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Inc., 1960).

[11]John Dewey. *Democracy and Education.* (New York: The Free Press, 1916).

[12]Edward T. Hall. *Beyond Culture.* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press Doubleday, 1976).

Critique

The intent of Joan Sullivan's project as described in this article is one that can only be applauded—working toward minimizing ethnocentrism and xenophobia must be seen as a *sine quo non* for a nation or a school community which aspires to realize a democratic ideology. Furthermore, there is no more important an age group on which to focus this project than that of the adolescent who is on the threshhold of adult freedom and responsibility. Finally, educating the imagination toward a more just society for *all* through literature is a most meaningful use of the secondary school curriculum.

In considering the merit of Sullivan's project, one looks for persuasive and convincing arguments regarding its effectiveness. Unfortunately the project as described seems to come up short for at least two reasons: first, one senses an oversimplified conception of what it means to read literature; and secondly, one feels that the author is engaged in a rather unsubstantiated exercise in psychoanalysis. Both of these shortcomings, I believe, could be overcome, possibly by revising the language and style of the paper so that it indicates a more critical and substantive use of the scholarship around the "act of reading" as well as that concerning adolescent psychology. In what follows here I will briefly elaborate on the above two points.

Many would agree undoubtedly with the premise that the reading of literature can be a significant opportunity for one to begin to question one's world view, one's understanding of oneself and the other, especially the other who may be of a different ethnicity, race, class or gender. However, the act of reading is not one-directional, that is, the reader's thoughts are not necessarily controlled by the text. Rather, it seems that

the act of reading is more of a dialectic, albeit one that is different from a face-to-face conversation.

As Wolfgang Iser notes, there is the possibility of a fundamental asymmetry between the text and the reader: the interaction between text and reader fails when, for example, the reader's projections "superimpose themselves unimpeded upon the text" (Iser, 1978, p. 167). On the other hand, the interplay between text and reader can be one of mutuality, one of "social creativity in which each is enriched by the other . . . " (Iser, p. 164). Sartre, it seems to me, has captured this complex interplay between text and reader when he says,

> [R]eading is a pact of generosity between author and reader. Each one trusts the other; each one counts on the other, demands of the other as much as he demands of himself . . . [W]hen I read, I make demands; if my demands are met, what I am then reading provokes me to demand more of the author, which means to demand of the author that he demand more of me. (Sartre, 1967, p. 55)

Hence, when Sullivan reaffirms Jauss's statement that reading "*compels* us to a new perception of things, and therefore, liberates us from prejudices" (p. 1, my italics), I believe she begins her project with not only an erroneous assumption but with one that is not totally borne out in her interactions with adolescent readers. Sullivan ignores the possibility that the reader might *not* "trust the author," resulting perhaps in an exercise of the reader's freedom to reaffirm his or her own beliefs, which in some cases may actually be the solidification of one's ethnocentrism or xenophobia.

When Sullivan describes the oral responses to the literature read by the adoleslcents, we hear a somewhat more convincing and realistic description—for example, that Jimmy's responses revealed a conflict with himself, and that Valerie initially did not waiver from her view of what Americanization entailed, especially her "English only" attitude. And yet, we are expected to believe that after having read and discussed merely three texts, the students experienced significant emotional, perceptual and behavioral changes. This premise ignores both the complex interplay between reader and text as well as the nature of the adolescent. Adolescent psychology tells us that this is a time when one begins to acquire the cognitive tools to argue for one's beliefs—ethnocentristic or not—as well as the stage when, as Erikson says, the adolescent is concerned with identity formation revealed by a vacillation between ideological commitment and confusion of values, a wrestling with issues such as whether to be a follower or a leader, or what is the meaning of authority.

My point is that those of us who believe in multi-ethnic studies and see the need to work against prejudice must avoid the temptation to use overzealous subjective interpretation to confirm these admirable beliefs. We have to be more candid about the complexity and effort that goes into changing a reader's norms and values.

In concluding the paper, Sullivan, I believe, makes several pragmatic points which seem contrary to the optimistic idealism of the earlier

sections. She correctly asserts that when racism is entrenched in the school environment, it is difficult to sustain new "cultural understandings." In other words, attempting to change adolescent values, to turn them away from injustice, cannot be accomplished through the mere act of reading, even when the literature chosen is exceptional. Reading literature that challenges one's ethnocentrism must not only pervade the core curriculum, it must be supported by teachers who themselves have transcended ethnocentrism and xenophobia and by a school governance committed day-to-day to the ideal of social justice.

Sullivan's project is itself a call for social justice in the secondary school. Her use of literature to achieve this quest is an act of sincerity—she is asking us to use works of art, as Susanne Langer writes, not only to educate "human feeling," that is, "to objectify feeling so we can contemplate and understand it" (Langer, p. 91), but to educate "human vision," that is, that which "assimilates ordinary sights . . . to inward vision and lends expressiveness and emotional import to the world" (Langer, p. 94). This objectification of subjective reality and subjectification of outward experience, in other words, the essence of a work of art as it relates to life, may be one of the significant ways to bring about cultural advancement (see Langer, pp. 93-94), including the development of more just paradigms of educating in schools.

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—Angelo A. Giugliano
Russell Sage College