professional training concerns him. Had he read any of the novels treated in this study, he would have realized that teacher training is usually irrelevant in the practical world. He does read some books on the psychology of teaching and finds them useless (50).

He continues doggedly trying to reach the students through educational techniques such as well-planned lessons and imaginative presentations. His attempts are unsuccessful. At last he begins to heed the advice, "get to know them". Following this guideline actually removes him gradually from the sphere of education to that of social work. Becoming involved in their problems is an inevitable consequence of the familiarity Rick seeks to build between himself and the students. Parents begin to ask his advice on other matters. A mother comes to the school to ask his support in the problem of her daughter's late hours. He agrees to speak to the girl on the mother's behalf with the full support of the principal. On another occasion he goes to court in support of a student

who is charged in a stabbing incident. All of this social involvement helps him to know the students better and contributes to his rapport with them.

Although the society around the school and the students themselves distrust him because of his colour, Rick is also separated from them by class. He is a product of the British colonial middle-class. His realization that the "British Way" he was taught to respect as a child was an illusion, does not cause him to lose the values and mores of his upbringing. These included a classical education modelled on the British grammar or even private school curriculum. As a result, during the summer holidays he spends his time "visiting exhibitions", going to the theatre, ballet, and concerts" (79). He believes so profoundly in the civilizing attributes of these pursuits that he arranges visits to them for his class during the school year. The headmaster shares Rick's belief in the therapeutic properties of good taste. Braithwaite describes a school assembly:

After the prayer, the Head read a poem, La Belle Dame Sans Merci. The records which followed were Chopin's Fantasie Impromptu, and part of Vivaldi's Concerto in C for Two Trumpets. (40)

Such an assembly would not now be possible. The educational philosophy behind this practice is that the school has a responsibility to provide an alternative to the popular culture of the day. For the past twenty years, this counterbalancing role has been lost, although there are

increasing demands for its revival. Neil Postman in Teaching as a Conserving Activity ¹⁹ argues that one goal of education is to provide students with an appreciation of the cultural expression of the past. Rick Braithwaite makes no pretence at meeting the students on their own intellectual and cultural level. On the contrary, he insists that they address each other civilly; the girls in the class must be referred to as "Miss" and the boys by their surnames. He never wavers in his confidence that his values and tastes are civilized and should be adopted. Twenty years later, Allan Bloom in The Closing of the American Mind would lament the passing from the educational scene of this kind of cultural assurance:

Civilization or, to say the same thin, education is the taming or domestication of the soul's raw passions -- not suppressing or excising them, which would deprive the soul of its energy -- but forming and informing them as art.²⁰

In the years following the publication of To Sir With Love, in books and television shows such as Room 222, ²¹ teachers were presented in an even more ministering role. Knowledge and the transmission of values gave way to loving and caring for the

¹⁹ Neil Postman, Teaching as a Conserving Activity (New York: Delacorte Press, 1979), quoted in Joe Steussy, Rock and Roll Its History and Stylistic Development, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990), 399.

²⁰ Allan Bloom, The Closing of the America Mind, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 222.

²¹ William Johnston, Room 222 (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1970).

students. In an autobiographical account of teaching, Cries from the Corridor (1980) by Peter McLaren, a teacher in a public housing suburb of Toronto, receives the following advice from his principal:

Teachers have to understand about the prejudices they bring to their job ... We can impose our values on them, but that implies their values aren't any good. That would be destructive. We've got to develop relationships with these kids, and relationships involve feelings...²²

This approach may well be beneficial to the students. However, it can decimate the teaching population because of the high level of psychological involvement that it demands. An older teacher tells the youthful Peter McLaren that the effort of constant personal commitment "both as therapist and teacher has made him an emotional wreck himself" (155). Braithwaite had taught for one year during the course of To Sir With Love. Although happy with the progress he made, he may not have enjoyed the experience so much after his tenth year. If he had remained in the job, he might have discovered that the fine balance he and the school maintained between cultural standards and personal involvement would eventually tip in favour of the latter. He may not have found this development quite so rewarding. Conversely, Peter McLaren during the three teaching assignments covered in his book

²² Peter McLaren, Cries from the Corridor (Toronto: Metheun, 1980), 111.

appears to thrive on the non-academic aspects of the job. He joins teaching because he wants to feel that he is important to the system. He felt "expendable" in a suburban school and switched to the inner-city: "That's where you'll feel most needed" his wife advises him (xiv).

With the exception of Goodbye, Mr. Chips, the various novels considered here deal with teachers at the beginning of their careers. Those which are to some extent autobiographical were written by men who soon left the profession to pursue writing careers. This is certainly an indication that teaching attracts creative men. However, the creative aspects of the task do not sustain them in the long term. The most successful fictional teacher in terms of durability is Mr. Chips. He is also the dullest. Both he and Rick Braithwaite speak of the students as "theirs" at the end of the novels. Waugh's teachers do their best to avoid not only the students but also teaching itself. Strangely missing from all the novels is a desire for career mobility, surely a prime concern of men in other professions. This may be due to the fact that the authors did not see their characters as seriously considering teaching as a long term career.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE: THE FEMALE TEACHER

i The Individual Female Teacher

In two of the novels dealt with in this study, the central female characters have strong links with the nineteenth-century. Rachel Cameron, teaching in small-town Manitoba, was very much aware of her Scottish settler ancestors. Jean Brodie was born in the nineteenth-century. It may, therefore, be useful to explore the historical development of the woman teacher to better appreciate her position in the schools of the first half of the twentieth century and later.

Generally, young women who entered teaching in the nineteenth-century were thought of as either performing a nurturing function until they left to marry and have children of their own. If they remained single, they were seen as being engaged in an occupation which was a useful substitute for motherhood.¹ In either case, they were expected to have no interest in the more power-centered administrative aspects of the profession. School boards felt that women lacked the forcefulness to deal with bureaucracy or the older male students.² Nevertheless, women outnumbered men in teaching by

¹ Jane Gaskell and Arlene McLaren, Women and Education, (Calgary: Detselig, 1987), 33.

² Gaskell and McLaren 34

the turn of the century. Then, as now, the male minority dominated in the administration positions. Because of these developments certain stereotypes of female teachers emerged. Gaps between the wages of male and female teachers gradually widened, placing the woman in a subservient role even though she was doing the same job as a man. The younger female teacher, coming from a male dominated household, could be expected to be meek and respectful to male authority and motherly to the students.³ If she did not marry she was expected to embody these qualities throughout her career.

For the young woman entering the profession today, nineteenth-century expectations transmit a surprisingly powerful echo. The professional journal Canadian School Executive (May 1993) recently carried an article entitled, "Teacher Trainees' Attitudes toward the Teaching Career".⁴ It reported on a survey of 180 students who were enrolled in the final year of a Bachelor of Education program at Lakehead University. Extrinsic factors such as vacation time and job availability appeared to have little significance as incentives to choosing the profession. Most respondents said that "the opportunity to impart knowledge, be around children and utilize creative skills were far more important as

³ Gaskell and McLaren, 36

⁴ Douglas J. Thom, "Teacher Trainees' Attitudes" in The Canadian School Executive, November (1992), 28-31.

motivators than working conditions, salaries or job security".⁵ The nurturing side of the young nineteenth-century teacher is very much alive in these young aspirants. It was also a character trait of Sylvia Barrett in Up the Down Staircase (1964). After a nerve-shredding year of inner-city teaching, she chose to continue for much the same reasons she had when she began. A real-life counterpart of Sylvia, reflecting on her first months of teaching is quoted in the study, Teachers in Canada (1992):

"I am a first year teacher and my eyes have really been opened in the past two months. Teaching is not at all the fun and games I thought it to be. However, there are rewards I had not expected: the glint of understanding in a student's eyes, the eagerness to learn".⁶

No doubt the nurturing element is an intrinsic part of the job and a salient characteristic in young teachers. The "glint of understanding" is not always enough to sustain the novice. King and Peart (1992) in a national survey of teachers carried out for the Canadian Teachers' Federation also found that ten percent of teachers leave the profession in their first three years. Suggested as reasons for the high drop-out rate were the common complaints of the beginning teacher -- "overworked, uncertain, isolated, learning by trial and error" (Teachers in Canada, 34). No doubt many others persist although they may

⁵ Thom, 29.

⁶ A.J.C. King and M.J. Peart, Teachers in Canada, (Ottawa: Canadian Teachers' Federation, 1992), 29.

not be temperamentally or even psychologically suited to the profession.

King and Peart report that "about one quarter" of the 15,000 teachers in their study chose to enter teaching because of an influential teacher in their own school experience.⁷ One woman teacher said she had "very nice" teachers in elementary school and wanted to be like them. Rachel Cameron in A Jest of God was also influenced by one of her teachers, although "niceness" was not the characteristic she most admired. She was interested in power. She used to watch her second grade teacher select coloured chalks and write what she wished on the blackboard. Rachel reflects, "It seemed a power worth possessing then" (A Jest of God, 7). The candour of the fictional character invites us to speculate about whether there are less altruistic reasons for entering teaching than those usually given. Psychological motives for becoming a teacher are difficult to identify and receive sparse attention in educational research. Lortie (1975)⁸ attempts to dissect the meaning of the phrase "the desire to work with young people". He concludes that:

The psychological needs which underlie an interest in working with children are undoubtedly varied and complex, and there is no research which justifies the concept of

⁷ King and Peart, 27.

⁸ Dan C. Lortie, Schoolteacher (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 10.

a single personality type among teachers.⁹

Notwithstanding the difficulty of researching the underlying motives of the prospective teacher, one is inclined to accept Rachel Cameron's frank self-analysis. An image of power and control imprinted on a student's psyche since childhood may indeed be a key factor in the choice of teaching as a career in later life. However, the wielding of power is not a goal most teachers would want to acknowledge.

Power in its societal rather than its personal dimension has been an important element in the relationship of women to teaching. While women in the late nineteenth-century filled teaching jobs which men did not want, the profession offered a relatively easy access to the working world for the middle class woman.¹⁰ The medical, legal and governmental professions had well established entry control regulations which protected these male territories. Teaching was usually in the control of local authorities, not a professional body.¹¹ Around the turn of the century even working-class girls began to enter teaching. Like nurses, they learned on the job.¹² As formal training and certification began to flourish in the first decade of this century, middle-class

⁹ Lortie, 27.

¹⁰ Gaskell and McLaren, 36.

¹¹ Jane Lewis, Women in England, (Sussex: Wheatsheaf, 1984), 198.

¹² Lewis, 198

single women could enter teaching without feeling they were becoming involved in a menial task.

In the late Victoria period a disproportionately large female population meant that one-quarter of all women in Britain would never marry.¹³ This phenomenon gave rise to the view that women were superfluous in the population. This, in turn, gave rise to various schemes to deal with them including mass compulsory emigration. Florence Nightingale, one of Miss Brodie's mentors, refused to concede that the single state should be of any great concern to either women or society. Eschewing the notion that spinsters were merely women who had not been asked to marry, she suggested that spinsterhood might be preferable to marriage because "behind his destiny woman must annihilate herself".¹⁴

In Miss Brodie's own generation, following the First World War, the proportion of single women increased until, in 1929, it was estimated that forty percent of women over the age of thirty had never been married.¹⁵ At the same time, the introduction of the marriage ban to women teachers opened up jobs to single women. From the early 1920s, local authorities in Britain and the colonies, as a means of absorbing the growing numbers of unemployed educated single women, adopted

¹³ Sheila Jeffreys, The Spinster and Her Enemies, (London: Pandora, 1985), 86.

¹⁴ Jeffreys, 88.

¹⁵ Lewis, 200.

the position that married women were not efficient teachers.¹⁶ Although challenged in court, these bans were not abolished in Britain until 1944. While these developments served to enhance public perception of the single woman teacher there were other countervailing forces at work. Alison Oram (1984) points out that running concurrently between the wars there were government campaigns to replenish the population by promoting the virtues of motherhood and family life.¹⁷ The spinster teacher, then, while enjoying some improvement in her professional status continued to be portrayed as "neurotic, lonely and frustrated".¹⁸ As late as 1948, an educational commenter could seriously offer the view that "single women teachers suffered from emotional problems arising from sexual repression or homosexuality".¹⁹ On the other hand the McNair Report on Education (1944) stated that the glorification of the married woman teacher had reached the point of being with the marriage bans and spinster teachers. The report coined the phrase, "the wise married woman" and advocated her re-entry to the classroom as a proper example of young

¹⁶ Lewis, 193.

¹⁷ Alison Oram in Teachers, Gender and Careers, ed. Sandra Acker, (New York: Falmer Press, 1981), 24.

¹⁸ Oram, 32.

¹⁹ Margaret Littlewood, "The Wise Married Woman and the incompatible Teaching Unions" in Women Teachers, eds. Hilary De Leon and Frances Widdowson Migniuolo (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1989), 182.

children.²⁰

These, then, were the forces which were building during Miss Brodie's prime. However, Miss Brodie was anything but repressed and sex was the least of her difficulties. She has no qualms about directing her "set" toward sexual experience. She gratified her own urges on weekends with a man she did not love and had no intention of marrying. To help vitiate the popular image of the spinster a real life contemporary of Miss Brodie, Winnifred Holtby wrote in 1934:

The spinster may have work which delights her, personal intimacies which comfort her, power which satisfies her.²¹

She might well have been speaking of Miss Brodie who had an extremely satisfying -- albeit unorthodox -- life as a teacher until her "betrayal". She was not unlike Rachel Cameron in that power was the nucleus of her devotion to the "set" and by extension to the profession itself. "Working with young people" for Miss Brodie meant directing their talents, as she perceived them, in directions which she would wish to pursue herself. Judy Little (1991) in her analysis of the novel points out that Miss Brodie was very much alone because of sociological conditions as well as her own idiosyncrasies:

Unlike the women of a generation or two before her, she is not part of a supportive community with a developed language about what sex and vocation mean to the

²⁰ Littlewood, 182.

²¹ Winnifred Holtby, Women (London: John Lane, 1934), 131.

spinster.²²

It might be suggested that the increasing tide of rejection of spinsterhood between the wars could draw an isolated teacher like Jean Brodie to the attractive, simplistic philosophies of fascism. In her betrayal she was a victim of the sociological forces of the nineteenth-century which formed her as an independent woman and the emerging countertrends, such as the "wise married woman" and the personality-based fascism of Mussolini. She was also blind to the need for society to protect in its schools the fundamental ideas which underpin it. A secondary school teacher in Toronto was recently removed from the classroom because he supported the National Front, a neo-fascist organization. It was not proved that he used the classroom to spread his beliefs.²³ Teachers occupy an unusual position in the working world in that they are expected to be conduits for the values of society. This is perhaps the most fundamental of the external forces upon their careers.

²² Judy Little, "Endless Different Ways" in Old Maids to Radical Spinsters, ed. Laura L. Doan, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 24.

²³ The Toronto Sun, April 14, 1993, 7.

ii The Female Teacher in the Community

The values of the society, as far as the teacher is concerned, are often enshrined in law. The Ontario Education Act (1990) stipulated that:

It is the duty of the teacher.... to inculcate by precept and example respect for the religion and the principles of Judeo-Christian morality and the highest regard for truth, justice, loyalty, love of country, humanity, benevolence, sobriety, industry, frugality, purity, temperance and all other virtues.²⁴

Similar inventories enjoining teachers to be Christ-like (it is a very male list) models for society exist throughout the world.²⁵ Those drawn up by teachers' organizations differ little from those generated by government. To understand the insistence that teachers in general, and women teachers in particular, be moral paragons it is worth noting that the Socratic dialogues dealt with morality and one of Christ's images is that of the Great Teacher. The church-run schools of the Middle Ages provided the "cement" which held feudalism together. As parliamentary democracy developed, so too did the secularization of education. Nevertheless, the school still retained its role as a moral bridge in society. Emile Durkheim found that the new morality had to be attained pedagogically by forming in the student "a preference for an

²⁴ E.G. Alexander, Teachers and the Law, (Toronto: Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, 1990), 14.

²⁵ Marion Edman, The Self image of Primary School Teachers, (Detroit: Wayne State Press, 1968), 23.

ordered life".²⁶ For Durkheim the curriculum itself is secondary to the "ordering" function of the system and, by implication, the teacher. Further, as Lortie indicates, New World legislation, such as the Old Deluder Satan Act, "symbolized the linkage Puritans felt between literacy and salvation".²⁷ The teacher, therefore, although denied the power of the clergy, had much of its moral obligation.

Rachel Cameron, in the small Presbyterian society of Manawaka, was well aware of these constraints. Although her Scots ancestors were "almightier than anyone but God" (A Jest of God, 61), her own generation did not share this confidence. They were, nonetheless, expected to live up to a tradition of moral superiority. She reflects that "the backbone had been splintered considerably" before the tradition reached her. That she is the town's second grade teacher, and thereby a focus of the moral vigilance of the school board and the parents, certainly contributed to her overwhelming personal insecurity. Her endless self-analysis leads her to wonder, "I honestly do not know why I feel the daft sting of imagined embarrassments" (A Jest of God, 58). An actual teacher living in a similar small town in Prince Edward Island felt the same pressure and seems to have had a reaction to it much like

²⁶ Emile Durkheim, Moral Education (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe Inc., 1961), 43.

²⁷ Lortie, 10.

Rachel's. King and Peart (1992) quote her rather tense view of the situation:

I think that you have to be a role model and I think that your behaviour shouldn't be any different from that of any upstanding citizen....I wouldn't want to be seen as behaving badly or doing something wrong. I think it would be very damaging....you have to be on your toes at all times.²⁸

Theresa Dunn, in Looking for Mr. Goodbar, while conscious of the social obligations of the teacher, perversely enjoyed living beyond them in her chaotic private life. One of her casual sex partners effectively sums up public expectations with the pithy remark, "What the hell you doin' fucking around in bars if you're a teacher" (24). What indeed? She would be much wiser to follow the example of an actual counterpart in the King and Peart study, "If I am going to go to a bar....I go to another town" (138). Even in another town she would probably be reluctant to admit that she was a teacher.

A recent case (1991) that came before the Ontario Human Rights Commission illustrates the vulnerability of the woman teacher when she departs from the norm in matters of life style.²⁹ A teacher in a Christian school became divorced, lived with a male friend and was subsequently dismissed. She filed a complaint with the Commission in which she said she had been discriminated against because of her marital status.

²⁸ King and Peart, 138.

²⁹ "Teacher fired for Lifestyle" in The Canadian School Executive, May (1993), 31-33.

The ensuing enquiry found that she had, indeed, been discriminated against. However, this discrimination was justified because the Human Rights Code of Ontario protects the rights of institutions to serve the needs of a particular religion or creed. The rights of the teacher are therefore, secondary to the rights of the employing institution. Rachel Cameron and her real life colleague in Prince Edward Island have very valid reasons for feeling insecure. Conversely, when the teacher leaves the outside world for the classroom she often finds security and acceptance there. Jennifer Nias explored the "subjective reality" of teaching in Britain in her article, "What it means to feel like a Teacher" (1988).³⁰ The study attempted to establish the affective components of the elementary school teacher's role. Most of the respondents identified the intensely personal nature of the profession. One woman, speaking of the need to bring a "wholeness" of self to the classroom, said:

I tend to bring a lot of my personal life into school with the children. They know a lot about what I'm doing all the time, so in that way teaching is never separate from my personal life.³¹

Many of the teachers spoke of the importance of developing "relationships" with the children. The nature of these arrangements was often unclear, but they generally included a

³⁰ Jennifer Nias, "What it means to feel like a Teacher" in Schoolwork, ed. Jenny Ozga, (Milton Keynes: Open university Press, 1988), 195-213.

³¹ Nias, 198.

notion of the teacher being in a parental role. This perception of the profession as a caring one caused most of the teachers to extend their duties far beyond the classroom and into their free time. This often had devastating results for their personal lives. Their views of themselves were dominated by the conflicting demands of their task. They had to be loving and authoritarian and professional and personal. As one teacher put it:

I don't think anyone could teach young children unless they're both egocentric and selfless. You've got to be sure of who you are yourself and yet quite prepared to forget who you are, not forget it, but put who you are second to who the kids are.³²

Nias concludes that it is a basic paradox of the profession to live with the stress which ensues from deep personal commitment. Conversely, Theresa Dunn, in Looking for Mr. Goodbar, draws her only emotional sustenance from teaching. Inept in her relationships with adults, especially men, her students provide her with normal human affection. She loved them as though they were her own, "happiness was quite genuinely there only when she was with the children" (125). Their ingenuous dependence touches her and her need ignites a reciprocal response in them. She would agree with one of Nias' respondents who said, "It's all the feedback things isn't it -- all the things that make you feel good about

³² Nias, 212.

good about yourself".³³ The classroom can be an island of sanity for some teachers.

Many teachers would probably be reluctant to admit that their reason for remaining in the profession was their own emotional satisfaction. Lortie's respondents led him to assume that "psychic rewards apparently revolve around classroom achievement".³⁴ Teachers spoke of "reaching" students or making a breakthrough with a particularly difficult student. In the study by King and Peart, the affective development of the teacher was not considered. Relationships with students were divided into the non-emotional categories of evaluation and discipline. In their section on "Teacher Satisfaction" only one of the selected fifteen responses had similar feelings to those experienced by Theresa Dunn. A grade one teacher said that "my students like me and tell me so daily. I find this mutual caring leads to a good learning environment".³⁵ This teacher seems to have struck a happy balance between the emotional and the educational.

There is no doubt that a symbiotic relationship where there is affection and respects desirable. However, to allow

³³ Nias, 206.

³⁴ Lortie, 109.

³⁵ King and Peart, 109.

affection to be the foundation of classroom procedure is dangerously inappropriate and the situation is not sustainable in the long term. Many teachers in Nias' study appeared to be close to nervous exhaustion. One teaching couple said, "We enter the week on Monday morning and come out of the tunnel on Friday night and hardly see each other in between".³⁶ Intense involvement in teaching, or with a particular student, inevitably leads people to breaking points. Rachel Cameron experienced this when she struck her favourite students across the face with a ruler. The solution to the paradox of teaching which concerns Nias is surely to maintain a respectful professional distance from students and, indeed, from the job as a whole. This may be equally important regarding one's relations with one's colleagues and administrators.

In the book, The Complex Roles of the Teacher (1984), a work designed for use in colleges of education, the authors offer advice on how teachers should relate to colleagues. They advise, for example:

A floating coffee klatch, one that rotates from one staff member's home to another's on a monthly basis, is another means of getting to know fellow workers in some other setting.³⁷

³⁶ Nias, 208.

³⁷ Shirley F. Heck and C. Ray Williams, The Complex Roles of the Teacher, (New York: Teachers' College Press, 1984), 17.

This would be enough to send many teachers rotating into early retirement or another occupation. Organized conviviality is seldom successful in schools and often creates social pressure in addition to the everyday stress of doing the job. However, it is desirable, even necessary, to form closer than usual working relationships with colleagues at particular junctures in one's career. The experiences of Sylvia Barrett of Up the Down Staircase (1964) provides a case in point.

Following her inadequate teacher training and confronted by an impossible class, Sylvia was fortunate in finding a sympathetic older supportive colleague. Mrs. Schachter, an elderly widow, immediately comes to Sylvia's aid and guides her through the ancillary pieces of educational business which take up much of a teacher's time and can put a beginning teacher into a state of shock. They remain friends throughout the year, but their friendship remains essentially a professional one. They do not see each other outside school hours.

The loneliness of the classroom can remain a problem beyond the teacher's first year. Lortie found that the problem was of particular concern among older single women. They often blamed the lack of social interaction with colleagues for the fact that they could not meet marriageable men. Rachel Cameron would certainly share these sentiments. Her insulated existence leads her eventually to fear even the potential sexuality of her third grade boys:

And yet I feel at ease with them [girls] in a way I don't with boys, who have begun to mock automatically even at this age. (A Jest of God, 10).

Lortie notes that older, single women teachers are "thrown back on each other's company to a considerable degree".³⁸ Friendships of desperation rather than compatibility can often develop like that between Rachel and her lesbian colleague Calla. In their case, non-professional socialization leads to embarrassment and tension which undermines their working relationship at school. Calla eventually adopted an approach to isolation which is probably more widely effective; she becomes passionately involved in a non-school interest, religion, which brings her into contact with people away from her job.

Recent studies of the growing problem of teacher stress would vindicate Calla. Jack Dunham, in Stress in Teaching, found that those teachers who dealt successfully with job stress had full lives away from teaching and their colleagues.³⁹ One teacher said:

I reduce stress by ensuring that my life is not on a single track. I do this by pursuing other interests -- mainly music and sport -- so that on Monday morning my body and spirit are refreshed ... I lead a full life outside school and keep physically fit....I find that as a member of a motor racing club being at a race meeting blocks out all other thoughts....⁴⁰

³⁸ Lortie, 98.

³⁹ Jack Dunham, Stress in Teaching, (New York: Nichols Publishing Co., 1984), 114.

⁴⁰ Dunham, 115.

Other teachers mentioned that living away from the school community helped them cope. However, for a small town older teacher or a big city beginning teacher, the task of developing a non-school social life may be difficult. In the case of the beginning teacher, it would be easy, though rare, for a school principal to organize an informal support group of older teachers to be ready to help the novice when needed. "Mentorship" programs have been developed to reproduce in a more formal fashion the spontaneity of Sylvia Barrett's relationship with her older colleague. These are few. Young teachers are most likely to operate in isolation, as Susan Moore Johnson (1990) puts it, "on their own wit, doing their best to approximate the practice of their own good teachers".⁴¹ School administrators, usually male, seem to feel little duty to support young teachers, who are usually women.

Miss McKay, the headmistress of the school in which Miss Brodie taught, was an anomaly in British education in the 1930s. It was considered unnatural to have male teachers take orders from a woman. In 1939 the National Association of Schoolmasters bluntly refused to allow a male teacher to serve under a woman:

Only a nation heading for the madhouse would force upon men -- many men with families -- such a position as service under a spinster headmistress.⁴²

⁴¹ Susan Moore Johnson, Teachers at Work, (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 163.

⁴² Lewis, 199.

While we are not told of the attitude of the school's male staff to Miss McKay, we are left in no doubt as to Miss Brodie's feelings. For Miss Brodie, the isolation of the classroom is a sanctuary for her ideas and must be protected against the incursions of the headmistress. It is Miss McKay's duty to ensure that the curriculum be followed to meet the demands of the government examinations. Miss Brodie, of course, characterizes her as an unimaginative bureaucrat.

Teaching is an unusual occupation in that it allows an inordinate amount of individual freedom once the classroom door has been closed. Various philosophies and methodologies of education may be promoted by the administrative level but they will always fail without teacher cooperation. Many teachers over the past twenty years of "student-centered learning" in North America have carefully avoided the latest trends and taught in the traditional manner. Teachers can take countless upgrading courses, s crammed with the latest jargon such as the "culture of change", and leave the ideas behind once they have credit for the course. The administrators are all but powerless to combat individuality in the classroom. Miss McKay recognized this problem in her dealings with Miss Brodie. Miss Brodie's curricular transgressions would be difficult to prove and, in addition, she took the precaution of developing a supportive group among the parents of her "set". Miss McKay has to search carefully

over seven years to find an adequate reason to get rid of Miss Brodie. Her first approach is on moral grounds. But she discovers Miss Brodie is not a drinker, and that her affair with Mr. Lowther is discreet. Fortunately, an unlikely and ultimately more fundamental pretext presents itself -- that of political disloyalty to the system. Miss Brodie's romantic individualism struck at the roots of the institution and was her real betrayer.

Rachel Cameron's relations with her principal are on a much more person level than Miss Brodie's. This is due partly to the fact that elementary schools are more informal. Informality can lead to a blurring of the line of personal and professional demarcation. Although she does not like him personally, Rachel has a satisfactory working relationship with principal Willard Siddley. The finely balanced scene in which he visits her classroom exposes the undercurrents of the relationship. The exchange begins with an innocuous gesture which establishes Willard's ursine sexuality and his desire to make it felt:

He strides across to my desk now, places his hands on the edge of it, leans down and looks at me earnestly from behind his glasses. (A Jest of God, 12).

When Willard teases her about meeting a male guest at his home for dinner he leaves no doubt that he is using social interaction and sex to assert his position. He gives the standard answer to the charge that he is being manipulative -- "Oh, come on, now, can't you take a joke" (13).

Sheila Cunniston, in her article, "Gender Joking in the Staffroom" (1981), examines how ostensibly trivial exchanges, such as Willard's and Rachel's, and concludes that gender joking is invariably initiated by men and detracts from a woman's professional worth. It subtly "mitigates against their promotion".⁴³

Although Rachel Cameron has no interest in promotion, she is acutely aware of the sexual implications of the incident. Her reaction is somewhat more complex than those described in the Cunniston article. Rachel becomes sexually aroused by Willard's posture although her reaction is simultaneously tinged with revulsion and resentment. Cunniston is reluctant to apply the term "sexual harassment" to minor incidents of male initiated gender interplay. However, she clearly sees no positive aspects. Simply put, her view would be that gender-directed interaction has no place in the workplace. Both Rachel's experience and Cunniston's conclusions illustrate the difficulty in grappling with the problem of sexual harassment. To complain publicly about behaviour, which on the surface, is merely the asserting of gender differentiation is to run the risk of trivializing the issue. To allow such behaviour to continue may invite an escalation of it beyond acceptable limits. The loss of a sense of what is acceptable or what used to be called a sense of propriety, is the root cause of

⁴³ Sheila Cunniston, "Gender Joking in the Classroom" in Teachers' Gender and Careers, 116.

much sexual tension and resentment in the workplace. Willard overstepped this line by invading Rachel's sexual privacy. However, there was very little that she could do about it. There is often little difference between the exercise of power and the assertion of sexuality.

Summary

Sociological research supports my conclusions on women teachers in fiction. Miss Brodie is clearly the inheritor of a feminist tradition. Unfortunately for her, there was a period of readjustment during her prime. A knowledge of the sociological forces at work during the period enlarges our appreciation of her character. On the other hand her striking personality and life bring a human dimension to the problems she, and many of her generation, must have faced between the wars.

The remarkable similarity between Rachel Cameron's anxieties and the experience of present day teachers in Canadian small towns shows that some aspects of teaching, despite the innovations of the past thirty years, have changed little. In fact, Rachel's experience of personal isolation and stress and her position vis-à-vis her principal have become important current issues in education. Rachel, in conforming to societal expectations of teachers, and Theresa Dunn, in flouting them, represent extremes in personality types which are found in the profession. However, these are difficult to pinpoint in sociological research.

Sylvia Barrett, of Up the Down Staircase, faces problems uncovered in sociological research. Her experience is almost entirely within the walls of the school and all of her problems are rooted in education itself. Though an entertaining and remarkably accurate portrait of a beginning

teacher's experience, the novel never succeeds in bringing its central character to life.

Miss Brodie and Rachel Cameron, the more interesting of the characters in terms of exploration of personality, are both misfits. Rachel, by the end of the novel, has come to terms with her isolation. Miss Brodie could never adjust to a society which was typified by the "hard wearing flowers such as chrysanthemums or dahlias" (Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, 6), which adorned the school. It is interesting that Willard Siddley sent Rachel a potted begonia while she was in hospital -- "something practical that would last" (A Jest of God, 161). Schools and teachers are not expected to be colourful or recklessly expressive. Many teachers find this difficult.

CHAPTER 4

THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE: THE MALE TEACHER

The Individual Male Teacher

Since the novels dealing with male teachers in this study draw on two distinct school systems, the private and the public, an effort will be made here to examine their differences. The different approaches to education in the middle and working-class strata of society will be examined. Because all of these men are single, there will be a discussion of the bachelor teacher. Particular attention will be paid to the male teacher's relationship with his colleagues and to the role of teachers' unions.

There are marked differences between the fictional and the sociological perceptions of female and male teachers. In this section I will explore the character of the individual male teacher from both standpoints and I will demonstrate that his relationship to the community is different from that of his female counterpart. The same general themes will be used as a framework for discussion. I will explore the process of choosing the profession, social position and interaction with peers, pupils and principals. The King and Peart (1992) study provides evidence of the experiences of Canadian teachers.

Men teachers are concentrated mainly at the high school level. In Canada, women outnumber men up to three to one in grades 1 to 6. In the case of grades 7 through 10, the ratio is almost equal. In the final three grades of high school,

men outnumber women by a ration of about three to one. However, among younger teachers in the upper high school grades, women are rapidly overtaking men. There is little doubt that King and Peart are correct in suggesting that "it is very likely that the proportion of women will equal that of men in the not too distant future".¹

While women teachers are joining men in greater numbers in the upper grades it cannot be said that there is a corresponding movement of men to the other end of the scale. Indeed, it is becoming increasingly difficult for a man to teach young children and still maintain a positive self-image. Men teachers are now suspect. Revelations concerning the sexual and physical abuse of students by male (often single men in religious orders) teachers have been constantly in the news over the past three or four years. If the teaching of young children is considered a "natural" occupation for women, this is not the case for males. An article entitled, "Socialized into Primary Teaching" (Aspinwall, Drummond 1989) reports on a study of student teachers:

....Whether or not women feel themselves to be socialized into primary education the majority of young men entering initial training are actually socializing themselves out. Those men who decide nevertheless that they want to work with young children often find their decision greeted with some suspicion. One head reported that she had several men on her first school staff. "Whenever one has applied to other schools I have had phone calls asking if they are 'all right'".²

¹ King and Peart, 21.

² K. Aspinall and M.J. Drummond in Women Teachers, 15.

The City of Hamilton Public school board, during its 1992 hiring period, made it a priority to hire more men for the primary grades.³ The staffing co-ordinator believed that "because there are so many single-parent families headed by women....it's really important to have a role model of a caring compassionate male".⁴

Despite the efforts of school boards to redress the imbalance, the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation notes that the percentage of males in the primary grades has dropped from 33 to 25 percent in the past decade. A former male kindergarten teacher in Hamilton noted that "children taking turns to sit on the rocking chair with the teacher for storytime is a thing of the past....the fear is there of accusations coming up to haunt you later".⁵ At a time when it is most desirable to have male role models in elementary schools, men teachers have valid reasons for continuing to choose the senior grades.

Lortie, on the basis of his research on American teachers, suggests that teaching is a very accessible

³ The Hamilton Spectator, Aug. 22, 1992, B3.

⁴ The Hamilton Spectator, Aug. 22, 1992, B3.

⁵ The Hamilton Spectator, Aug. 22, 1992, B3. The president of the Ontario Teachers' Federation said recently at a private meeting that any male teacher who taught before 1980, when the unions first became aware of the growth in the number of accusations, albeit mostly false, could be accused of impropriety.

profession.⁶ One may enter it from a variety of academic backgrounds. It is, therefore, often chosen as a substitute interest in a field such as literature or science. Candidates' marks may not have been high enough for post-graduate work in their fields of interest. Lack of funds may have forced them to seek teaching jobs. Of the five fictional male teachers in this study, three entered the profession because they could not find suitable alternatives. Rick Braithwaite of To Sir With Love (1967) was a professional engineer who fell prey to the rampant racism in his own profession; Paul Pennyfeather in Decline and Fall (1928) was sent down from oxford for indecent behaviour; Mr. Chipping of Goodbye, Mr. Chips (1934) found that his marks did not permit him to pursue an academic career.

Braithwaite, after his enforced "choice" of a teaching career, decides to continue for a second year and actually looks forward to it. His experience suggests that teaching can hold rewards for people who have no initial interest in it. Mr. Chips is an example of someone who came to teaching indirectly but who found he was ideally suited to it. In the study by King and Peart (1992) about half of the teacher indicated that they had joined the profession from necessity rather than choice. One man who had been teaching for twenty-five years recalled:

⁶ Lortie, 14

Once I thought I wanted to be a doctor....I wondered how I was going to finance medical school....Then I ran into an education prof and he said a lot of people go into -- teaching it only takes a year....⁷

The report by King and Peart (1992) concluded that "the majority of the women but only 39 percent of the men, had chosen teaching first". It appears the novelists were correct in their perception that most men do not consider teaching a desirable career, at least initially. Whether men remain in the profession because of interest or because it provides a safe haven from the vicissitudes of the world outside is less clear. Certainly, in the case of the fictional bachelor teacher, there is an element of "sanctuary" to be considered.

There are three types of bachelor teacher in the popular fiction analyzed in this study. Rick Braithwaite epitomizes the self-sacrificing, sincere and highly principled hero of the classroom. On the other hand, Evelyn Waugh's collection of perverts, bumlbers and weaklings who inhabit Decline and Fall represent the author's jaundiced view of the English public school. Mr. Chips, who spends most of his teaching life as a bachelor, is a symbol to convey an ideal of the English public school teacher.

In contrast with the spinster teachers, Braithwaite is quite clearly a hero. Cultured, handsome, good at games and sexually well-adjusted, he is not destined to remain a bachelor for long. Before the end of the novel he is planning

⁷ King and Peart, 28.

to marry an attractive white colleague. Thus, through the excellence of his character, he surmounts the barriers which faced him.

The bachelors of Evelyn Waugh's school Llanabba, enjoy the protection of the public school system. They certainly need this haven. The "model of medieval impregnability" allows the cheerful pederast, Grimes, to thrive virtually unchecked. The product of a minor public school himself, Grimes perpetuates a tradition of sexual exploitation of young boys. These schools continue to be successful, despite generations of criticism by former students.⁸

Conservative sociologists have begun to reappraise private schools and to find much of value in them. A recent study in the United States identifies many aspects of private school life which are beneficial to teachers and explains, perhaps why the bachelor would find a satisfying professional life in them. Arthur G. Powell, in his article, "The Conditions of Teachers' Work in Independent Schools"⁹ outlines a series of "themes" in these schools which distinguished them from the public system. Taken together, these appear to

⁸ Note: The novelist John Le Carre, a former master at Eton, recently remarked, "It is difficult to imagine the reform of British society without the abolition of the public schools." The Hamilton Spectator Weekend, July 24, 1993, 10.

⁹ Arthur G. Powell, "The Conditions of Teachers' Work in Independent Schools" in The Contexts of Teaching in Secondary Schools, eds, M.W. McLaughlin et al. (New York: Columbia 1990), 111-115.

provide stability and a quasi-familial atmosphere:

....small and caring school environments (instead of large and impersonal ones); greater parent involvement; character development as an explicit goal; and an unapologetic emphasis on academic learning, including more homework and higher standards.¹⁰

Although Powell does not extrapolate the particular appeal these school features might have for the bachelor, they do, in fact, provide an institutional framework in which certain aspects of traditional family life are emulated. These are institutions with a clear purpose and an interest in the individual. The teacher is endowed with a paternal dignity and authority. He is, therefore, more truly in loco parentis in a private school than a public one because he must clearly share the parents' ambitions for the students. These ambitions are unequivocal and they include preparation for a higher education which will lead to the higher professions. There is an emphasis on the formation of character traits which will protect, not to say insulate, the student from the mediocrities of mass culture. Students are required to maintain a respect for the institution and its personnel. There is no such consensus in public schools.¹¹

Private schools, by virtue of their autonomy, have the ability to attract and select staff who are from similar

¹⁰ Powell, 112.

¹¹ Powell, 121.

backgrounds and share the basic tenets of the private school ethos. This leads to a sense of family or, at least collegiality, which can help to sustain a teacher such as Mr. Chips through an entire career. The collegial model of decision making is more easily applied when the membership is homogenous. Teachers in private schools, therefore, are able to make decisions about curriculum, materials and discipline. These are simply imposed from above by administration in the public schools. The bachelor teacher, in particular, can generate the time and continued dedication to thrive in such a system. He can also live more easily than a family man on an income that is usually \$5,000 per annum less than his public school counterpart.¹² Notwithstanding the latter concern, the bachelor finds a comfortable academic niche in the private school. At a time when current public education practices are being scrutinized and reviewed, there is much to be learned from the private school tradition. Research such as that done by Powell suggests that Mr. Chips may not be such an anachronism after all.

In addition to the "themes" mentioned by Powell, the private school offers an element of social status not found in the public school. The social status of the male teacher, as perceived by himself and others, has been linked with the

¹² Powell, 125.

question of his "professionalism". As discussed earlier, the religious roots of teaching have set it apart from other trades and crafts. Yet the historical pattern of low pay and the employee status of the teacher have made him less autonomous than the lawyer or physician. Since the burgeoning of the public school systems in the wake of the post-war 'baby-boom' some changes have taken place which have simultaneously enhanced the status of the teacher and also separated him from the professional model. Teachers' unions, by gaining salary increases through the aggressive techniques of organized labour, pressing for higher certification standards and becoming contributors to the formation of educational policy, have drawn teachers toward a labour model. Lately, the status of teaching has been increased simply because it is not easy to gain entry to it. Limiting access, as the medical profession well knows, increases status. Demographic patterns and economic recession are such that in 1993 far greater numbers of graduates want to enter teachers' colleges than will be accepted.¹³ At the same time, graduates in medicine and law are finding their qualifications are no guarantee of employment. Maclean's Magazine (August 21, 1993)

¹³ Note: Even at drastically reduced admission rates more teachers are graduating annually than there are jobs. In an article on the employment situation in Hamilton, The Hamilton Spectator, July 21, 1993, 32, noted that: Hamilton Board of Education received more than 4,000 applications for teaching jobs, but is confident it can cover its requirements internally".

reported that "as many as half of all graduates from Canadian law schools will not be getting jobs in their field and competition for the few good jobs available is stiff".¹⁴ Structural shifts in the economy and the reaction of public policy to them may see physicians in Ontario working on a salaried basis in the next few years. These developments mean that there may be a blurring of what was traditionally known as "professional status". In times of prolonged economic recession, a considerable increase in status accrues to a person who has a secure job of any kind. Teaching has always been a job which offered security. Forty one percent of the teachers in the study by King and Peart (1992) remained teachers for that reason.¹⁵ Security has sometimes been prized over salary. However, for men in particular, there has been an important additional career need.

Opportunity for advancement is especially important to men. They seek the status and the salary. It is significant that none of the fictional teachers in this study shows an interest in advancement. One can surmise that, with the exception of Mr. Chips, they were not really interested in teaching as a life-long career. The authors of the novels

¹⁴ Macleans Magazine, August 12, 1993, 35.

¹⁵ King and Peart, 29.

certainly were not. Hunter, author of The Blackboard Jungle, worked as a teacher for a while. However, he gave it up as soon as his book was published, as did E.R. Braithwaite, author of To Sir With Love. Evelyn Waugh despised the English public school system, and left it as soon as he could. The ostensibly dedicated McLaren is now on the staff of a small American mid-western college where he dispenses the educational ideas broached in Cries from the Corridor. One must conclude that our authors have no first-hand experience of the long-term realities of the profession.

Lortie found that men often enter high school teaching because, like the novelists, they have an interest in a particular subject. P.W. Musgrave noted that teachers who have graduated in a particular subject will wish "to initiate his pupils into this world (the university) whether he is teaching in arts or the sciences, and he will tend to see himself as a junior colleague of the university lecturer".¹⁶ However, Lortie found that this self-perceived elevation in status was often not enough to sustain the male teacher:

Men who enter teaching however, find it less difficult to avoid feeling that their teaching careers have brought them less than the alternatives have yielded....¹⁷

¹⁶ P.W. Musgrave, The Sociology of Education (London: Methuen and Co., 1965), 223.

¹⁷ Lortie, 34.

In The Blackboard Jungle, the older men teachers constantly bemoan the mistake they made in entering teaching with the mantra "Had I but known..." (153). It is suggested in the novel that they had "chosen the easy road, the road to security..." (113). Later in their careers they think they might have been highly successful in other professions. Their bitterness is documented in a sociological study by the (U.S.) National Education Association. This research showed that men were more likely to join teaching to improve their socioeconomic status. It also found that "women teachers typically originate in higher status homes than men in the occupation".¹⁸ Men, therefore, may experience more intensely than women the drive for social improvement. The research in Canada by King and Peart also concluded that men had a greater interest in promotion than women and became frustrated when their hopes were not realized.¹⁹

During the past few years, those hopes are being threatened from another direction. There are now affirmative action policies in place in many educational jurisdictions. These are government initiatives designed to address the historical imbalance between males and females in administration. In the study by King and Peart, one male teacher commented rather coyly:

¹⁸ Lortie, 35.

¹⁹ King and Peart, 38.

I wouldn't call it discrimination but the fact is that they are looking for more women than men in administration. An example is last year I applied for a vice-principalship and four women were hired and no men. I'm sure that was based on ability not gender.²⁰

The obvious reluctance to say what is meant that is evident in this statement should equip this aspirant very well were he ever to become an administrator. The continued implementation of affirmative action, and a resulting increased level of interest in promotion by women, may reduce the status conferred by being an administrator in the eyes of men. It is by no means clear whether, in an era of economic recession, these considerations would deter men from entering teaching. In a study of "semi-professions" (teachers, nurses, social men teachers moved quickly into administration or else left the profession.²¹ Studies such as this need to be revised in light of recent developments. The nebulous, divisive consideration of social status in occupations is fast becoming archaic. It is becoming increasingly evident that occupations whether "working", "semi-professional" or "professional" share workers) by Simpson and Simpson (1969) it was found that young

²⁰ King and Peart, 38.

²¹ Richard L. Simpson and Ida Harper Simpson, "Women and Bureaucracy in the Semi-Professions" in The Semi-Professions and their Organization, ed. Amital Etzioni (New York: The Free Press, 1969), 209-211.

more commonalities than has previously been thought to be the case. Physicians, for example, now talk of strike action against government initiatives, as do other public sector workers such as nurses, hospital porters and teachers.²²

In an article entitled, "Schoolwork: Perspectives on Workplace Reform in Public Schools" (1990)²³ Thomas B. Corcoran compared actual school working conditions to a set of eleven optimal conditions established in general workplace research. Two of these conditions dealt with the influence of administrators on teacher performance and job satisfaction. He cites "support (endorsement, backing, approval, and legitimacy) as one of the three basic sources of power in organization". When he applied this criterion to schools he found that most teachers had little or no contact with administrators in the course of a day. When an encounter did take place, it had little practical influence on problems a teacher might have with discipline, parents or curriculum. It seems that administrators, all of whom are teachers initially,

²² Note: At the Social contract sectoral meetings initiated by the Ontario government in May 1993, members of the medical profession, city workers, teachers and other government workers met together to negotiate with the government.

²³ Thomas B. Corcoran in The Contexts of Teaching in Secondary Schools, 145-164.

want to distance themselves from "front line" issues after their promotions. Rick Dadier, in his experience at Manual Trades, learned that position distinction bordered closely on class distinction in his dealings with administrations.

In his first meeting with the head of the English department, Rick is struck by the incongruity between Mr. Stanley's appearance and his dingy front office:

His suit was expensively tailored and he looked the complete picture of the chairman of the English Department at Princeton or Harvard, except this was North Manual Trades...(10).

Over-dressing is used to make clear the difference between the teacher and middle management. When the image is projected to the student level, the gap is wide. The teacher is isolated somewhere in between.

Mr. Stanley's parting question to Rick leaves no room for doubt, "You know how to punch a clock do you?" (12). Although time cards as an employee surveillance technique have disappeared, teachers are still often required to sign attendance books at the office each morning before they go to their classrooms. This practice has no obvious value because when teachers are going to be absent, they telephone at least an hour before school starts to arrange a replacement. This form of surveillance at the start of the day does little to promote an atmosphere of mutual support or trust between teacher and administrator.

Corcoran's study of teacher-administrator relations also examined the area of supervision and evaluation. Having

reviewed the research on teacher attitudes in this area he concluded that "one of the primary purposes of teacher evaluation systems is the improvement of the individual's craft".²⁴ Yet less than half the teachers in the study reported that they got any useful information from evaluation sessions. The more experience a teacher had the less helpful evaluation practices were perceived to be. There seems to be inherent fear and distrust of evaluation systems no matter how consultative and cooperative their design. In the past, school inspectors would walk into a classroom unannounced. They might adopt an imperious manner and criticize the teacher in front of the students. Evaluation was always a precursor to dismissing a teacher. These practices live on in the lore of the profession long after they have been abandoned. However, in modern times, evaluation has taken on new and more threatening aspects. Evaluations are especially worrying if they are done at the request of students or parents. Teachers feel that administrators are more likely to bow to political pressure rather than to defend their teachers. The Blackboard Jungle provides a graphic example.

The department head began a series of unannounced visits to Dandier's classroom where he would sit at the back making notes. The teacher at first welcomed the visits, supposing

²⁴ Corcoran, 147.

they would culminate in a useful appraisal of his work. In fact, he was sent to the principal and accused of racism. He had taught a lesson on racial tolerance and had been unwise enough to use racial epithets. He had been showing that some terms are offensive when applied outside the ethnic group, while being acceptable when used within it. One bright, but malicious student reported the teacher to the principal. The meeting began with the principal making the assumption that Dandier was racially intolerant, and ended in a shouting match. A pertinent remark was made by a teacher interviewed for the study by King and Peart (1992):

The only times interest has been shown in my programs are times when someone has a complaint or concern.²⁵

Corcoran concluded that his findings painted a bleak picture of general working conditions in public schools. The situation could be improved considerably through changes in attitudes and the development of policies designed to enhance the respect accorded to the individual teacher. It must be recognized that the work done in classrooms today is difficult and complex and the efforts of most teachers are to be admired rather than criticized.

Teachers do not become immune to the effects of constant criticism as their careers progress. The resulting alienation which ensues is not well documented in the novels about teachers. This is due to the fact that such novels typically

²⁵ King and Peart, 119.

deal only with a year or two of a teaching career, usually the first year. This may be explained by the short lengths of time the authors spent in the profession. In addition the teaching persona they project would be impossible to maintain over a long period. The three "inner city" male teachers dealt with here become so involved with the personal lives of their students that the preservation of sanity would dictate their leaving the classroom quickly. The single most important factor in teacher stress is dealing with students.

Students tend not to like being in school and generally they do not want to learn what they are taught there. John Dewey, whose ideas have shaped North American educational theory and practice since the Second World War, saw education "as the supreme human interest in which, moreover, other problems, cosmological, moral, logical come to a head".²⁶ The ordinary teacher today finds that the classroom is where many of the current social problems come to a head. Gone is the traditional consensus which supported the work of the teacher. High levels of divorce and separation have fractured the traditional level of interest and positive, though tacit, support for the school on the part of parents. Administrators can no longer be depended upon to defend their teachers and their programmes. Students often come to school when they are

²⁶ Brian Hendley, Dewey, Russell, Whitehead, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 109.

psychologically and physically unfit to learn. Susan Moore Johnson found that teachers in her study:

told again and again of impoverished students lacking adequate food, housing or medical care. Some of these children exhibited severe psychological problems. A student of one suburban high school teacher had committed suicide.²⁷

Individual schools and teachers are not equipped to deal with the wide variety of present day problems.

Rick Dandier in The Blackboard Jungle prevented the rape of a woman teacher by a student. The attacker was not particularly a bad student and he remained popular among his peers. Dandier was severely beaten a few evenings later on his way home from work. This episode which might have been exceptional in 1955, even in an inner city area, would not be unexpected today in a suburban high school. King and Peart (1992) in their study of Canadian teachers found that:

Fourteen to 21% of the female and 8 to 15 % of the male teachers, depending on grade group worried about being physically injured by students.²⁸

In The Reporter (June 1993), an Ontario teacher professional journal, an article entitled "When Violence Comes to School" noted that disruptive students were the most important causes of stressors in teachers' lives. An educational psychologist said:

²⁷ Moore Johnson, 83.

²⁸ King and Peart, 87.

An assault...represents a contradiction to most teachers. Unlike a random assault, the perpetrator is frequently the very student teachers have dedicated their lives to helping. Teacher victims have the same emotions as other crime victims -- disorientation, numbness and inability to sleep.²⁹

The harassment which teachers experience at the hands of some students leads to high levels of stress. Some students' behaviour is outside the bounds of the law. In addition to the threat of personal violence, teachers often have their property damaged and have articles stolen from them in school. However, the most serious problem is the escalating level of violence in schools and the lack of a public consensus in how to deal with it.

A teacher in Sault-Ste.-Marie brought a student to court because of repeated threats of violence. Although the student was found guilty, the student was soon back in school. The teacher was advised:

to be careful how I "look" at him. Somehow I'm being held responsible for his feelings toward me. In the end, the consequences for his violent, anti-social behaviour weren't very evident.³⁰

It is clear from this statement that there is, in the schools of the 1990s, a sense of powerlessness on the part of teachers in the face of increased student violence, vandalism, and theft. Administrators and, to a greater extent, teachers feel

²⁹ The Reporter, (Toronto: O.E.C.T.A., June 1993), 14-16.

³⁰ The Reporter, 15.

that there are no societal supports to protect them should they try to stem the tide. For example, some jurisdictions prohibit expulsion of students. Corporal punishment is now outlawed. Temporary suspension is a slow and laborious process and it is not possible to search students or their school lockers. The law offers little or no support to teachers against students who are harassing them. The study by King and Peart (1992) included the following statement from a high school teacher:

The Young Offenders Act...works against the role model of a teacher and it is very difficult to exercise authority. A teacher's authority in the 1990's is clearly eroded considerably. In the halls you think twice about getting involved... because the teacher's rights are not as protected as the students.³¹

The emphasis on student rights and the concomitant absence of any emphasis on student responsibilities has made education, in any meaningful sense of the word, impossible in many classrooms. Heroic fictional teachers such as Dandier and Braithwaite do little to promote an understanding of the ordinary teacher's position today. Both of these teachers made their "breakthroughs" with students by winning physical confrontations with violent students. They would not win these contests today. For the same actions they would find themselves in court with their jobs and reputations in jeopardy. The two-fisted approach adopted by heroic male teachers in tough schools has no counterpart in the current

³¹ King and Peart, 91.

educational system. In many cases, the posture of the male teacher in relation to his students has become, of necessity, increasingly remote and non-participatory. Many teachers have become dispensers of education rather than teachers of students. This is likely to continue until teachers begin to feel again that they are in charge and have support.

CONCLUSION

It is interesting that none of the fictional male and female teachers had children of their own. No doubt this allowed the authors to develop their themes without the distraction of a more important element unrelated to school. Of the two married teachers, Dandier and Mr. Chips, only the latter had a wife involved in school life. His brief marriage proved complementary to his role as a resident teacher in a private boys' school. Most teachers in public schools are married with families. This can present significant problems, especially for female teachers. It is rare, for instance, for a school board to offer day care facilities to employees despite the pedagogical nature of the profession. The phenomenon of teacher "burn-out" is also inadequately dealt with in the novels. The reasons for "burn-out" are many. One problem is the need to adapt to social change. During the past twenty years, change has been a constant pressure to teachers. Innovations in philosophy and methodology have appeared almost annually and include such thrusts as "new math", "family grouping", "language experience", "child-centred learning", "whole language", "social promotion", "the discovery approach", and "anecdotal reports". These changes have been difficult to absorb, especially for the male teacher. Harmon Zeigler, in his book The Political Life of American Teachers (1967), argues that men are more likely to

become alienated than women.³² Men are more concerned with social status than women and the denial of promotion is more important to challenges to authority and are more distressing for the male. He attributes many of the male teachers' problems to the fact that he is involved in a "feminized" profession in North America. He quotes a classic study by Richard Hofstadter to support his claim:

....in America where teaching has been identified as a feminine profession it does not offer men the stature of fully legitimate male role...The boys grow up thinking of men teachers as somewhat effeminate and treat them with a curious mixture of genteel deference (of the sort due to women) and hearty male condescension.³³

Although there is little deference extended to either male or female teachers today, the male teacher is often isolated in staff rooms and apologetic in social situations. Perhaps authors such as Hunter and Braithwaite sought to counteract the traditional image of the male teacher by creating the heroic teacher. In reality, the male teacher has sought to redress his concerns through a channel ignored in the novels and dealt with only sporadically in the sociology of education, that of the teachers' union. Teacher associations or unions, as they are now more commonly called, have gradually developed in strength since the Second World War.³⁴

³² Harmon Zeigler, The Political Life of American Teachers (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967), 20.

³³ Zeigler, 13.

³⁴ King and Peart, 1-18.

The militancy of the 1960s and 1970s, which was primarily a reaction to low salaries, has since given way to emphasis on professional development, political action and attempts to influence educational policy and other issues. The success of the unions is largely due to their ability to reach the individual teacher in the classroom.

All teachers work very much in isolation during the school day. However, men teachers, in particular, tend to maintain this separateness even on the few occasions when interaction is possible. For example, staff room talk among men is often of a general nature, unconnected to their jobs. Many male teachers do not like to discuss any difficulties they may have in the classroom because they have been socialized to feel that they must handle their own problems. On the other hand, male teachers have had no difficulty in becoming involved in their unions. Collective action endowed them with the strong masculine image of the wider union movement. It is only recently that women have begun to occupy significant leadership positions on teacher union executive committees, even though the majority of the members of teachers' unions are female. In 1982 the male leader of an overwhelmingly female union in Ontario -- the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association -- commented:

One frustration for me was that so few women members have taken an active role in O.E.C.T.A., yet nearly two-thirds

of our membership is women. We have never had more than two or three women members on the executive in any one year.³⁵

Since the majority of women teachers are married with children, this situation was probably inevitable. The situation has changed considerably over the past five years. Yet men continue to fill most of the leadership roles at the provincial, the local and the school levels. The union has become an important collegial meeting ground for the male teacher. Unions have filled the breach which existed because of the inability or the unwillingness of employers to provide a forum in which teachers could come together with a sense of empowerment. The unions have now broadened the participation of teachers to include areas that go beyond salary negotiation and professional development.

The City of Hamilton local of the O.E.C.T.A. offered members the opportunity to participate in some 35 committees during the school year 1992-93. Of one thousand teachers more than three hundred were actively involved in union work. The following partial list from the association's handbook indicates a range of interests including communications, political action, social justice, charity, occupational health and safety, educational issues, retirement, grievance, equal

³⁵ Sheila Coe, The First Forty Years (Toronto, O.E.C.T.A., 1984), 113.

opportunity. The employer is a bystander. In the past, the male teacher might have been expected to have a part-time job after school. However, with the winning of improved salary agreements, he has been released to pursue union interests. Consequently, he has much greater opportunities for interaction with his colleagues.

One location of male teacher interaction that is rarely explored in educational sociology, but which is well documented in The Blackboard Jungle, is the local bar. When Rick Da dier and his colleague Josh finish their first week at Manual Trades, they repair to the nearest bar, in accordance with a tradition that seems to exist among male teachers in every school. It is here, with the help of alcohol, that the men can divulge their insecurities as teachers and their problems with students, parents and administrators. Young teachers learn the "ropes" of the school system. They learn the techniques of teaching and discipline which may not be found in training manuals. And they learn which colleagues to trust and which to avoid. In these surroundings the teacher can meet others outside his own specialty or division. Susan Moore Johnson found that even in the best organized and collegially oriented schools there was a problem of lack of contact:

Although teachers might successfully coordinate their efforts within departments, there were no comparable schoolwide mechanisms in public high schools to coordinate teachers' efforts among departments.³⁶

³⁶ Moore Johnson, 162.

The past twenty years have seen much growth in school board sponsored professional development. However, this has been ineffective in creating a sense of common interest across departments. A professional development meeting would typically involve a group of teachers of a particular division or subject being talked at by an out-of-town expert. The subject matter would usually be chosen by the school board. For men teachers, any sense of institutional cohesion can only be engendered in a location that is not controlled by the employer.

The coaching of sports teams often provides a limited opportunity for interaction, usually before or after school hours. At the start of the day, teachers who share cars will often stop at coffee shops. There, they can discuss the upcoming school day and prepare their positions on issues which might be presented at staff meetings. Informal planning of special events can also be done here and ideas can be presented and evaluated in a non-threatening atmosphere.

Generally, men teachers do not find the school itself to be a satisfactory place for professional interaction. Neither the socialization of new staff nor the development of close working relationships are provided for there.³⁷ As a result these are likely to develop only in settings that are beyond

³⁷ Moore Johnson, 165.

the influence of the administration. The growth in participation in unions has led to the development of a sense of continuity that is stronger than at school board level. This has happened at a time when ideas such as local school autonomy and "site-based management" are being promoted as the educational trends for the 1990s. Decentralized management may decrease the sense of insecurity and isolation of male teachers if it is done in cooperation with the teacher's union.

While the personal problems of male teachers are almost ignored in the novels, those of women are detailed painstakingly. Rachel Cameron's neuroses betray a vulnerability not allowed in the men. Sylvia Barrett's first year problems were overcome through extraordinary forbearance and with the support of her older colleague. Dadier and Braithwaite solved similar problems through exhibitions of physical strength.

In terms of educational issues, both the situations in the novels and the focus of much of the sociological work appear to be outdated. The issue of social status of teachers is changing as other professions experience the unemployment caused by economic recession. The importance of the teachers' unions is vastly underestimated. The issue of violence in schools is well covered in the novels, perhaps because of its dramatic value. Violence at elementary school level appears to need wider attention. The position of men in elementary

schools requires much study, especially in light of the need for positive male role models and the suspicion male teachers are viewed with as a result of revelations of misconduct by male teachers against students. The problems of individuals who are at odds with the school community has been well dealt with in the recent book, Teachers' Work, Individuals, Colleagues, and Contexts (1993),³⁸ by Little and McLaughlin. One would be hard pressed to find a more eloquent fictional example of the problem than the book, The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie. Finally it must be acknowledged that fiction often illuminates issues and personalities in areas to which sociological research has little access. Complementary studies in both disciplines can prove useful.

³⁸ Judith Warren Little and Millirey Wallin McLaughlin, Teachers' Work, Individuals, Colleagues and Contexts, (New York: Teachers' College Press, 1993).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alexander, E.G. Teachers and the Law. Toronto: Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, 1990.
- Anderson, Judith. "Lifestyle, A Basis for a Teacher Termination", in The Canadian School Executive. Vancouver: James Balderson, 1993.
- Aspinall, K., and Drummond, M.J. in Women Teachers. ed. Hilary De Lyon. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1989.
- Bloom, Allan. The Closing of the American Mind. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988.
- Braithwaite, E.R. To Sir With Love. Scarborough: New American Library, 1967.
- Braithwaite, Max. Why Shoot the Teacher? Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1978.
- Carlyle, Thomas. Critical and Miscellaneous Essays. London: Chapman and Hall, 1894.
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer. Ed. F.N. Robinson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961.
- Collins, Philip. Dickens and Education. London: Macmillan, 1963.
- Coo, Sheila. The First Forty Years. Toronto: Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, 1984.
- Corcoran, Thomas. "Schoolwork: Perspectives on Workplace Reform in Public Schools" in The Context of Teaching. ed. M.W. McLaughlin. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.
- De Lyon, Hilary. Women Teachers. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1989.
- Doan, Laura L. Old Maids to Radical Spinsters. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991.
- Duncan, Robert. Margaret Laurence: First Lady of Manawaka. Ottawa: National Film Board of Canada, 1987.
- Durkheim, Emile. Moral Education. New York: The Free Press of Glencoe Inc., 1961.

- Eagleton, Terry. Literary Theory. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983.
- Edman, Marion. The Self-Image of Primary School Teachers. Detroit: Wayne State Press, 1968.
- Gallagher, Donat. ed. The Essays and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh. London: Methuen, 1983.
- Goethe, Johann von. Elective Affinities. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971.
- Gordon, Michael. Juvenile Delinquency in the American Novel. Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Press, 1971.
- The Hamilton Spectator. Hamilton: Southam Inc., 1993.
- Harvey, W.J. Character and the Novel. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965.
- Heck, Shirley F. and C. Ray Williams. The Complex Roles of the Teacher. New York: Teachers' College Press, 1984.
- Hendley, Brian. Dewey, Russel. Whitehead: Philosophers as Educators. Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986.
- Hilton, James. Goodbye, Mr. Chips. London: Hodder Paperbacks, 1969.
- Holtby, Winnifred. Women. London: John Lane, 1934.
- Hunter, Evan. The Blackboard Jungle. London: New English Library, 1970.
- Jeffreys, Sheila. The Spinster and Her Enemies. London: Pandora, 1985.
- Johnston, William. Room 222. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1970.
- Kaufman, Bel. Up the Down Staircase. New York: Avon Books, 1966.
- King, A.J. and Peart, M.J. Teachers in Canada. Ottawa: Canadian Teachers' Federation, 1992.
- Kleinbaum, N.H. Dead Poets Society. New York: Bantam Books, 1989.
- Laurence, Margaret. A Jest of God. New York: Popular Library, 1966.

- Lewis, Jane. Women in England. Sussex: Wheatsheaf, 1984.
- Little, Judy. "Endless Different Ways" In Old maids to Radical Spinsters. Ed. Laura L. Doan. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991.
- Little, Judy, Warren and Milliray Wallin McLaughlin. Teachers' Work; Individuals, Colleagues and Contexts. New York: Teachers' College Press, 1993.
- Littlewood, Margaret. "The Wise Married Woman and the Teaching Unions" in Women Teachers. ed. Hilary De Lyon. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1989.
- Lowenthal, Leo. Literature and the Image of Man. Boston: The Beacon Press, 1957.
- Maclean's Magazine. Toronto: Maclean Hunter, 16 March 1992 and 12 August 1993.
- McDonald, Jacqueline. Evelyn Waugh. London: Macmillan, 1988.
- McLaren, Peter. Cries from the Corridor. Toronto: Methuen, 1980.
- Metcalf, John. Going Down Slow. Don Mills: McClelland and Stewart, 1972.
- Moore Johnson, Susan. Teachers' Work. New York: Basis Books, 1990.
- Musgrave, P.W. The Sociology of Education. London: Methuen, 1965.
- New Yorker Magazine, March 26, 1955. New York: 1955.
- New York Times. March 21, 1955. New York: 1955.
- Nias, Jennifer. "What it means to feel like a teacher" in Schoolwork. ed. Jenny Ozga. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1988.
- Oram, Alison. "Employment Issues and the Woman Teacher 1910-1939" in Teachers, Gender and Careers. ed. Sandra Acker. New York: Falmer Press, 1981.
- Postman, Neil. Teaching as a Conserving Activity. New York: Delacorte Press, 1979.

- Powell, Arthur G. "The Conditions of Teachers' Work in Independent Schools" in The Contexts of Teaching in Secondary Schools. ed. M.W. McLaughlin. New York: Columbia, 1990.
- Quigly, Isabel. The Heirs of Tom Brown. London: Chatto and Windus, 1985.
- Reed, John R. Old School Ties. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1964.
- Reporter Magazine. Toronto: Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, 1993.
- Rossner, Judith. Looking for Mr. Goodbar. New York: Pocket Books, 1980.
- Spark, Muriel. The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie. New York: Penguin Books, 1980.
- Steussy, Joe. Rock and Roll: Its History and Stylistic Development. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1990.
- Turner, Marion. Manawaka Women. Unpublished M.A. Thesis. Hamilton: McMaster University, 1970.
- Waugh, Evelyn. Decline and Fall. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976.