

A SURVEY OF THE READING INTERESTS
OF CATHOLIC HIGH-SCHOOL GIRLS
WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR GUIDANCE PRACTICES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	page
INTRODUCTION	vii
I.- SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT RELATED LITERATURE . .	1
1. Amount and Quality of Reading	4
2. Impact of Television on Reading	10
3. Thorndike's Measuring Technique	15
II.- METHOD OF RESEARCH, DEFINITIONS, AND CRITERIA	25
1. Data, Sample, and Administrative Aspects	26
2. Computation of Interest Scores	35
3. Definitions and Criteria for Evaluation	39
III.- NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE GIRLS' READING IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT TRENDS	56
1. Modern Mass-Culture as Related to Reading	57
2. Challenging Students' Reading	69
3. What and Why Do Girls Read	84
IV.- POOLED JUDGMENT ON TYPES OF READING	104
1. Reaction Toward Compulsory Reading	105
2. Librarians' Report	116
3. Conflict of Opinion on Teen-age Reading	124
V.- DISCOVERING STUDENTS' READING PATTERNS THROUGH FICTITIOUS TITLES AND TOPICS	133
1. Levels of Preference by Grades	136
2. Interest Appeal by Ability Groups	154
VI.- INTEGRATING GUIDANCE WITH READING ACTIVITIES	159
1. Effects Attributed to Reading	162
2. Attitude Toward Catholic Literature	170
3. Reading Viewed by Educational Objectives	179
4. Need of a Reading Guidance Program	191
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	201
BIBLIOGRAPHY	207
 Appendix	
1. BOOKS RECOMMENDED BY LIBRARIANS AND APPRAISED BY TEN JUDGES	232
2. THE QUESTIONNAIRE - PART III (A & B)	238
3. <u>ABSTRACT OF A SURVEY OF THE READING INTERESTS OF CATHOLIC HIGH-SCHOOL GIRLS WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR GUIDANCE PRACTICES</u>	242

LIST OF TABLES

Table	page
I.- Summary of Selected Studies in High-school Students' Reading Interests, 1938-1958 . . .	20
II.- Grouping Characteristics of the Sample	33
III.- Approximating a Level of Interest Score for a Title	38
IV.- Girls' Reading Activities According to Ability Levels	64
V.- Intensity of Interest Measured in Terms of Other Preferred Diversions	70
VI.- Best-liked Books and Books Read Last in Order of Popularity	88
VII.- Typical Reasons for Enjoying "Best-liked" Books	93
VIII.- Typical Reasons for Disliking Certain Books. .	96
IX.- Answers and Corresponding Percentages to the Question: "Why Do You Read What You Do Read?"	98
X.- Negative Attitude Toward Required Reading. . .	107
XI.- Favorable Reaction Toward Required Reading . .	109
XII.- Comparative Rank of Most Popular Books Submitted by High-school Librarians.	118
XIII.- Percentage Distribution by Type of Interest Factors Inherent in Books	131
XIV.- Composite Picture of Interest Level in Fictitious Titles According to Grades. . . .	137
XV.- Popular Fictitious Titles According to Grades, Rank Preference, and Maturity Level.	139
XVI.- Basic Theme and Maturity Level of the Annotated Books	142

LIST OF TABLES

vi

Table	page
XVII.- Levels of Interest showing Choice of Pictitious Titles in Descending Order. . . .	144
XVIII.- Classification of Reading Material in Order of Preference According to Grades	150
XIX.- Choice of Reading Material According to Topical Classification by Three Ability Groups	156
XX.- Students' Self-Revelation in the Area of Reading Effects	165
XXI.- Summary of the Opinions Expressed by Students Who Liked to Read Catholic Books	177
XXII.- Contrasting Attitudes Toward Catholic Books. .	178
XXIII.- Types of Reading Problems Among Catholic Students in Grades IX Through XII.	194

INTRODUCTION

Notwithstanding the valuable additions to the field of research in reading, there still remain several potential areas that offer opportunity for further investigations. Moreover, no study has been found dealing with the qualitative analysis of the Catholic high-school girls' reading patterns in the light of the educational objectives, and in relation to the area of guidance.

This apparent lack of interest in the reading habits of the Catholic youth may have been based on the assumption that the boys and girls in the Catholic high schools do not differ fundamentally in their reading preferences from other teen-agers in the non-Catholic institutions. Such opinion, however, has been generalized from impressionistic judgment.

For that reason, a more objective quantitative analysis of information was sought with a view of applying the educational implications, drawn from the data, to reading guidance in the classroom. An attempt was made, therefore, to determine the importance of the reading interests of the Catholic high-school girls by investigating not so much the number of books read, but chiefly the quality and variety of reading as indicated by their preferences.

The general idea, underlying the whole study, deals primarily with the critical appraisal of the Catholic girls'

reading interests, estimated by the principles embodied in the tenets of the Catholic philosophy of education, and determined by the standard, widely accepted, namely, that good reading material challenges the reader's interests and, at the same time, contributes to the development of his needs.

To a large extent, attention was concentrated on the following subordinate questions, closely related to the foregoing topic:

How do the reading patterns of the Catholic high-school girls fare when measured objectively on the basis of levels of preferences?

Is there any evidence of increasing reading maturity among the different high-school grades at different mental ability levels?

What is the frank opinion of the girls regarding "free" and required reading, and what is their attitude toward Catholic literature to which they have been invariably exposed?

To what extent is consistency of our Catholic educational principles reflected in the reading tastes and in the effects of reading they had done?

Judged by the information gained from the data, what is the nature of guidance adopted by the schools in creating desirable reading habits and in elevating the reading taste of the pupils?

Inasmuch as these topics are broad in scope, their chief value can be recognized in providing basis for realistic application of the principles of guidance in reading.

The data upon which the investigation was based were secured by means of two questionnaires. One was administered

to five hundred students, Grades IX through XII, in five Catholic high schools, located in different representative communities of a large metropolitan city; the other, much shorter, was sent to seventy librarians, engaged in active work with pupils in the Catholic high schools of that city.

The former provided information regarding the amount, character of the reading done, the likes and dislikes of certain types of books, attitudes, and personal factors that influence the reading habits of young people. The latter served as a basis for comparison, and as a fairly reliable source for correlation of the answers of respondents. To obtain an index of maturity of the reading material suggested by the librarians, the books recommended by them were submitted to ten experts for their appraisal.

The tabulation and analysis of the data, under various headings, aimed to point out three major issues: 1) certain factors that have a significant bearing upon the girls' likes and dislikes in reading; 2) quantitative and qualitative aspects of the girls' reading activities according to the high-school grades and with respect to ability groups; 3) the girls' opinion with regard to the different types of reading, including Catholic literature.

Although the findings reflect the over-all picture of the prevalent reading tastes of the group as a whole, the study makes no claim to scientifically-established conclusions.

The data are indicative but inadequate in many ways. The scope of the study is confined to books only. The sample is limited to size and to a time span of one scholastic year. Since many of the responses do not lend themselves to statistical analysis, most of the data were computed on a percentage basis.

The results, nevertheless, may be useful to identify type interests which can be applied in the selection of reading material for different groups. The data may be suggestive in re-emphasizing the need for integrating the codes of traditional values with the elevating of the current reading tastes of our Catholic high-school students. Finally, the fluctuations, weaknesses, differences, and similarities in the composite interest areas should serve to recognize the importance of stimulating more meaningful reading by rendering more and better guidance at all times.

CHAPTER I

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT RELATED LITERATURE

The question of reading habits and reading interests among adolescents has been given serious consideration among educators and parents. This attention has been sharpened by the publication of the controversial book Why Johnny Can't Read by Rudolph Flesch.¹ The author's blanket condemnation of the way reading is taught in schools has aroused mingled alarm and indignation in the homes and classrooms. An avalanche of criticism, both favorable and unfavorable, appeared in the series of articles, published by the Chicago Sun-Times, May 29 - June 7, 1955, and in the various periodical literature. As a result, many research activities in the area of remedial, as well as developmental reading on the secondary-school level, have been instituted.

A backward glance on past investigations, however, may bring the contemporary problems into clearer focus. But to detail from the vast professional literature about the adolescent and his reading preferences the results of findings which have been accepted in the educational world, would mean to extend the analysis beyond the scope of this work.

¹Rudolph Flesch, Why Johnny Can't Read, New York, Harper, 1955, 222 p.

Hence, only selective studies which had been published during the two last decades and conceived as contributory to the background for the investigation were reviewed in this survey. As this report was concerned with senior high-school students, the studies which refer to that age were chiefly utilized. Occasionally, a reference was made to earlier investigations to illustrate the types of problems, and to contribute helpfully to an understanding of topics discussed.

Bibliographies of reading studies yielded references to innumerable investigations relating to the reading of high-school students. A great body of research was summarized by William S. Gray in the Elementary School Journal up to and including 1932, and in the Journal of Educational Research since 1932. Traxler and Townsend presented a bibliography of research in reading, covering the periods from 1930 to 1960 in the four publications of the Educational Records Bureau: Bulletin, No. 32, Ten Years of Research in Reading; Bulletin No. 46, Another Five Years of Research of Reading; Bulletin No. 64, Eight More Years of Research in Reading, and Bulletin 75, Research in Reading During Another Four Years.

Other very helpful sources were Betts and Betts' An Index to Professional Literature on Reading and Related subjects, listing over 8,000 references, published up to January 1, 1943; Strang's Bibliography Relating to Reading on the

High School and College Level, and Miles A. Tinker's summaries, published in the educational journals from 1938 to 1942. Number of studies and articles on "Interests" and on "High-school Students' Reading" are indexed in the Psychological Abstracts and in the Education Index.

An examination of studies of reading interests has revealed that certain general tendencies are noted in all research concerning high-school students. Several investigations, such as Jordan's and Rideout's have shown comparable findings. Jordan's observations have led him to believe, after comparing several studies which have been made since 1919, that there was only a slight change in the fundamental interests of adolescent boys and girls. He based his conclusions on the fact that the favorite authors and favorite books of high-school students were about the same in 1918, 1925, and 1932.²

Rideout also compared books read by the pupils of two generations.³ Carlsen in his report "Behind Reading Interests" wrote that adolescent reading interests have not changed in the past thirty-four years, nor do they change in

²Arthur M. Jordan, "Reading Interests," in Proceedings of the National Education Association, Vol 73, Washington, National Education Association, 1935, p. 342-45.

³A. J. Rideout, "Juvenile Judgments," in The English Journal, Vol. 27, issue of January 1938, p. 38-43.

different geographical areas.⁴

1. AMOUNT AND QUALITY OF READING

Few attempts were made to judge the amount and the quality of the personal reading of high-school students. On this point, however, the literature contains some contradictory conclusions. Some studies revealed a relatively low level in reading interests and a small amount of leisure-time reading on the part of youth. Such, for example, were the findings of the survey by Stella S. Center and Gladys L. Persons. The results of their investigation indicated a large part of the high-school students' reading to be light fiction, but very little of the literature that requires close thinking.⁵

Ethel Cornell also found the quality as well as the quantity of recreational reading on the decline. And this, she asserted, was as much prevalent among those of high I. Q. as among those of lower intelligence. She agreed that a certain amount of recreatory reading was good in adolescence, but she believed that there should be also evidence of

⁴G. R. Carlsen, "Behind Reading Interests," in The English Journal, Vol. 43, issue of January 1954, p. 7-12.

⁵Stella S. Center and Gladys L. Persons, "The Leisure Reading of New York City High-School Students," in The English Journal, Vol. 25, issue of November 1936, p. 217-226.

emerging purpose in older readers. The young people she studied were reading without much discrimination. The eighteen-year-olds were reading less juvenile books, but not better literature.⁶

Brink's study offered further evidence that "the materials read voluntarily by many pupils are unsatisfactory both in quality and quantity," though he concluded that the 1,532 Chicago high-school pupils in his study spent a significant portion of their time in reading.⁷

Gray, Iverson, and a host of librarians are in agreement that during the past three decades reading among the elementary school children increased considerably. But "the decrease in book-reading among senior high-school pupils is certainly as great as, if not greater than, it formerly was."⁸

Not all research reports, however, have been in common agreement on the question of quantity and quality of reading during the adolescent years. Interpretation of data from the records kept by the Evaluation Staff of the Eight

⁶Ethel L. Cornell, "Can Librarians Help Unusual Readers?" in American Library Association Bulletin, Vol. 35, issue of March 1941, p. 160-165.

⁷William G. Brink, "Reading Interests of High School Pupils," in The School Review, Vol. 47, issue of October 1939, p. 613.

⁸"Amount of Reading Done by Children," in The Catholic Educational Review, Vol. 50, issue of December 1952, p. 694.

Year Study over a period of six years, grades seven through twelve, gave a more encouraging view. Among other interesting facts concerning the high-school students, the report showed that "students do read widely and with increasing maturity." Though the total amount of reading done decreased as students advanced in grades, the quality of reading improved.⁹ Similar observations were made by Wilfred Eberhart, whose analysis of facts revealed that pupils do read books, and that there is an increasing proportion of non-fiction reading among the twelfth grade pupils.¹⁰

Henne made a study of high-school students' reading, covering the period of four decades, from 1900 to 1940 inclusive. According to her findings, the difference in the amount of voluntary reading by pupils during those years was insignificant.¹¹

The appraisal of the quality and the amount of youth's voluntary reading has followed a rather consistent pattern.

⁹ Harold A. Anderson, "Reading Interests and Tastes," in Reading in General Education, A Report of the Committee on Reading in General Education, William S. Gray, Chairman, Chapter VII, Washington, American Council on Education, 1940, p. 217-271.

¹⁰ Wilfred Eberhart, "Evaluating the Leisure Reading of High-school Pupils," in School Review, Vol. 47, issue of April 1939, p. 257-269.

¹¹ Frances Henne, Preconditioned Factors Affecting the Reading of Young People, unpublished Doctor's dissertation presented to the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago, 1949, p. 76.

All investigators agree that high-school students do read, and that some read a great deal, but they hold conflicting opinions regarding the students' content of voluntary reading. In general, it has been acknowledged that high-school pupils' reading preferences encompass several classics, many modern adolescent stories, large number of acceptable but inconsequential books, and some harmless trash.

That reading interests under guidance may be improved has been demonstrated by La Brant and Heller's research study of two groups of high-school students over a three-year period. The authors summarized their results in terms of the nature of books read and the criteria adopted.¹²

Some investigators sought to learn how reading affects the attitudes, thinking, or behavior of students. Notable among such studies, on the secondary-school level, are the analyses of the responses to a questionnaire submitted by Sister Mary Corde Lorang.¹³ The purpose of her study was to determine 1) the extent to which voluntary reading of books had helped the young adults master the developmental tasks

¹² Lou L. La Brant and Frieda M. Heller, An Evaluation of Free Reading in Grades Seven to Twelve, Inclusive, Columbus, The Ohio State University School, The Ohio University, 1939, 158 p.

¹³ Sister Mary Corde Lorang, The Effect of Reading on Moral Conduct and Emotional Experience, Washington, The Catholic University of America Press, 1946, 122 p.

characteristic of their age; 2) the types of books which had developmental values for them; and 3) the kinds of life-problems that their reading helped them to solve. The frank replies of 2,374 adolescents revealed the dangers of indiscriminate reading as well as the desirable effects attributed to good reading.

Brooks selected one hundred titles of children's books that had developmental values, and submitted the list to librarians with the request that they designate the most popular titles. The list was later delimited to fifty titles, twenty-five books for the "later childhood age group and twenty-five for early adolescence."¹⁴ A valuable bibliography, based on the foregoing study, was published as a March-April supplement to the Chicago Schools Journal.¹⁵ It contained annotated references for books placed under seventy-eight categories.

Attention was also directed toward satisfying the interests of the retarded readers. Blair discovered that there was a need of suitable material for retarded readers

¹⁴ Alice R. Brooks, "Developmental Values in Books," in Youth, Communication, and Libraries, edited by Frances Henne and others, Chicago, American Library Association, 1949, p. 51.

¹⁵ Effie La Plante and Thelma O'Donnell, "Developmental Values Through Library Books," in Chicago Schools Journal, Vol. 31, issue of March-April 1950, p. 1-21.

of adolescent age. As an aid of attacking this problem, he sent a list of titles of more than twenty-four hundred books to two hundred and seventeen schools. On the basis of the replies received from the principals in various sections of the country and on his own personal experience, he has drawn a list of one hundred books most enjoyed by retarded readers in senior high schools.¹⁶

Bernstein in her study attempted to explore ways in which interest is related to reading comprehension. From two stories which served as the instrument of measurement, she found that comprehension was associated more closely with interest than with reading. When interest was high, the pupils projected their own life-situations into the story, and responded more fully to questions based on the text. In other words, where one story was much more interesting than the other, the pupils read the more interesting story with superior comprehension.¹⁷

Strang submitted a questionnaire to pupils in grades VII through XII in thirty schools. The responses were similar to those reported in other investigations, though there were

¹⁶ G. M. Blair, "Reading Materials for Pupils with Reading Disabilities," in High School Journal, Vol. 39, issue of October 1955, p. 14-21.

¹⁷ Margery R. Bernstein, "Relationship Between Interest and Reading Comprehension, in Journal of Educational Research, Vol. 49, issue of December 1955, p. 283-288.

several outstanding features: 1) there was a wide range of interests characterizing today's teen-age reading; 2) there was a strong interest in books about teen-agers and teen-age problems; 3) very few students expressed interest in any of the classics, and only a small number of students was interested in biography, religion, philosophy, and art; 4) comics were seldom mentioned after grade IX; 5) there was an extensive interest in current adult fiction.¹⁸

2. IMPACT OF TELEVISION ON READING

A number of surveys has been conducted to discover the effect of television on reading. The role which television is playing and is yet to play is not clearly defined. That its impact has been stupendous few will doubt. There is, however, a difference of opinion as to its favorable and unfavorable effects.

In 1949-1950 TV made its appearance in Chicago and nearby cities. Each year since 1949, Professor Witty of Northwestern University has circulated questionnaires and interviewed children, parents, and teachers in the Chicago area. He secured facts on the amount of televiewing, attitudes and favorite programs, and compared the data with the

¹⁸ Ruth Strang, "Reading Interests, 1946," in The English Journal, Vol. 35, issue of November 1946, p. 477-482.

pupils' marks in school, their intelligence, reading, recreation, and behavior.

According to Dr. Witty's report, financial conditions proved no barrier to the ownership of a television set. In 1950, forty-three per cent of the pupils who were interviewed had television sets at home. In 1957, ninety-six per cent reported ownership of sets.¹⁹

Thus TV emerged as the dominant force in usurping "the leisure of children and young people, leaving little time for other more desirable activities and recreational pursuits," including reading.²⁰ However, in his 1959 television survey, Witty noted that high-school students devote much less time to TV, averaging about thirteen hours per week.²¹

Excessive viewing of TV is often cited as the reason for the general decrease in wholesome reading among children and teenagers. There is a general opinion that TV tends to influence reading and study habits adversely, and "cause children and young people either to read less or to choose

¹⁹ Paul Witty, "TV and Today's Children," in Today's Health, Vol. 35, issue of November 1957, p. 40.

²⁰ -----, "Interest in TV and Success in School," in Educational Administration and Supervision, Vol. 37, issue of April 1951, p. 195.

²¹ Paul Witty and Paul Kinsella, "Children and the Electronic Pied Piper," in Education, Vol. 80, issue of September 1959, p. 49.

materials of inferior quality and doubtful value."²²

On the other hand, many observers believe that television alone cannot be held responsible for the current disinterest in reading, and that other factors, such as availability of books, the home environment, and the attitudes of adults toward reading must also be considered. Significant observations, on this point, have been made by Gordon Dupee:

...ours is a society which does not honor reading. We turn our own depreciation of reading to indignation and blame the school. We think youngsters as of "school age," as though they were not of "home age," or "movie age," or "television age." We think of school as the only place of schooling... Forty-two per cent of the houses in America today are without bookcases or bookshelves of any kind ... A survey by one of America's leading encyclopedias revealed that 84 per cent of the families purchasing their encyclopedias had not opened it within one year after purchase. It was bought as cultural furniture.²³

The antidote for television lies in guidance. To offset the threat of TV to reading, Witty advised that books discussed should be related to themes in favorite TV programs, and that pupils should be helped to find reading material that is "not only rich in excitement and adventure, but superior in literary quality."²⁴ He further warned "that

²² Paul Witty, "Reaction to Television," in Elementary English, Vol. 27, issue of October 1950, p. 355.

²³ Gordon Dupee, "Can Johnny's Parents Read?" in The Saturday Review, Vol. 38, issue of June 2, 1955, p. 5.

²⁴ Paul Witty, "Comics and Television," in Today's Health, Vol. 30, issue of October 1952, p. 52.

children's strong interests in television may be a liability or an asset."²⁵ Teachers can do much to utilize television in supplementing the reading program. TV has tremendous educational possibilities, if teachers and parents learn to use it wisely.

Sterner investigated the attractiveness of the mediums of communication. She compared radio, motion-picture, and reading interests of high-school pupils to discover whether the medium or reading interests had greater attraction for the adolescent. Her data revealed that it was interest rather than the medium that stimulated pupils to spend time to excess in these activities. Intelligence and socio-economic status showed little relationship to the selection of interest, media, and specific titles within a medium.²⁶

One of the most extensive studies was that of Norvell, whose sample included 50,000 junior and senior high-school pupils in the state of New York. The boys and girls were asked to label as "very interesting," "fairly interesting," or "uninteresting" the various literary selections which they had studied in class during the current year. By weighting each of the three interest ratings and tabulating the results,

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Alice P. Sterner, Radio, Motion Picture, and Reading Interests: A Study of High School Pupils, Teachers College Contributions to Education, No. 932, New York, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1947, p. 102.

Norvell assigned each of the literary selections a percentage rating. He considered seventy per cent high enough to warrant consideration for class reading. Then, he classified each selection according to its theme, and determined the average interest rating of various themes.

His findings showed that much of the reading material used in the classroom is disliked by pupils, and he recommended that three-fourths of the selections, now commonly in use, should be replaced with material which children would enjoy reading. He concluded that for pupils in secondary school, content and not reading difficulty is a major determinant of reading interest.²⁷

Norvell noted also that neither age nor intelligence seemed to be very significant. This fact is in close agreement with other investigations, which deal with the relationship of age and intelligence to the reading habits and interests. Malchow, for example, offered evidence that bright and slow-learning pupils tend to like the same books.²⁸ Even the retarded readers, according to few studies, have reading interests similar to those of their age-mates, although they read less and show a slightly greater inclination to read

²⁷ George Norvell, The Reading Interests of Young People, New York, Heath, 1950, 262 p.

²⁸ E. C. Malchow, "Reading Interests of Junior High-school Pupils," in The School Review, Vol. 45, issue of March 1937, p. 175-185.

mystery and adventure stories than do the average and superior children.

3. THORNDIKE'S MEASURING TECHNIQUE

Norvell's survey approximated rather closely Thorndike's study.²⁹ There are, of course, variations in the selections of reading material, which basically constitutes the nature of the investigation in Norvell's study. His data, too, are not directly comparable because of different methods of assembling. There are also seeming disagreements resulting from differences in the ages of the children contributing the data. In the main, however, the similarities are noticeable, and Norvell himself asserted that his findings have paralleled those of Thorndike.³⁰

Thorndike made a comparative study of children's interests to determine the extent to which chronological age and mental maturity control reading interests. The other problem of his study was to find the subject that the "less gifted pupil" would enjoy reading.

Thorndike developed an instrument, which resembled the measuring technique used by Waples and Typer in their

²⁹ Robert L. Thorndike, Children's Reading Interests, New York, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1941, 48 p.

³⁰ Norvell, Op. Cit., p. 80.

study, What People Want to Read About.³¹ Waples and Tyler annotated a list of non-fiction articles appearing in magazines to find out the reading interests of adults. Thorndike included in his list titles of fiction, and limited his subjects to elementary and secondary-school pupils. In addition, he made each item ingeniously fictitious.

This technique enabled him to obtain data quickly and conveniently, "apart from the influence of availability, readability, and past experience with particular books." It was his theory that with actual titles, a child's choice might be influenced by his memory of the reputation of a book or of an individual who might have recommended it. Fictitious titles, on the other hand, required a simpler and correspondingly safer response, and were, therefore, a more valid measure of interest.

He used the questionnaire "for lack of something better."³² Besides, "practical limitations of time, materials, and reading ability make it impossible to have subjects actually read lengthy passages for a purpose of interest survey."

³¹ Douglas Waples and R. W. Tyler, What People Want to Read About, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1931, 312 p.

³² Robert L. Thorndike, Children's Reading Interests: A Study Based on a Fictitious Annotated Titles Questionnaire, A Review, by L. C. Mossman, in Educational Method, Vol. 20, issue of April 1941, p. 365.

³³ Thorndike, Op. Cit., p. 4.

The questionnaire, consisting of eighty-five fictitious titles with annotations, was presented to 2,891 pupils, ranging in age from eight to over twenty, and in grades from four to twelve. The age group did not represent complete cross-section of the school population. Grades five to six contributed the largest numbers. Only thirteen per cent were high-school pupils. Brighter children predominated in the younger groups, while the older groups were heavily loaded with the slower children of those ages.

Thorndike grouped his subjects according to sex, age, and brightness, that is into thirds according to intelligence test, or in some cases, according to reading test or age-grade status when the pupil's I. Q. was not available. This sorting yielded fifty sub-groups. The interest score for a given title for each sub-group was computed through the use of the formula employed in the present study.

Thorndike's inquiry into the dependence of reading interests upon mental development led him to believe that the differences between the reading interests of dull and bright children are not so much in the books read as in the age level at which they read. His findings revealed consistent patterns of interests for bright and slow children of the same age.

"In their pattern of reported reading interests," wrote Thorndike in his monograph, "bright children (Median I. Q. about 123) are most like a group of mentally slower children

(Median I. Q. about 92) who are two or three years older than they are."³⁴ He further concluded that

As far as intelligence is concerned, the teacher will be able to give the bright children reading on topics which appeal most to the average child a year or two later, while the slow child will be interested in topics which will appeal most to the average child a year or two earlier.³⁵

Those who are concerned with the needs of retarded readers will find Thorndike's findings encouragingly helpful.

Russell has challenged Thorndike's assumption of similarity of interests at different levels. He has asserted that Thorndike

...might have obtained somewhat different results with a wider range of titles, and that his study eliminated reading difficulty as a factor. When children choose actual books, they are almost forced to pick ones they can read; therefore the results in terms of books read will differ considerably at different levels. Thorndike showed similarities in potential interests rather than actual.³⁶

It seems pertinent to point out, however, that Thorndike used fictitious titles primarily to avoid a situation in which pupils would be required to read on the basis of actual experience with a book. His purpose was "to explore the

³⁴ Ibid., p. 35.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 38.

³⁶ David H. Russell, "The Development of Reading Preferences and Tastes," in his Children Learn to Read, Chapter XII, Boston, Ginn, 1949, p. 259-60.

topics of interest rather than interest in any book."³⁷

Thorndike's findings and procedure have been quoted somewhat at length because, in the consideration of the background for this survey, it was one study which proved of considerable value for the method and suggestions it had offered. The instrument he developed seemed of sufficient worth to warrant its further adaptation in the current study in an attempt to estimate the reading of the Catholic high-school girls. In fact, it has served as the crux for this investigation.

Findings on reading interests of high-school pupils have been diverse and widely scattered throughout many sources. Investigators have considered the subject from many angles. Studies have differed considerably in quantity of sampling, in location and type of community, in grade level, in selection of factors of interest, in statistical treatment, and in classification of categories. A limited number of such studies, which appeared to be most useful, has been synthesized in Table I. But literature in the field is abundant. A relative significance and extent of the topic may be found in Encyclopedia of Educational Research.³⁸

³⁷ Thorndike, Op. Cit., p. 5.

³⁸ William S. Gray, "Significant Facts Concerning Reading Interests and Preferences," in the Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Rev. Ed., New York, Macmillan, 1952, p. 981-984.

Table I.

Summary of Selected Studies in High-School Students' Reading Interests and Preferences, 1938-1958.

Investigator	Date and Subjects	Method	Purpose	Results
W.G. Brink	1938 Grades 9-12 1,532 pupils	Record of books read in 2 weeks	To improve quality of reading and to provide effective remedial program	Change in reading interests; recent titles preferred; adventure given first ranking
L.L. LaBrant and F.M. Heller	1939 Grades 7-12 About 54 in each grade	Record of free reading during one semester	To discover whether voluntary reading leads to extensive reading	Reading, according to needs, interests, and abilities of pupils, tends to lead to extensive reading
Beryl McAdow	1941 Grade 10 400 pupils	Books selected by slow readers on basis of interest appeal	To provide slow pupils with material they can enjoy reading	Compilation of 250 best-liked books for poor readers; students' reading ability improved
Robert L. Thorndike	1941 Grades 4-12 3,000 pupils	Questionnaire based on fictitious titles	To determine to what extent is reading interest dependent on C.A. and I.Q.	Bright and slow pupils have similar interests but resemblance is increased when pupils are 2 or 3 years younger than the slow ones.

Table I.

Summary of Selected Studies in High-School Students' Reading Interests and Preferences, 1938-1958 (Continued)

Investigator	Date and Subjects	Method	Purpose	Results
Dale Zeller	1941 Grades 7-9 4,047 pupils	List of 48 books and 18 factors determining reading interests	To set up equations for predicting appeal of reading material on basis of interest factor	Only two factors, action and humor proved statistically significant
Ruth Strang	1946 Grades 7-12	Questionnaire	To learn what type of books arouse pupils' interest	Preferences voted for books dealing with teen-age life and problems, adventure, action, and humor
Alice P. Sterner	1947 Grades 9-12 372 pupils	Checklist, pupils' diaries and reading records	To discover whether medium of leisure activity or interest had greater attraction	Interest rather than medium attracts pupils. Relationship among interests independent of media was .72; among media independent of interests, .27
Climachus Boyle	1949 Grade 9 120 pupils	Reading Design and pupils' reading records	To determine relationship between I.Q. and reading interests	Moderately high relationship between I.Q. and reading interests exists

Table I.

Summary of Selected Studies in High-School Students' Reading
Interests and Preferences, 1938-1958 (Continued)

Investigator	Date and Subjects	Method	Purpose	Results
George Norvell	1950 Grades 7-12 50,000 pupils	1,700 literary works commonly studied in classrooms	To appraise interest in reading material for teaching literature	Selections if well-liked, will be liked 2 or 3 grades above and below. Pupils' preferences listed according to rank order
Margery R Bernstein	1954 Grade 9 100 pupils	Three readability formulas differing significantly in interest	To find relationship between interest and comprehension	Comprehension is associated more closely with interest than with reading
William E Vanderment and W. A. Thalman	1956 Grades 6-10 1,034 pupils	Questionnaire	To discover the types of imaginative elements of reading fantasy preferred by pupils	No significance found in analysis of reading preferences of various socio-economic groups according to fantasy content

In summary, recent studies disclosed average trends in reading preferences. Certain major conclusions relative to age, sex, and few other factors were in unanimous agreement; other findings, on the other hand, were frequently in conflict.

In the spring issue of the Educational and Psychological Measurements for 1954, Scott summarized some of his critical observations relative to research in reading, published during the period from 1940 to 1950. He described the research reports of that decade as "voluminous," "varied in quality," "practical rather than theoretical," reflecting inherent limitations, such as "inadequate controls," and "weak criteria of success."³⁹

Throughout the two last decades, the results of studies on reading interests have offered a direct challenge for continued effort to elevate reading tastes and preferences of the high-school pupils, and pointed out broad implications for the role of personal reading and the personality of the reader in the contemporary social life. Problems to promote reading interests and habits in the midst of new agencies of mass communication still await solution, and the great wealth of possibilities in the unexplored "areas of

³⁹ C. W. Scott, "A 'forest' View of Present Research in Reading," in Educational and Psychological Measurements, Vol. 14, spring, 1954, p. 208-214.

research interest" still merit intensive study.

In this connection, there are several determining factors which can make this research a contributory source of information. Essentially, the first noteworthy feature lay in its objectives. The primary purpose of this exploratory survey was a qualitative analysis of the girls' reading interests in the light of the philosophy of the school. From the critical appraisal of the girls' reading habits, the teacher can recognize not only the students' likes and dislikes in reading, but also the deviations from well-established principles of education and standards of good reading.

In addition, the aim was to discover the important facts and the significant problems which may prove helpful as a basis in the organization of a reading guidance program. To sum up, the findings may re-emphasize recognition of the place accorded to reading interests, and rouse the teachers' challenge to guide their pupils into the WHAT of reading.

CHAPTER II

METHOD OF RESEARCH, DEFINITIONS, AND CRITERIA

Of the different techniques for finding facts, the questionnaire proved to be the most feasible method of approach to the present research problem. At any rate, it was the easiest way to inventory a large group of individuals.

Because of its limitations and frequent unjustified censure, a concentrated effort was made to follow a well-approved procedure in the development of the questionnaire, so that each phase of its general construction would meet with the technical recommendations on questionnaire writing.

In its initial stage, the questionnaire was based upon the personal experience of the writer, who as librarian in three Catholic high schools, in three different sections of city, had for many years close contact with teen-age readers. In its second phase, the questionnaire was submitted to a trial jury, consisting of some fifty graduate students, the majority of whom were teachers of secondary and elementary schools, and finally it was administered during the latter part of the scholastic year of 1956 to five hundred high-school pupils.

Since it has been decided that the subjects of this investigation were to be exclusively girls, it was necessary to eliminate twenty-five questionnaires, submitted by the

boys of one of the participating schools. Fifteen questionnaires, answered by the girls were also discarded; ten on account of the missing I.Q's and five because of incomplete data. In all, responses from 460 students were tabulated. In general, an attempt was made to remove as far as possible all the factors that might in any way tend to invalidate the findings.

1. Data, Sample, and Administrative Aspects.

a) Data. - The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first part was designed to elicit from the students factual data, such as, school, grade, the family background, social and economic setting, and the cultural level. It is a general accepted theory by many investigators that these factors condition the pupils' quality of reading and the reactions to the subject read.

Another important information desired was the identification of interest - not exactly of the sort secured by available standard tests, but an inventory that would indicate the students' likes and dislikes, or inclination toward types of reading material which makes the greatest appeal to them. The basic purpose of this second part of the questionnaire was to analyze the personal characteristics of the pupils by probing their expressed reactions to reading.

Because one of the most important aspects of the investigation was determination of reading interests, it was necessary to use a tool which was both valid and reliable. Such a tool was available in the instrument developed by Robert L. Thorndike, who believed that some estimate of children's interests in reading can be discovered from the responses of fictitious titles of supposed books.¹ The annotated list of fictitious titles in the third section of the questionnaire has been based on this device.*

This section of the questionnaire had a two-fold purpose: 1) to discover objectively the nature and range of reading interests of Catholic high-school girls, in order to secure a more adequate picture of their prevailing preferences for the basis of a functional reading guidance program, and 2) to find out not so much what is the effect of intelligence in differentiating reading interests, although that question also has been incorporated into the problem of research, as how traditional attitudes affect the quality of the Catholic high-school girl's reading taste. After all, attitudes do influence one's judgments, and play an important role in determining one's choice of action.

¹ Thorndike, Op. Cit.

* See Appendix 2 - (A)

Obviously, more effective than a brief descriptive annotation is a selection or passage from a book, wherein the knowledge of the author's intent, his tone, and his attitude toward the topic are revealed. But such broad areas of concern aim to analyze the depth of understanding and the critical reactions and judgments of the students, a scope of research which could very well furnish the basis for another supplementary experiment.

b) The sample. - The study was confined to the analyses of reading interests of Catholic high-school girls only. In one respect, it was strictly a local study. Only 1.5 per cent of Chicago Catholic high-school girls participated in this survey.² Although 460 students constitute a small group compared to the number of students in the Archdiocese of Chicago, it was assumed that the careful selection of schools insured a balanced and honest opinion of the Catholic girls with respect to reading. The group as a whole represented five out of thirty-four different Catholic high schools within the city limits. The enrollment of these five schools ranged from 200 to 300 pupils. The schools were selected as representative of the various communities of the city.

² Enrollment of girls in the Catholic high schools for 1955-1956, excluding suburban areas, was 23,507. Archdiocese of Chicago Annual School Report, 1955-1956.

Studies of reading habits indicate that all the factors in the pupil's environment, including interest and natural equipment, help to shape his reading taste. There are, however, some investigators who maintain that the significance of family background and economic conditions in relation to type of reading is negligible. De Boer, for example, has pointed out that "the factors of intelligence and socio-economic status do not markedly affect young people's interests.

Similarly, Sterner's study provided evidence regarding the relationship of intelligence and socio-economic status to youth's choices of media and interests. In her Radio, Motion Picture, and Reading Interests: A Study of High School Pupils, she found that "socio-economic status shows the least relationship to those media and interests."⁴ And in reference to intelligence, she pointedly remarked: "Intelligence as a factor in these areas seems to be greatly overrated, for it makes little difference in choices of media or interests."⁵

It was desirable, nevertheless, to secure data concerning the composition of the subjects participating in the study, since different economic and cultural levels made the

³ J. J. De Boer, "About Reading and the High School Student," in The English Journal, Vol. 47, issue of May 1958, p. 278.

⁴ Sterner, Op. Cit., p. 31.

⁵ Ibid., p. 32.

communities or parts of a community quite distinctive. One community, for example, rated higher than the others on a number of social indexes, such as high economic status, good educational background, and predominance of English-speaking people. Another showed high percentage of unskilled labor, foreign parentage, and elementary schooling.

The group as a whole was made up of pupils from homes representing varied strata of society. This judgment was supported, in a private interview, by a former Assistant-Superintendent of the Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Chicago. A few came from homes representing the wealthy. Others came from the poor, the religious, the indifferent, the professional, and the laboring classes. Most of them, however, came from about the average background with respect to occupational and educational levels.

Many pupils in this sample were of the third and fourth generation of mixed nationalities. They were a mixture of Irish, Polish, Italian, German, Lithuanian, and Bohemian descent, making it a typical urban school population. It appears fair to add, however, that nationality factor is not extremely significant when school environment and training are fairly similar.

The parents' education was also of varying level. Of the fathers of the subjects, nine per cent were college graduates; forty-three per cent were high-school graduates,

and thirty-eight per cent had elementary school education only. Of the mothers of the subjects, six per cent were college graduates, fifty-five per cent claimed high-school as their terminal point of formal education, and thirty-two per cent had elementary school education only. The education of the mothers of these subjects appeared to be slightly higher than the fathers, even though more fathers than mothers attended college.

In the occupational classification, the professions were represented by few parents. A small group included owners of business concerns; the greatest number, however, consisted of workers in the industrial plants.

Among the pupils, 43.8 per cent worked on the average of fifteen hours per week during the after-school hours. Very few had no siblings. The number of children in the family ranged from one to eleven, with an average of two children per family.

While the majority of the pupils had been exposed to a Catholic environment throughout all the years of their schooling, 26% of the girls, taking part in this investigation, attended the public school on the average of three years prior to their enrollment at the Catholic high school.

c) Grouping. - The total student group was divided by grades, nine to twelve, inclusive. The basis for determining

the number of pupils for this study was not altogether arbitrary. It was decided that one-third of the pupils, selected from the school enrollment, should represent the highest, the average, and the lowest group of students of each grade, that is, to include in the high group all those having an I.Q. of 115 and above, in the middle group, those having an I.Q. of 100 to 114, and in the low group, those with an I.Q. below 100. The school records supplied the intelligence scores.

Accordingly, there was a fairly equal-sized distribution in the ages from twelve to nineteen, with a mean age of 15-5, and with an equal distribution of representative intelligence quotients, the mean for which was 106.7, and the standard deviation, 16.5. The students were, therefore, included proportionately to the enrollment of the school. The I. Q.'s ranged from the borderline to very superior. The median of the I. Q. scores, according to the four high-school grades, is given in Table II.

The purpose of the homogeneous grouping was two-fold: 1) to find out to what extent the girls in different grades vary in their reading preferences, and 2) to discover the differences in the quality of reading and in the individual reading interests between the high and the low groups. Besides, it seemed to be the most convenient and reliable method by which to secure a stratified sampling in the five schools during one academic year.

Table II.
Grouping Characteristics of the Sample.

Grade	Bright Group 115-up		Average Group 100-114		Slow Group Below 100		Total
	Total N	Med. I.Q.	Total N	Med. I.Q.	Total N	Med. I.Q.	
9	50	124.1	60	105.8	46	89.3	156
10	23	120.7	50	108.0	42	90.2	115
11	37	125.2	39	108.0	26	90.8	102
12	21	126.0	36	106.8	30	91.8	87
Total	131		185		144		460
Per cent and Median	28.4%	124	40.2%	107	31.3%	90	

d) Administrative aspects. - The reading-interest questionnaire was administered late in spring of 1956 by the teachers of the cooperating schools. A brief statement of the purpose of the study was given to the pupils. It was explained to them that their correct responses were necessary to make an accurate study. They were told that the questionnaire was not a test but a survey to show which books they liked best, so the library could purchase books they would enjoy. They were encouraged to be honest and to give a sincere personal opinion without any thought of whether their answers meet the approval of their teachers or not. There seemed, therefore, no reason to believe that any of the students falsified the given responses.

Though no limit was set for answering the questionnaire, the time required for giving the responses ranged from forty to sixty minutes. This time included both the preliminary explanation by the teacher and the actual writing of the replies by the students.

The validity and reliability of the method of exploring the girls' expressed reading interests employed in this study seem fairly well substantiated through a comparison of the results from the five school groups. There is considerable consistency in the responses of the individuals and groups, the consistency being much greater with some pupils and certain topics than with others.

The reliability of the data depended in large measure upon the homogeneity of the groups. It will be well to remember that the subjects participating in this study were all urban pupils, alike in sex, schooling, and religion. It was further assumed that the responses given by the girls have been genuine indications of their reading interests, since they have been asked to indicate the type of books they would like to read, and not those they had already read. The questions, therefore, were not necessarily requiring an answer which would be an index of their reading achievement. For that reason, it was naturally believed that the truthful answers and expressions of the girls' views have been decidedly in favor of the reliability of the data.

2. Computation of Interest Scores

Few investigations can claim absolute originality in idea and method. In this respect, the current study was not unique in adopting Robert L. Thorndike's simple but convenient device as one part of measuring the reading patterns of 460 girls who attended five different Catholic high schools.

The measuring instrument, as used by Thorndike, was the usual inventory technique, but ingeniously devised to yield "simpler and correspondingly safer responses." It consisted of a list of fictitious annotated titles, marked by the three-way response. The pupils were asked to indicate

their choices by encircling one of the three: "YES" if they would like to read the story, "NO" if they would not like to read it, and "?" if they could not make up their minds. In this way, they interpreted their reaction in terms of like, dislike, or indifference (LID).

A similar approach was adopted in this investigation. A list of fictitious titles of books was compiled and annotated, so that the nature of the contents could be readily inferred. Titles were designed to sample the various types of subjects which might prove of interest to high-school pupils.

Some topics were represented somewhat arbitrarily by more than one title. For example, "School and Teen-age Interests" had six titles. "Art," on the other hand, had only one. The subjects relating to a certain topic were not grouped, but were scattered throughout the inventory, in order that the reader might be encouraged to read each item as a separate book entry.

The computation of interest scores for the various titles was based on Thorndike's formula:

$$\frac{\text{Number marking "YES"} + \frac{1}{2} \text{ Number marking "?"}}{\text{Total number in group responding to the item}} = \frac{\text{Raw per cent or Interest Score}}{\text{for given item}}$$

That is, one half of the number who encircled "?" has been added to the number of pupils in the group who encircled "YES." The resulting sum was then divided by the total number of

pupils who had answered that item.

It will be well to recall that the groups were divided according to their I. Q's and by grades. Scores for each group separately have been found, and then finally averaged to get the interest for all four grades. An example of the procedure of approximating a level of interest score for each title was illustrated in Table III, showing the overall level of interest score for the title Captain Gil (No. 21).

"This," according to Professor Thorndike, "seems a perfectly reasonable way of approximating a level of interest score for each item ... for each group ... and for all grades."⁶ Since this procedure was followed for all twenty-five titles, it became possible to rank the titles according to the scores in order of interest for the group as a whole, and to compare the rank of any title for one group with its rank for any other group.

This technique was used because it was an approach that lends itself to pupils' interests not through getting their reactions to specific books, but to a general character or types of books. Moreover, the aim was to discover the nature of group interests and not of individual tastes. Consideration was given chiefly to the influence of group similarities rather than to individual differences in determining

⁶ Robert L. Thorndike's letter to the writer, dated March 27, 1958.

Table III.

Approximating a Level of Interest Score for a Title

Grade	N	No. answering YES	Plus	No. encircling ?	Raw per cent
9	156	99	($\frac{1}{2}$)	29	72.7
10	115	75	($\frac{1}{2}$)	11	70.0
11	102	72	($\frac{1}{2}$)	0	70.5
12	87	50	($\frac{1}{2}$)	10	63.2
Total and Average	460	296		50	69.1

reading choices. This group measurement device in the computation of scores proved well-suited with respect to facility and ease. All other data in the subsequent chapters were computed also according to rate per cent. The presentation of percentages has been given in the corresponding tables.

3. Definitions and Criteria for Evaluation.

The role of interest in revolutionizing the principles of educational procedure has been well recognized in modern research. But the multiple uses to which the word has been applied make the process of defining the term rather complex.

Prior to the age of experimental verification, there were several theoretical, philosophical, and psychological concepts of interest, some of which scientific measurement today has rejected. For example, interest was considered to be the essential principle in organizing knowledge in the mind. It was thought of as an end, dominating the faculty of the will.

A few psychologists made interest synonymous with attentiveness - a concept closely related to the definition in Webster's Dictionary: "a propensity to attend to and be stirred by a certain class of objects." Some writers identified interest with emotions, or feelings, either with feelings of pleasantness or unpleasantness. Edward Thorndike

believed that satisfying pleasurable stimuli was an aid to learning; in fact, that interest, the pleasurable feeling, was basic to all learning, and that more work was done when the learner was interested. The feeling of aversion, on the other hand, subtracted from the production. "Feeling is the most commonly emphasized criterion of interest."

Dewey considered interest in intimate connection with action, adopting, therefore, a broadly behavioristic view. In his essay "Interest and Effort in Education," he defined interest as the identification of self with action, or with the object which the action concerns, these being both means and end. Accordingly, interest is a unification of the whole self with the activity undertaken.⁷

a) Definitions. - For the purpose of the topic under consideration, the following definition was found most feasible: an interest is "a relatively permanent disposition to respond in a complex manner to some object, experience, or activity with which the individual tends to become temporarily identified."⁸ A workable definition of reading interests was also adopted, namely, "what students read and what they want to

⁷ John Dewey, Interest and Effect, Boston, Houghton, Mifflin, 1913, p. 7, 16, 23.

⁸ Alexander A. Schneider, The Psychology of Adolescence, Milwaukee, Bruce, 1951, p. 228.

read." In other words, reading interest means preference for certain specific books, certain authors, or for certain types of themes in literature.

Other terms related to interest include reactions, habits, patterns, preferences, and taste. Some of these have been used arbitrarily and connote variant meanings; others, like taste and preference, have been reduced to more definite meanings. Taste has been defined as "the integrated sum total of an individual's interests, likings, and choices as manifested consistently at any given period of his life";⁹ while preference "is a readiness to receive one object as against another."¹⁰ It is apparent that a common thread of meaning runs through these subjective, yet acceptable and practical definitions.

Closely knit with the difficulties inherent in the connotations of interest are the various techniques and approaches to the evaluation and measurement of interest. But limitation and consistency with the original purpose of the

⁹ Jean Betzner and R. L. Lyman, "The Development of Reading Interests and Tastes," in The Thirty-Sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I, The Teaching of Reading: A Second Report, Chapter VI, Bloomington, Illinois, Public School Publishing Co., 1937, p. 185.

¹⁰ Jacob W. Getzels, "The Nature of Reading Interests: Psychological Aspects," in Developing Permanent Interest in Reading, compiled and edited by Helen M. Robinson, The Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Reading, held at the University of Chicago, Vol. 18, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 84, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1956, p. 7.

investigation preclude historical and critical evaluation of such a formidable topic. It may not be amiss, however, to point out that some of the attempts that had been made to measure interest were fairly well treated by Fryer in his Measurement of Interests.¹¹ The book is considered a standard reference work, containing complete documented treatment of the subject. It contains a critical and interpretative summary of the studies that have been made from psychological measurements of human interests to 1930.

Periodical literature has adequately supplemented Fryer's work. For example, Dayhaw in his article "The Measurement of Interest," which appeared in the Canadian Journal of Psychology, June, 1948,¹² summarized some of the steps in the investigation of interests, and pointed out how effort has been directed toward greater clarification and development of a more intelligent application of the conception of interest. The author described many interests tests in current use, and offered a list of suggestions for future fields of exploration.

b) Interest factor in reading - Interest in terms of subject preferences has been the focal point of analysis in many

¹¹ Douglas Fryer, The Measurement of Interests, New York, Holt, 1931, 488 p.

¹² Lawrence T. Dayhaw, "The Measurement of Interest," in the Canadian Journal of Psychology, Vol. 2, issue of June 1948, p. 71-80.

studies; the majority of these have been concerned with reading, wherein interest, as in everything else, plays an important role. In fact, it has been generally conceded that to measure the success of any educational endeavor, one needs only to study the character, the method of direction, and importance of the interest which it generates. Too often teachers have failed to recognize this powerful means in fostering better reading habits. And yet, a knowledge of the different patterns of reading interests might have given them a natural approach in their subtle task of guidance.

Of course, there are many factors, other than interest, which command consideration for effective guidance. Interests are the product of social background; they are influenced by experiences at home and at school. Besides the social age and the economic level, the chronological, mental, and reading age, together with the pupil's physical and emotional characteristics must be taken into account. Cultural opportunities, curricular demands, availability of books, and other general attitudes which condition the nature of reading experiences also govern the reader's choices. It is advisable to bear in mind these major determinants of interests when offering counsel and guidance in reading.

Most teachers recognize the fact that every reader possesses a distinct personality, formed by diverse experiences and environmental factors. No one will dispute,

therefore, the assertion that some pupils' interests may be negative in character, and fail to "provide for growth in the right direction." But "taste in reading," according to Ruth Strang, Director of Columbia University's Reading Center, "is not predetermined; it develops in a favorable environment with proper stimulation and guidance."¹³

Strang believed firmly that interests can be caught, taught, and cultivated. "It is a fallacy to think," she deftly remarked at the first annual meeting of the International Reading Association in Chicago, "that because children and adolescents now like certain kinds of books, they should go on liking them. Reading maturity is built not merely by satisfying existing interests, but by developing new interests."¹⁴

Whatever the predominant interests may be, they can serve as the starting point by discerning teachers for re-directing the unwholesome ones and stimulating more desirable ones. Sometimes these interests may be improved by materials that offer similar satisfactions in a more complex manner.

¹³ Ruth Strang and Others, Problems in the Improvement of Reading in High School and College, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1955, p. 307.

¹⁴ Ruth Strang, "Providing Materials Appropriate to Interest and Mature Levels," in Better Readers for Our Times, The Proceedings of the International Reading Association, Vol. I, New York, Scholastic Magazine, 1950, p. 83.

But it is important for the teacher to know that it is necessary in raising the reading levels to take the child "from where he is to where he ought to be."

This view was expressed by Suloway at the Annual Conference on Reading, held at the University of Chicago in 1956.

... The adolescent is not a blank tablet; he comes into our classroom with a set of previously acquired interests. We have the power to enhance these interests, to advance them toward maturity, and possibly the power to eradicate some of them.¹⁵

Accordingly, the teacher must begin with the pupil's present thinking and work toward the attaining of the desired objectives, namely, the development of both interests and tastes, the latter meaning, of course, the quality of material the pupil reads within the field of his interest. She must be mindful of the fact that "interest readiness," like all other phases of development, appears at different periods for each child, and that she cannot produce forced growth. She must "stoop to conquer," and descend almost to the ridiculous in order to modify or eradicate the undesirable standards of their reading tastes. Existing interests will prove useful as motives. Through skillful guidance, these interests can

¹⁵ Irwin J. Suloway, "Classroom Methods for Developing Reading Interests - In Grades Ten Through Fourteen," in Developing Permanent Interest in Reading, Compiled and edited by Helen M. Robinson, The Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Reading, held at the University of Chicago, Vol. 18, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 84, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1956, p. 132.

be enriched and even heightened toward the sublime.

The idea of accepting the student on his own reading level, with his present reading interests, has been recommended by several specialists in reading. Harold Anderson, for example, has advised as follows:

Somehow we must identify the present interests of our students and introduce them to reading matter related to these interests; no matter how limited these first may be, and then through skillful guidance open up newer and wider horizons.¹⁶

Witty of Northwestern University observed that it is a generally accepted fact to regard some interests as transitory, and others unworthy of extension. "Therefore, it is suggested," he further remarked, "that teachers aim to modify old patterns, create new interests, and raise the level of pupil's tastes."¹⁷ The foregoing idea was supported by Helen Robinson. "Interests should expand with age," she said, "and in certain areas, they should be intensified."¹⁸

¹⁶ Harold A. Anderson, "Objectives for Improving Reading Interests - In Grades Ten Through Fourteen," in Developing Permanent Interest in Reading, compiled and edited by Helen M. Robinson, The Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Reading, held at the University of Chicago, Vol. 18, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 84, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1956, p. 39.

¹⁷ Paul Witty, "Balanced Reading Programs," in Chicago Schools Journal, Vol. 30, issue of November-December 1948, p. 88.

¹⁸ Helen M. Robinson, "What Research Says to the Teacher of Reading," in The Reading Teacher, Vol. 18, issue of February 1955, p. 177.

A higher plane of reading interests should be the goal of all teachers, even though it be not great literature. This, of course, requires guidance at every attainment level, because some pupils may be drifting in the current of aimless pastime; others, as Robinson has intimated, "may be willing to read only a single type of book, or read only books about one topic, or only those written by one author."¹⁹ Granting that a liberal attitude toward the pupil's current reading is advisable, Robinson nevertheless has cautioned that "we cannot be content merely to satisfy current interests, but we must be constantly alert to promote growth in this aspect of reading."²⁰

It is the responsibility of the teacher to bridge the gap gradually between the static and narrow reading interests on the part of her pupils and the type of books she would like them to read. Students' interests are often dormant. These, too, need to be challenged. The teacher must provide reading material to arouse these sub-surface interests, so that personal growth of the pupils will match their potentialities. Exposed to the best books for their interest level, their appreciation will develop in line with what is presented to them, that is, from the best books in the subjects that are

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

parallel with their interests, and at their own level of reading achievement, to the more mature books in the stranger fields that will challenge their interests and meet their needs.

c) Interest appeal as criterion. - Another broad area of discussion is the controversial opinion regarding pupils' reading interests as standards of choice in book selection. There are several misconceptions on the matter of using interest as the basic and the most important single guide in building the library collection and the reading program.

Chief among these ideas of the doctrine of interest is the undue weight given to the pupils' transitory and immature interests, acknowledging them as final and absolute norms for book selection and guidance. Followers of this extreme theory believe that the most effective way to meet the pupil's interest and assure his growth is to allow him to choose any book that pleases him. They insist that the pupil must have the freedom to read materials parallel to his independent reading and on a subject of interest to him, because in this way only will the non-reader find reading a pleasurable activity.

Data have indicated that pupils' first choice is generally based on author's style or on appealing and interesting titles of books. Consequently, young people, though they "are not always completely wrong," need definite help and a

sense of direction in extending their interests to areas more profitable and wholesome.

Students' preferences may be used for the cues they give for book selection. They may serve as a point of content by means of which the teacher can lead the pupils into untried fields and arouse a liking for books of greater worth, but "not as the determinant for continued practice."²¹ To rely completely on the changing tastes of teen-agers has been often regarded among conservative educators to be both absurd and unsound.

It is, of course, important that the pupils enjoy what they read. The interest value in the book induces the student to finish reading the book, to create a desire to read some more like it, and even to recommend it to others. But it is equally important that the pupil read books that are worthwhile.

Unfortunately, there has been often a conflict between the teachers' stamp of approval and the criteria which the average high-school students use in choosing books for leisure reading. Students' definition of "worthwhile" is not always congruous with their teachers' connotation. On this point, however, Josette Frank, in her informative and readable book, Your Child's Reading Today, has argued as follows:

²¹ Betzner and Lyman, Op. Cit., p. 187.

This does not mean surrendering our hard-won standards of judgment and discrimination. Whether or not we are ourselves great readers, our standards of appreciation have been the product of long experience, and it is this we would like to pass along to the boys and girls. Taste and interest are not inherited, but they are contagious.²²

Witty and Kopel gave a similar advice to the teacher who is concerned about directing the tastes of her pupils.

... Interests are largely acquired, but their cultivation is the function of education. It is clear, therefore, that consideration of and respect for children's interests need not lead the teacher to abrogate her primary responsibility for influencing and guiding children's growth.²³

Should it be, then, understood that attempting to avoid the dangers of granting excessive latitude and freedom to the pupils in their selection of books for leisure reading, the teacher should accept the alternative attitude? Such has been the view of those teachers who believe that to raise the reading level of taste, the pupils must be challenged with cultural material that is both difficult and inspiring. They disregard pupils' present experiences, their needs, interests, likes and dislikes, and act on the assumption that too much reliance on interest may lead to aimless and random reading.

²² Josette Frank, Your Child's Reading Today, Garden City, Doubleday, 1954, p. 22.

²³ Paul Witty and David Kopel, "Interest as a Factor in Reading," in their Reading and the Educative Process, Chapter II, Boston, Ginn, 1939, p. 58.

They fail to realize that nothing is more fatal for a teacher of reading to do than to force the students in her charge to read only those books which she likes or those she thinks should appeal to them. "Reading interests, attitudes, and abilities may be shared; they cannot be transmitted from teacher to pupils."²⁴

It is true that for the majority of the boys and girls, high school is the terminal of formal education. Some teachers have insisted, therefore, that pupils read the "essential" books, approved by their judgment alone, merely because they are good literature. Anderson summed up very well his opinion on that reading approach.

Some educators would cater to the interests of pupils, and others would assert that students should read certain books which contain the great thinking of all ages irrespective of present interests. From the point of view of the latter, the question is not whether the student is interested in those particular books. He ought to read them. Unless he reads them, he is uneducated.²⁵

He upheld and reiterated the same views at the Annual Conference

²⁴ E. T. McSwain, "Problems of Interpretation When Evaluating Critically What is Read," in Promoting Growth Toward Maturity in Interpreting What is Read, compiled and edited by William S. Gray, The Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Reading, held at the University of Chicago, Vol. 13, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 74, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1951, p. 143.

²⁵ Harold A. Anderson, "Reading Interests and Tastes," in Reading in General Education, William S. Gray, Chairman, Chapter VII, Washington, American Council on Education, 1940, p. 263.

on Reading, held at the University of Chicago in 1956.

One of the most vital factors in developing the habit of good reading is to make certain that the act of reading is a meaningful and rewarding experience. Much reading in high school and college is done under compulsion. Altogether too often the literature we recommend for young people consists of "profound and difficult classics written by men of uncommon powers." If students are prematurely introduced to these books or required to read beyond their level of maturity or largely outside their range of interests, their reading is likely to end with their graduation.²⁶

The negative reaction of students toward reading of books which they cannot comprehend confirms the fact that little or no advantage is gained by compulsion. Comprehension is necessary for maximum enjoyment of reading. Reading material can be difficult to present challenge, but it should be easy enough for the pupil to grasp the author's meaning, and interesting enough to give the student pleasure and satisfaction from the reading activity.

Another class of teachers, who hold an extreme view regarding the question of selection or recommendation of books, are those who make no restriction, and recommend indiscriminately to any pupil in their classes titles of books, even those which contribute little or nothing to the interpretation of life. They are the ones who begin with books rather than with pupils' interests, unmindful of the truism that "it is of

²⁶ Harold A. Anderson, "Objectives for Improving Reading Interests," Op. Cit., p. 40.

doubtful advantage to teach a boy to read and not to teach him WHAT to read."²⁷

Most of the high-school students are unaware of the joys of reading. There are few that are "book-minded," and probably few that know how to extend their interests, but majority need to be directed, as one may infer from Chute's general assumption:

My guess is that ten per cent of the high-school enrollment is really unfitted for the act of reading for pleasure. They are born non-readers, just as there are perhaps ten per cent who are born readers. It is the huge area between, the eight per cent who can be really happy in the world of books if they are introduced to it in the right way, that constitute the great challenge to the ... teacher.²⁸

No doubt, the teacher must be equipped with the information as to the type of books and methods best suited to promote the general expansion of the pupils' reading areas. As always, the old axiom, "One cannot give what he does not possess," holds true also in the present discussion. Guiding youth to wide reading requires extraordinary skill and a strong conviction of its educational value.

Interest alone, however, cannot be the sole criterion for book selection. There are other standards that must be

²⁷ Felix M. Kirsch, "There's Something About a Book," in The Catholic School Journal, Vol. 40, issue of March 1940, p. 68.

²⁸ Marchette Chute, "Lifetime Reading Habits," in Wilson Library Bulletin, Vol. 30, issue of April 1956, p. 620.

observed. White suggested the following major considerations for determining the nature and variety of the materials in the secondary schools: 1) the general objectives of the school, 2) the characteristics of secondary-school pupils, and 3) method of instruction.²⁹ It is, of course, obvious that individual differences must be recognized, and a diversified collection of books provided, so that it will command the interests and meet the needs of the slow, the average, and the mature readers.

The whole educational scheme of the Catholic school, including the acquisition of books, has been governed by the unchanging criteria and codes of traditional values, embodied in the philosophy of the school. The philosophy of the school is invariably the philosophy of the school library. A body of these core values has been stated in the encyclical on "The Christian Education of Youth," and in the objectives formulated by the National Catholic Educational Association, Secondary School Committee, and by the Commission on American Citizenship, under the auspices of the Catholic University of America.

²⁹ Robert White, "Nature and Variety of Reading Materials Needed in the High Schools and Junior Colleges," in The Appraisal of Current Practices in Reading, edited by William S. Gray, The Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Reading, held at the University of Chicago, Vol. 7, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 61, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1945, p. 77.

In connection with the different reading approaches and selection of reading materials, the Catholic schools follow the middle course, harmonizing the newer theories, which emphasize the interest concerns, with the traditional patterns and school objectives. According to the established practice, group preferences serve as a partial guide in the selection of reading materials for the library collection.

Many librarians do give the students direct access to what they want to read, but, at the same time, they try to put within their reach books that have personal significance for them. Through such a non-directive way, the school endeavors to meet its obligation to guide youth to books which combine interest and simultaneously satisfy the criterion of worth.

However, an investigation of the reading interests of pupils may yield more authentic facts than those reported through personal observation. Above all, it may "reflect the extent to which the teacher has accepted responsibility for directing pupil growth."³⁰ Therefore, an effort was made to analyze, in the light of the current views and assumptions, the data of the present study and to appraise marked deviations from accepted standards.

³⁰ Witty, "Balanced Reading Programs," Op. Cit., p. 88.

CHAPTER III

NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE GIRLS' READING IN THE LIGHT OF THE RECENT TRENDS

Perhaps, as some studies indicate, there are no marked differences between the reading tastes and attitudes of the present-day girls of high-school age and those of ten or twenty years ago. In fact, certain opinions, formulated three decades ago, have been well established. Such, for example, has been the recurrent criticism that secondary-school pupils read very little in their leisure time, and what they do read seems to be on a rather low level and of poor quality. Practically all studies on reading interests show that there is a tendency for the amount of reading to decrease during the high-school period, and the books most commonly read by teen-agers are those of fiction.

Since 1940, however, important observations have been associated with the unique problems, external events, and social changes, created by the new media of communication, which have been rapidly altering America's reading habits and leisure-time activities. The dominance of such attractions as radio, motion pictures, television, and picture magazines have underlined the importance of cultural and recreational influences in the life of the Americans in general and the American youth in particular.

1. Modern Mass-Culture as Related to Reading.

Basically, today's youth is not different from the young people in the past generations, but never before have the conflicting values, interests, and distractions been so overpowering in enticing young people from reading and from intellectual pursuits. Today, "we live splendidly and dangerously in this era of automation," said Eleanor Hempel at the Reading Conference, held at Claremont College in 1956.¹ "Books and reading and libraries seem to have little glamor," observed Watts as he reviewed the different factors which have influenced reading;² while Nila Banton Smith of New York University, commenting on the influence of the mass communication agencies, aptly remarked: "The demand at the moment is for a streamlined type of reading ability, geared to the tempo of modern life."³

In a similar vein, Preston discussed the changes in reading habits that have come about as a result of the newer media of communication, and asserted that "a major task of

¹ Eleanor Hempel, "TV Reading," in The Twenty-first Yearbook, Claremont College Reading Conference, Claremont College, Claremont, California, 1956, p. 53.

² D. R. Watts, "What's Happening to Reading?" in The English Journal, Vol. 43, issue of March 1954, p. 129.

³ Nila Banton Smith, "Reading in 1953," in Education, Vol. 73, issue of May 1953, p. 533.

high school and college teachers is to help young people develop reading habits which are appropriate to the age in which they live."⁴

There is no doubt that young people of the present generation must face problems that are more complex and more mature than their peers formerly had encountered. True, the adolescent boys and girls are, in a sense, reaching adulthood earlier than the youth of the first part of this century. But life, presented in modern media, has increased emotional and psychological strains, and made youth aware of the current events in a way never before realized. The state of uncertainty, confusion, and conflict, which prevails in the world, tends to make the adolescent's personal adjustment more complicated. In addition, many more homes today are failing to provide the proper climate for happy living due to the high rate of divorce and family disruptions.

An overall picture of the modern teen-ager's dilemma has been well drawn by Goebel:

Teen-agers have been affected tremendously by the swift tempo of today's mode of living. Radio, television, movies have made them aware of the world in

⁴ Ralph C. Preston, "The Changed Role of Reading," in Reading in an Age of Mass Communication, Report of the Committee on Reading at the Secondary School and College Levels, edited by William S. Gray, National Council of Teachers of English, Monograph No. 17, New York, Appleton-Century-Croft, 1949, p. 1.

which they live; of the problems which they as adults must face ... At the same time the teenager leads a very active life. He has a full study schedule, extra-curricular activities, often an after-school job. Childhood has been left behind, but there is so much to be learned so quickly if he is to adjust to the world of the adult. Hence, he needs patterns and often finds them in his reading; it behooves us to know his reading interests ...⁵

Some evidence of the widespread span and rapid expansion of the new media of communication can be deduced from the report submitted by Arthur Hull Hayes, President of the CBS Radio, at the fifty-fourth annual meeting of the National Catholic Educational Association, held in Milwaukee in 1957.

To substantiate his facts, Hayes quoted several notable figures. Approximately, ninety-eight per cent of all homes in America are radio-equipped. In fact, there are more homes with a radio than with electric lights or electric refrigerators. And despite television's relatively recent appearance, seventy-nine per cent of all homes in this country own a television.⁶ More local investigation was made by Matthew Stepien. In his study of ten parochial schools in the

⁵ E. R. Goebel, "Teen-age Reading," in Library Journal, Vol. 77, issue of June 1, 1952, p. 942.

⁶ Arthur H. Hayes, "Radio and Education," in Proceedings and Addresses of the National Catholic Educational Association, Vol. 54, Washington, National Catholic Educational Association, 1957, p. 60.

Chicago area, Stepien found that eight out of ten pupils had TV sets at home.⁷

In view of this situation, it would seem naive to speculate on the assumption that reading habits of children and young people remained unchanged. As a result, there has been much discussion on the changed role and the new trends in reading interests; the findings, however, are only tentative and inconclusive because television is still in its transitional stage. A few generalizations have been offered toward which evidence points out the definite change in students' lives

... by a medium which claims almost as much time weekly as they spend in school. In general, the advent of television has been accompanied by a decline in movie-going, less time spent away from home, less time for hobbies, reading, homework ...⁸

The general opinion regarding the effect of television on reading is still a debatable question, due to conflicting results obtained in research studies. Josette Frank, for example, disputed the popular notion that television is "a threat to reading or to cultural interests," though she admitted "that it has made a deep cut into the teen-agers' time."⁹

⁷ Matthew S. Stepien, "The Role of Radio and Television in the Educative Process", unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Education, Chicago, De Paul University, 1954, p. 43.

⁸ B. M. Bradway, "High School Students' TV Habits," in Education Digest, Vol. 17, issue of October 1951, p. 11.

⁹ Frank, Op. Cit., p. 22.

Morgan, expressing a somewhat balanced judgment stated that "Reading has been influenced by television in that fewer books are read; but a few are read because the TV version is so interesting."¹⁰ Arbuthnot argued that "if television does not promote more reading, it can certainly enrich the background for reading in many fields."¹¹ Most observers concluded that "television and reading are compatible."

"Reading is a close and intimate communication." It can, if pupils are well motivated, provide competition for television. To insure its survival, however, the teacher must know how to make reading as interesting as its rival medium - the television. Most of the pupils today are strongly conditioned to the environmental factors of radio-listening, television-viewing, and movie attendance. Having identified these trends, the teacher must equip herself with the essential knowledge of the interests, background, and reading level of each student, and introduce each one tactfully to a plentiful supply of good reading material.

While it cannot be said with any degree of finality that television is responsible for curtailing young people's

¹⁰ Dell Morgan, "Television Versus Reading," in Wilson Library Bulletin, Vol. 25, issue of December 1951, p. 327.

¹¹ M. H. Arbuthnot, Children and Books, Chicago, Scott, Foresman, 1957, p. 589.

leisure reading, there is no doubt that students find radio-listening and television-viewing more pleasurable than reading. In consequence, reading is considered today as being more of an optional matter than it was three decades ago.

It is commonly assumed that the number of books read voluntarily may serve as a presumptive evidence for judging whether or not interest in recreational reading has been stimulated or developed. In the present study, however, the number of books read by the students does not reveal whether the books were read for the sheer joy of reading, since the girls reported the amount of reading in general. Such reading, ordinarily done in connection with school work, includes required reading, supplementary, as well as recreational reading material. These points, however, do not loom so large in the composite picture of the girls' reading activities.

The survey called for how many books, excluding textbooks, were read by the students during the scholastic year, covering the months from September until the first week of May. The answers were tabulated both by grade and ability levels.

It was found that the seniors held the first place in number of books read, with an average of 15.1; the freshmen followed with an average of 14.5, the sophomores, with 11.6, and the juniors, with 9.7. The average per capita for the entire group of 460 was 12.9 books. Ten per cent of the girls, whose chief leisure activity was television, read on the

average of one book a month. About 32 per cent of the students read less than one book a month.

Though comparatively small in number, there were some omniverous readers, who preferred reading to the glamor created by television. Forty-three girls (9.3%) read over thirty books during the eight-month school period. Of this number, twenty were in the high group, seventeen, in the average, and six, in the low group. Three students reported having read over 80 books; four, as many as 75 books; the record of three girls ranged from 60 to 69; seven, read 50; ten, read 40, and sixteen girls read between 20 and 46.

Apparently, those who like to read will continue to read, despite the attraction of TV. Others, as judged by the reading record of the TV fans mentioned above, read but to a lesser degree because of the television. Equally apparent was the fact that, if the books are measured to the pupils' interests, even the slow ones will read extensively.

However, Table IV shows that quantity is definitely associated with intelligence - a fact well established by previous studies. For instance, Cundiff provided evidence that "Intelligence affects the number of books read to a greater extent than does the socio-economic status of children."¹²

¹² R. E. Cundiff, "Children's Reading Interests," in Peabody Journal of Education, Vol. 25, issue of May 1948, p. 259.

Table IV.

Girls' Reading Activities According to Ability Levels

Variable	High (131 girls)	Average (185 girls)	Low (144 girls)
<u>Average</u>			
Number of books read per pupil	16.4	12.5	10.2
Hours spent in reading per week	5.6	4.8	3.7
<u>Girls reporting</u>			
"No books read"	7.0	9.0	14.0
Having reading as chief hobby	44.0 (9.5%)	70.0 (15.2%)	24.0 (5.2%)

The high group in the current study had an average of 16.4 books for the eight-month period; the average group had 12.5 books, and the low, 10.2 books. The average number of books read per month by the groups taken in order of their I. Q. rating was two, one and one-half, and one.

It would be reasonable to expect that students with higher I.Q's would spend more time in reading, since they had read more books than the average and poor readers. As shown in Table IV, the amount of time spent weekly by the superior group (28.4%) was approximately six hours. The average group (40.2%) devoted about five hours each week in the same pursuit. The low group (31.3%) allotted over four hours each week to "outside" reading. The average for the entire group of 460 students was four hours and thirty minutes each week. Recent related studies have shown comparable findings.

According to Barbe, who found similar results with respect to the number of hours devoted to reading by the gifted students, six hours weekly in reading is an amount of time which might be expected from "an average group."¹³ Only 9.5 per cent of the girls in the high ability group chose reading as their chief leisure activity (Table IV). The prevailing trend observed in this investigation showed the tendency to

¹³ Walter Barbe, "A Study of the Reading of Gifted High School Students," in Educational Administration and Supervision, Vol. 38, issue of March 1952, p. 151.

gravitate toward the general opinion that there is a relatively small amount of reading done by the high-school pupils throughout the four years.

In rationalizing for the limited amount of outside reading done by the gifted students, one may cite several possible reasons. Some bright pupils center all attention on their school assignments, or on extra-curricular activities, or after-school jobs. Equally possible is the fact that books for the high ability group are not always available, although the majority of the girls in the present study (74%) were satisfied with their school library collection for leisure reading. Evidently, their school libraries must have been fairly well equipped, since only 26 per cent have taken books from the public libraries.

Again, some students may have been handicapped by home environment. In this survey, 53 per cent of the pupils recorded "No" to the question whether they have a special place to read at home, and almost half of the number (45%) found no parental encouragement to cultivate the habit of good reading. Whether these factors could have been responsible for the students' failure to utilize more time for leisure reading is a question for investigation, for it is difficult to say, with any degree of certainty, how students would react even under the most favorable conditions, unless the problem had been identified in individualized case studies.

With regard to the superior students, Strang expressed the opinion that "a gifted child may be a retarded reader; he may be reading below his potentialities."¹⁴ She emphasized the fact that there is a need for early identification of the bright pupils so the teacher could provide them with challenging materials, covering a wide range of interests.¹⁵

Witty, who has studied the gifted children over three decades, has pointed out, time and again, in his numerous articles and reports of surveys, that the bright child needs guidance in reading as well as he needs it in any problem, personal, educational, or vocational. "Educators ... must divest themselves of the belief," he said, "that gifted students can get along by themselves ..."¹⁶

Similarly, Greevey deplored the great lack of attention and suitable provisions for individual differences, especially in the case of superior children.¹⁷ No student, including the above-average, should neglect his potential abilities.

¹⁴ Ruth Strang, "Gifted Children Need Help in Reading, Too," in The Reading Teacher, Vol. 6, Winter, No. 3, 1953, p. 23.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁶ Paul Witty, "Education for the Talented and for Leadership," in Teachers College Record, Vol. 57, issue of February 1956, p. 300.

¹⁷ W. H. Greevey, "Gifted Children Need Motivation," in Religious Education, Vol. 52, issue of September-October 1957, p. 365-370.

No one will dispute the question that the teacher must think and teach in terms of the individual rather than the mass. Nor can any one deny the fact that our democratic and Catholic educational system is geared to meet the needs of the many rather than the few. Many Catholic teachers, therefore, falling in line with the prevailing trends, have been wanting with respect to guidance and special reading material for the gifted.

Several discrepancies regarding the time and the amount of reading done by the girls have been detected. As indicated in the "No books read" column in Table IV, thirty girls failed to give a definite answer to the question regarding the number of books they had read. Ten girls answered simply "Yes." Two wrote they cannot recall how many books they had read; one wrote "Mostly condensed." Thirteen left the question unanswered, but the titles of books listed by those girls bore evidence to the fact that they did read, and some of the reading material was of superior quality. Two of this number specified that reading was their chief out-of-school hobby. One, however, frankly admitted that she read nothing that was not required. Four mentioned explicitly they had read "None." Lack of time was the reason given by twelve girls.

There was also some inconsistency as to the number of hours devoted to reading. Several students listed the number

of books they had read, but failed to record any time devoted to reading. Some, again, left the question as to the amount of reading unanswered, but indicated the time they had spent in reading. Quantitative findings, therefore, were not thoroughly convincing, except as they revealed only broad average trends, characteristic of high-school groups.

2. Challenging Students' Reading.

Almost every school has pupils who seem allergic to reading. Fortunately, majority of the students in this study seemed to have enjoyed reading, even though the quantity may have not been an index of their actual interest in reading. Only twenty-five pupils (5.4%) expressed aversion to reading.

To secure even a rough estimate of the intensity of the girls' reading interests, a simple but convenient device was used, that is, the interest level was judged by appraising each pupil's preference to read rather than to indulge in any other form of entertainment or amusement. Five questions, though worded differently, were concerned with this objective, that is, to elicit from the girls a genuine and truthful answer regarding the priority of reading in their active life.

Table V gives added proof that the high-school pupils, who consider reading as the most pleasurable recreational activity, are a minority. No doubt, case studies, interviews, and scales would have yielded more accurate answers, but the

Table V.
Intensity of Interest Measured in Terms
of Other Preferred Diversions

Attitude Questions	Per cent		
	Yes	No	No answer
Is reading your chief leisure activity?	30.1	69.0	0.9
Do you prefer books as presents?	30.0	68.0	2.0
Do you prefer to read rather than to enjoy TV or radio?	37.2	59.2	3.7
Do you find reading more pleasurable than any other pastime?	38.9	60.2	0.9
Have you given up voluntarily any other fun just to read books?	46.5	52.2	1.3

data in Table V give, at least, a fairly comprehensive picture of the Catholic high-school girls' general attitude toward reading, and of the limited extent reading is preferred when compared with other multiple diversions. Another noteworthy point evidenced by the results shown in Table V is the consistency in the girls' responses to the five attitude questions.

In the light of these facts, it may not be stretching the point too far to infer that the absence of a strong and persistent motivation may be one of the principal reasons for the downward trend in the reading habits of the adolescents. Reading must be motivated, since permanent reading habits, as some investigators have pointed out, are formed during the high-school years.

Obviously, in some schools little has been done to stimulate wide reading. Yet, it is only to the extent that the teacher motivates the pupil's reading so as to make the reading activity a pleasurable experience that she will overcome the pupil's indifference to reading and make him "want to read."

According to Schneider, "motivation is the most neglected aspect in the whole field of education." Strickler of University of Notre Dame observed that "the attitude of the high-school student toward reading is extremely negative." He urged that the secondary-school teachers concentrate their

efforts to improve reading habits of the boys and girls through motivation, so that the students will "want to read."¹⁸

Grambs in her Development of Lifetime Reading Habits called the period of adolescence "a crucial time for making or breaking book readers,"¹⁹ while Herr observed that "we lose most of our readers when they reach teen-age."²⁰

a) Suggested devices. - There are, of course, old as well as new ways and means, which the teacher can use to promote and encourage further reading along the lines of interest. True, no tailor-made formula have as yet been devised, but periodical literature abounds in suggestions and methods which resourceful teachers and librarians have developed to stimulate wide reading. Not all give the results of scientifically controlled observations, but they are helpful in cultivating desirable reading habits.

A composite account of procedures and devices that proved effective in grades seven to twelve was described by

¹⁸ Robert W. Strickler, "Reading Instruction Throughout the High School Curriculum," in Education, Vol. 78, issue of September 1957, p. 25.

¹⁹ Jean D. Grambs, The Development of Lifetime Reading Habits, A Report of a Conference Called by the Committee on Reading Development in New York, New York, Bowker, 1954, p. 1.

²⁰ Dan Herr, "The Lost Art of Reading," in The Catholic School Journal, Vol. 53, issue of February 1953, p. 34.

Romano in his article "Stimulating Pupils' Reading Interests."²¹

In "Can We Make Non-Readers Like to Read?" Tabackman described her ingenuity in helping a group of students in which 83 per cent were boys whose I.Q's ranged from 89 to 107 to fulfill the assignment of reading four books in four different areas of reading before the end of the last marking period. She acknowledged the fact that she had neither charts nor statistics by means of which she could show the results of her efforts, but the objective of defeating indifference to reading was attained.²²

Eric Johnson discussed several practical devices he used at his school to stimulate reading and upgrade the quantity and quality of students' individual reading.²³

Monologues, dramatizations, skits, mock radio and television programs were profitably used by Jensen. Group discussion on themes or topics based on biographies or novels, such as, "The Human Side of Great People as Revealed in Modern Biography," or "How People Overcome Seemingly Hopeless

²¹ Michael J. Romano, "Stimulating Pupils' Reading Interests," in High Points, Vol. 35, issue of October 1953, p. 21-24.

²² Sadie P. Tabackman, "Can We Make Non-Readers Like to Read?" in The English Journal, Vol. 37, issue of December 1948, p. 517-24.

²³ Eric W. Johnson, "Stimulating Reading in the Junior High School," in The English Journal, Vol. 48, issue of February 1959, p. 74-77, 100.

Situations," proved a stimulus to interest in reading.²⁴

b) Paperbacks. - Another device for increasing the quantity and raising the quality of reading of modern youth is the availability of inexpensive books in paper-bound editions. Americans have a rather irrational notion, said Suloway of Chicago Teachers College, "that good reading is most likely to be found only between hard covers ... We would do well to make wider use of paper books in classroom."²⁵

At the thirty-fourth annual meeting of the Catholic Library Association, Father Gardiner injected into the discussion his views regarding paper books. "There are a lot of crummy, cheesy, paperbacks on the market," remarked Father Gardiner, "but we do have a tremendous cultural tool at our disposal with the good paperbacks."

In a rather comprehensive article, which appeared in April, 1958 issue of the Catholic Library World, Brother Robert reported the procedure used in organizing a reading program having for its objective the cultivation of the reading habit by means of pocket-size books. He described the process of ordering, distribution, repair, time allotment,

²⁴ L. S. Jensen, "Fostering Interest in Reading," in The English Journal, Vol. 42, issue of October 1953, p. 367-370.

²⁵ Suloway, Op. Cit., p. 132.

advantages and disadvantages of using paperback reprints. The regular time schedule for reading gave the students the opportunity to read 12 books, though some read as many as 150 during that academic year.²⁶

Hunt of the University of North Carolina reported that "teen-agers are buying approximately three million paperbacks annually through Teen Age Club."²⁷ Unfortunately, the output has not always been wholesome and suitable for teenage mentality, despite the assumption based on the returns of the publishing market that there is a genuine taste for non-fiction and fiction of the highest order.

To counteract the unwholesome effect of some of the paperbacks, the Catholic pocket books were published. A list of the Catholic titles, compiled by Eugene P. Willging, was published in the February, 1958 issue of the Catholic Library World.

There is no doubt that paperbacks have been one of the major factors in influencing reading. Paper cover reprints

²⁶ Brother Robert, "A Program of Wide Reading," in The Catholic Library World, Vol. 29, issue of April 1958, p. 361-372, 416.

²⁷ J. T. Hunt, "Classroom Methods for Developing Reading Interests - In Grades Seven Through Nine," in Developing Permanent Interest in Reading, compiled and edited by Helen H. Robinson, The Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Reading, held at the University of Chicago, Vol. 18, University of Chicago Press, 1956, p. 129.

of high-school caliber have a place in the Catholic school-room, and teachers should encourage their pupils to buy and read them, provided, of course, that they are "sound in content and in full harmony with Catholic morality."

c) Training for leisure. - Though the value of reading in the Catholic high school has been theoretically emphasized, the practical side of its enjoyment has been strangely neglected. Yet, "free" or "pleasure" reading is a necessary background for cultivating wholesome enjoyment of leisure time.

Among the girls in the current study, leisure activities varied from sleeping and baby-sitting to dating and writing poetry. Only thirty per cent chose reading as their chief hobby and as a desirable outlet for leisure time.

Partial explanation for this attitude may be found in the pupils' daily programs which have been so overcrowded with subjects and activities that little time has been left to read for pleasure. For the majority of the Catholic girls, high school terminates formal education. Since those girls do not plan to go to college, the teacher's contribution with respect to leisure reading, as a dynamic force in enriching their lives, assumes an added significance. Eventually, reading will be pursued by the youth as they will have reached adulthood.

Besides, the worthy use of leisure has always been accepted as one of the goals of education. It is, therefore, distinctly a part of the educative process to develop effective

reading habits and to engender permanent reading interests as a leisure activity. The high-school period is an impressionable and formative period. The youth may develop reading habits and interests that are destined to be lifelong.

In addition, the numerous changes in the social patterns, the shortened work day, the various mechanical devices, gadgets, and technological improvements have increased the leisure of adults as well as of the young people. "Unless we train our students in the use of the leisure made so abundant by the machine," warned Maras, "we are not training them for the conditions of the machine world."²⁸

Since the tempo of modern life demands opportunities for relaxation, "stirring, relaxing hobbies" ought to be cultivated. Reading for pleasure and recreation is, therefore, a wholesome antidote for present-day emotional strains, for personal adjustment, as well as for sheer enjoyment.

It follows, then, that the school must recognize the importance of training for leisure-time reading. If the students are to acquire good reading habits that will carry over to their after-school life, the school must provide adequate time, a stimulating environment, and a quiet classroom conducive to leisurely reading. The best training for leisure

²⁸ E. B. Maras, "Plea for Silent Reading Period," in The Catholic Educator, Vol. 27, issue of November 1956, p. 171.

lies in the good use of a well-supervised and properly guided reading period in school.

d) The reading period. - One of the main obstacles to the fostering of the reading habits in the Catholic high schools has been the apparent lack of opportunities within the school for free reading periods. Arousing interest in reading serves little purpose unless the school provides regular time and opportunity for the enjoyment of reading during the school week.

Ordinarily, the home is expected to provide time and guidance in leisure reading of youth. But many pupils come from homes where cultural facilities are lacking. Many pupils have neither time nor suitable place to read at home.

According to the tabulation of responses, 53 per cent of the pupils in this investigation admitted they had no special place to read at home, while 43.8 per cent held part-time jobs after school. One worked twenty-one hours a week,

Despite these unfavorable environmental factors, 65 per cent of the girls reported having read voluntarily more books at home than at school. Almost half of the group (48.3%) stated that they read more books during the school year than during the summer vacation.

The time element with regard to "movie" attendance was also considered. The data showed that 42.5 per cent of

the girls attended the movies three or four times a month; 32 per cent of the pupils patronized the movies once or twice a month; 24.3 per cent of the group said they had not attended the moving pictures throughout the school year, but three girls went to the movies more than five times a month.

Although the pressure of social activities and different forms of entertainment curtails the students' time for personal reading, there was no noticeable difference between the amount of reading done by those who attended the movies once a week and those who said they had not attended the moving pictures during the past school year. Apparently, neither the attendance at movies nor the presence of television at home yields any significant difference on the amount of reading done by the girls. Other conditions, responsible for the general decrease in reading among high-school pupils, must be studied.

Aside from the general observation that local needs must be taken into consideration when analyzing the quantity and quality of the students' reading, the data showed that pupils do not know how to budget their time to devote either to recreational or serious reading. Within the confines of the school, regular periods should be set aside for personal reading. The reading period offers the best opportunity to compensate for the lack of provision for individual differences. Moreover, definite scheduled time for free but guided

reading seems to be the only solution to the problem of motivating interests and of forming good reading habits.

The idea that "there should be frequent days in class on which the entire period is turned over to reading" was recommended by Dr. Carlsen of the University of Texas.²⁹

Such has been also the expressed conviction of Father Dennis Flynn. In order to incorporate into the regular school program the reading period, Father Flynn said it was necessary to eliminate the study period from the daily class schedule. Father Flynn summed up the findings of his experiment with a confident statement: "High school students will read if given half a chance to do so."³⁰

Several approaches can be used to further personal reading during the class period. There is no single best method which would warrant satisfactory results. The prerequisites for every good procedure are the same: 1) the reading period must be intelligently, carefully, and systematically planned, 2) it must be well guided and supervised, and 3) it must be well motivated to inspire effort. It is a time of activity for both the teacher and the pupil.

²⁹ G. Robert Carlsen, "The Magic of Bringing Young Adults to Books," in Wilson Library Bulletin, Vol. 33, issue of October 1953, p. 137.

³⁰ Dennis J. Flynn, "Fostering the Habit of Reading," in The Catholic School Journal, Vol. 54, issue of February 1954, p. 36.

Free reading period may be devoted to curricular, critical, or developmental reading. Most frequently, however, it is adapted for the use of individualized extensive recreational reading, more appropriately called "pleasure reading." This "extensive reading," said Anderson, "should be purposeful not superficial."³¹

There are some teachers who oppose a class reading period, acting on the assumption that to allow leisurely reading on class time is not a very efficient method of utilizing the precious hours of the school day. Equally true is Guinzburg's contention that "in far too many educational institutions there is not enough distinction made between teaching subjects that call for strict discipline and teaching people how to read for pleasure."³²

Some teachers have failed to convince the students that reading is a pleasurable activity. Of course, guidance with respect to recreational reading must combine quality with pleasure. Reading can be fun, even if the material is informational rather than recreational. True, different types of reading have their own objectives, but profit and pleasure in reading are compatible.

³¹ Anderson, "Reading Interests and Tastes," Op. Cit.

³² H. K. Guinzburg, "Educate Students so They Want to Read," in Wilson Library Bulletin, Vol. 31, issue of February 1957, p. 450.

e) Book reports. - Another factor which tends to stifle rather than to stimulate the development of the reading habit is the teacher's demand for long formal book reports. Grambs expressed the belief that books read by the pupils "for the teacher's record" are the most devastating devices in killing interest in reading.³³

There are some teachers who limit the actual testing of pupils' reading to definite brief statements in which the pupil is asked to express his opinion, or what he particularly would recommend about the book, and illustrate by a quotation or an example the central ideal in a given book. But there are also teachers who demand the traditional reports because they believe that no discussion will give the necessary evidence that the student has actually read the book.

After all, it is not the amount but the desirable effects that should be the center of focus in reading guidance. In this connection, it will not be amiss to quote the words of caution, given by Betzner and Lyman, to teachers who are reluctant to dispense with the old requirement of book reports for credit, and "load their pupils with written reports on reading."

Those who guide children's reading experiences must realize that proof of developing interests and tastes does not lie in any external evidence that

³³ Grambs, Op. Cit., p. 6.

the reading has been done. Growth in appreciation cannot be numerically recorded. The evidence of developing interests and tastes is inherent in the satisfactions arising within the individual when he finds in books that which recalls, refines, reveals, or reaffirms ideas or feelings that seem to him to be valuable.³⁴

Dora Smith observed that "we are moving rapidly away from the time when individual reading was determined by so-called outside reading requirements, measured by book reports."³⁵

The prejudice against a book report is deeply ingrained among students. It evokes an almost unanimous complaint that a detailed report, either oral or written, takes the joy out of reading.

To make reading more attractive, teachers will be wise to use a less formal technique of testing than the written book report. For example, a discussion of a personal or general nature about the books read will give the students the recreational outlet to share with others emotional reactions and conclusions. The social situation, created by discussion, is a valuable influence in promoting social adjustment and in bringing about more desirable attitude toward reading.

³⁴ Betzner and Lyman, Op. Cit., p. 205.

³⁵ Dora V. Smith, "Nature of the Reading Program to Meet Personal and Social Needs," in Promoting Personal and Social Development Through Reading, compiled and edited by William S. Gray, The Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Reading, held at the University of Chicago, Vol. 9, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 64, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1947, p. 15.

3. What and Why Do Girls Read.

From the data described in the foregoing pages, the inference may be drawn that the Catholic high-school girls do read, but not so extensively as the teachers would want them to read. However, the aim of guidance work in reading must be concerned not only with how many books the girls read, but, above all, with WHAT they read.

Although specific titles of books read by the Catholic high-school girls are not particularly important, since most of them will soon be outdated and replaced by new ones on the same themes, nevertheless, an attempt was made to seek answers to such questions as: "What is the title of the book you liked best?" and "The title of the book you did not like?" and give reason for each answer. After all, dislikes as well as preferences are important in determining the tastes and interests common to pupils of particular grades. Through the tabulation of the girls' responses, it was hoped to obtain an index to the different patterns of appeal, existing in the four high-school grades, and thus to secure the basis for comparison with the ranking of fictitious titles, discussed in the subsequent chapter.

Since each pupil "brings to the printed page" a set of different attitudes, predispositions, opinions, backgrounds, abilities, physical, emotional, and intellectual traits, the

reading of any book will naturally result in a different experience for each reader.

Ruth Strang obtained evidence in her case studies of 112 individuals that "what a reader gets out of a passage depends, in a large measure, on what he brings to the passage."³⁶ The same idea was expressed by Rachel De Angelo: "Any book appraisal is an individual matter, for no book is the same to two people. Each person brings something different to it; each takes something different away."³⁷ It is obvious, then, that the teacher cannot expect the same reaction to a given book from all the pupils.

It was not surprising, therefore, to find that certain books were favorite with some girls, and disliked intensely by others. Even those with the same intelligence level and in the same grade level varied in their reaction. The following sample comments on the title *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens, selected at random, made this evident:

Favorable - "It's realistic," "Characters are alive,"
"It's warmly human."

Unfavorable - "Too long and boring," "Hard to understand,"
"Too dry," "Too many characters."

³⁶ Ruth Strang, Exploration in Reading Patterns, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1942, p. 125.

³⁷ Rachel W. De Angelo, "High School Age," in Library Journal, Vol. 76, issue of October 15, 1951, p. 1648.

To obtain specific interests patterns of the four groups, the titles were tabulated according to grades. Among the books, considered the "Best" in their literary diet, the freshmen chose the following: Seventeenth Summer, Double Date, No Other Man, Sue Barton, the Nurse, and other titles in the same series, and several Catholic books, such as: The Red Hat, The White Fire, The Cardinal, and Where There Is Love. The list had also a few juvenile classics: Hans Brinker, Little Women, The Call of the Wild, Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea, and one undesirable book, The Tree Grows in Brooklyn. The quality of books among the freshmen was consistent with their educational level and personal characteristics.

The sophomores' "Best-liked" books consisted of such titles as, Class Ring, Bells of Saint Mary, Going on Sixteen, April Time, Red Shoes for Nancy, Jane Eyre, Silver Chalice, and Quo Vadis.

The reports of some investigators indicate that as the girls mature physically and mentally, they also show development of reading taste. This tendency has been apparent in the "Best" books selection made by the girls in the eleventh and twelfth grades, although a few juvenile titles still held a perennial popularity among several upper classmen. Evidence of maturity taste in the upper grades was shown in choices such as, Kon-Tiki, God Goes to the Murderer's Row, Seven

Storey Mountain, A Crown for Ashes, Love Is Eternal, The Spear, and Life Is Worth Living. Like the freshmen, the juniors and the seniors had one objectionable book, which marred their list of "Best" books read - another fact, meriting emphasis on guidance in reading.

Interesting contrast was made between the "Best" books and the "Books Read Last," (Table VI). The girls' choices were not the same, as Table VI revealed, although three of the top titles, named by the majority of the freshmen and sophomores, were still teen-age stories. Upper classmen listed a number of biographies, and a sizeable number showed interest in stories of home life. The title selected by more upper classmen than any other was The Story of the Trapp Family Singers.

Table VI indicated also several interest factors based on the students' favorite titles. From their choice of best-liked books, one can see that if a book incorporated the themes of romantic love and teen-age life, it produced a strong appeal to the adolescent girls. Career stories, home and family life, travel and adventure, experiences true to life, character development, religious and inspirational values, and current scenes also were main features in their selections of favorite books.

Tabulation of the different titles preferred by the girls made it possible to determine the diversity of the girls'

Table VI.

Best-liked Books and Books Read Last in Order of Popularity

Best-liked Books	Books Read Last
Seventeenth Summer (Daly)	Seventeenth Summer (Daly)
Little Women (Alcott)	Little Women (Alcott)
The Foundling (Spellman)	Class Ring (DuJardin)
Love Is Eternal (Stone)	Jane Eyre (Bronte)
Red Shoes for Nancy (Hamilton)	Trapp Family Singers (Trapp)
Kon-Tiki (Heyerdahl)	Red Hat (Newcomb)
Sue Barton, the Nurse (Boylston)	The Foundling (Spellman)
Going on Sixteen (Cavanna)	Black Stallion (Farley)
Seven Storey Mountain (Merton)	Lantern in Her Hand (Aldrich)
God Goes to the Murderer's Row (Raymond)	Red Shoes for Nancy (Hamilton)
Silver Chalice (Costain)	I'll Cry Tomorrow (Roth)
Karen (Killilea)	Too Late the Phalarope (Paton)

reading. More variety of choices appeared on the sophomores' favorite list. There were many single titles scattered throughout the list of votes presented by the four groups. Except for the Seventeenth Summer, no one book enjoyed an overwhelming popularity among the subjects.

The book titles included fiction, classical and modern, heavy and light, juvenile and adult, non-Catholic and Catholic. Current publications predominated, although 55 girls selected classics as their favorite books. Some of those old-time favorites, which have persisted from generation to generation, have been Little Women, Jane Eyre, Beau Geste, and Quo Vadis. A significant item of information that emerged from the list of "Best-liked" books was the fact that 24 per cent of the books selected were written by Catholic authors or pre-eminently Catholic in tone and philosophy.

A similar trend characterized the girls' selection of books "Read Last." Approximately 150 Catholic titles and about 48 classics were mentioned. Several good adult books were spiced between juvenile titles, such as: Cry, the Beloved Country, Life Is Worth Living, Kon-Tiki, Lift Up Your Heart, and The Hills Were Liars.

Unfortunately, some students' reading is not always in accord with adult judgment about what they should read. There were six books mentioned by the girls as books "Read Last" which, by the concensus of opinion of Catholic librarians,

have been designated as undesirable: The Galilean, Mary Magdalene, The Tree Grows in Brooklyn, Big Fisherman, Pavilion of Women, and Les Miserables.

Though the purpose of this study has not been one of comparison with other surveys in the field, it may be of interest to note that in contrast to the findings of Brink, who in 1938 made an investigation of the reading interests of the public high-school pupils in the Chicago area, the subjects of this study seemed to have read a more commendable collection of books. At that time, Brink concluded his observations as follows: "With the exception of a few classics, which were undoubtedly prescribed reading, the list of books most frequently read by the seniors is made up largely of the best sellers of the year."³⁸

To find out what the trend of viewpoint among the students of the present study was with regard to the "Best Sellers," the girls were asked the question which read as follows: "Do you feel that you are out of touch with the current literature and life, if you don't read some of the so-called "Best Sellers?" To this question, 83 per cent of the students answered negatively; 16 per cent of the pupils apparently approved of the "Best Sellers" by answering affirmatively, while, one per cent failed to reply.

³⁸ Brink, Op. Cit., p. 618.

It was impossible, of course, to discover how much school influence determined the selection of the books by the girls. There was no question that availability was an important factor in determining the extent to which books were read by the pupils. The commendable quality of the girls' titles attested to the fine collection of books in the school libraries to which the high-school girls have had access.

Nevertheless, it is wise to temper conclusions with certain qualifying considerations. Besides provision of materials, there are other factors which may account for the stimulation of student reading.

Often the type of reading is governed largely by the curricular requirements. Some titles might have been used as book reports. Some might have been those "that teachers and librarians want the girls to read." Pupils do have a strong tendency at times to re-echo the judgments, likes and dislikes of their teachers. On the whole, the picture was rather complex, and it may be expected that a diversity of opinion regarding the titles chosen by the students will be asserted by many critics.

In the choice of authors, the girls showed marked individuality and independence. De Wohl, Dickens, Poe, Alcott were quite popular. Several authors of contemporary teen-age books, particularly the names of Du Jardin, Cavanna, Keene, Lambert, Boylston, Newcomb, Emery, Daly, and Stolz were most

appealing to the adolescent girls. The heavy vote from the four groups ranked Alcott the first place as a favorite author. Romance and teen-age life placed DuJardin second. Dickens who, as Brink remarked might have won his popularity through "prescribed reading," won the third place. Many students failed to answer the question as to their "special" writer, and 37.7 per cent of the group stated that they have no favorite authors.

Statements of reason for liking and disliking certain books were also helpful in analyzing the patterns of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among the readers. As indicated in Table VII and Table VIII, the reasons given found to be rather revealing.

Some girls showed lack of critical ability to state the reason for selecting the book of first choice. From Table VII, however, one may secure a thumb-nail information, based on the statements quoted verbatim by the girls, with regard to the element of appeal in certain books.

Several authors attracted interest in their writings by the ingenuity of their plots; others, because of captivating settings. Some students remarked that they had enjoyed the author's skill in making "the characters like real people."

Certainly, some students could have profited from reading many more adult books. There are many pupils, especially among the brighter and more mature, who have outgrown

Table VII.

Typical Reasons for Enjoying the "Best-Liked" Books

Title	Reason
Seventeenth Summer	"I could live the part of the main character."
Little Women	"A good family picture"
The Foundling	"I liked the moral behind it."
Love Is Eternal	"Beautifully written"
Red Shoes for Nancy	"Everything so human in this story"
Kon-Tiki	"I enjoyed the exciting episodes"
Going on Sixteen	"I like to read about teenagers"
Sue Barton the Student Nurse	"I want to be a nurse"
Seven Storey Mountain	"It gives you a lot to think about"
God Goes to the Murderer's Row	"It held my interest to the end."
Silver Chalice	"Combination of information and recreation"
Karen	"I like to read about children."
The Spear	"The plot was very interesting"

the happy-ending teen-age stories, and could have enjoyed many more adult books than had been mentioned in their responses. It was disappointing also to find so few books on careers. Whether this apparent lack of interest in career information was due to a chance result of the limited sampling, or lack of proper stimulation and guidance, or to the inadequate number of books in the library cannot be asserted without additional facts to justify conclusions.

While their selections were widely varied, yet one may say that in their choice of books featuring romance and teen-age life the girls showed tendency to be homogeneous in taste. Evidently, taste in reading depends more upon the reader's emotional and social development than on any other factor, including intelligence. Most of the students in all the four high-school grades expressed preference for the same two titles, Seventeenth Summer and Little Women (Table VI), both books dealing with the problems of adolescent love and dating.

It is obvious that teachers ought to make the most of the healthy emotional responses of the adolescent readers. Love, as the teen-age girl has learned it from the movies, television, and romantic novels tends to hold her engrossed in day-dreaming. Over-indulgence in reading sentimental and highly-imaginative romance may effect the girl's future personality development, her character, and her mental health.

With little encouragement, assistance, and above all, timely guidance, such undesirable effects may be prevented.

The perusal of the titles in Table VIII confirms the generally-accepted fact that some books are liked by some people and disliked by others. Seventeenth Summer and Going on Sixteen, both books highly endorsed by the majority of the teen-agers, were disliked by some of their peers. According to the frequency of mention, the following five books were most disliked: Tale of Two Cities, Mr. Blue, Scarlet Letter, Wind, Sand, and Stars, and Perelandra. Although multiple reasons have been cited for the lack of interest in reading some of the books, inability to read or to understand the contents of the book was the main reason given by the girls for their dislike of certain books.

A cursory glance at Table VIII arouses suspicion that the curricular or the required reading lists may have been over-loaded with traditional classics, since a fairly good number of them have been mentioned by the students as the most disliked books. Obviously, pupils, who had problems with the mechanics of reading, were introduced to literature too mature for their comprehension. Interest and difficulty of reading material must be considered first before literary standards, when suggesting books to the poor or even to the average pupils. The failure of the school at this point may be responsible for the growing number of "fugitives from reading."

Table VIII.

Typical Reasons for Disliking Certain Books

Title	Reason	Percentage
	<u>Reading too difficult</u>	11.3
Adam Bede		
Last of the Mohicans	"Style unappealing"	
Curiosity Shop		
Tale of Two Cities	"Plot too complex"	
Ben Hur		
Marble Faun	"Couldn't understand it"	
Pride and Prejudice		
Scarlet Letter	"Too many characters"	
Long Were the Nights		
Crook of Gold		
	<u>Contents uninteresting</u>	13.7
The Spartans		
Rise of Silas Lapham	"Too long"	
Children of Ghetto		
David Copperfield	"All talk, no action"	
Seven Storey Mountain		
Wind, Sand and Stars	"Too boring"	
Look for a Tall White Sail		
Windswept	"Not enough excitement"	
Oil for the Lamps of China		
Bring Them Back Alive	"Not the type for me"	
Mr. Blue		
Saint Among the Savages	"I like a story with a good plot"	
	<u>Miscellaneous reasons</u>	15.9
Going on Sixteen	"Too juvenile"	
Dolly Madison	"Too easy"	
Beany	"Too unusual"	
Seventeenth Summer	"Too light reading"	
House of Seven Gables	"Too morbid"	
Wuthering Heights	"Preferred the movies"	
The Senior Year	"It isn't true"	
Bronte Sisters	"Too involved"	

Next in order of consideration was the analysis of the answers given by the students to the question "Why do you read what you do read?" The answers to this question were grouped under four headings, and listed according to frequency of mention and corresponding percentages in Table IX.

Gray asserted that "perhaps we shall never know fully why people read what they do read, how interests originate and develop."³⁹ Yet, implicit in each answer, quoted below, is the reflection of the reader's individuality.

"I enjoy a variety of books, because each has something different to offer.

"I read serious reading because it challenges my mind."

"I usually don't have much time to read, and when I do, I prefer to read something light rather than serious or educational."

"There isn't any particular field of interest that I follow, just so the book is interesting."

"I read both realistic and romantic fiction to satisfy my moods."

"I read romantic adventure, because such books take my mind off school."

"I guess I'm like all girls; I like to read love stories."

"I read books about convent, not that I want to be a nun, but because those books give the inside story of the truly human life within these walls."

"Because it was recommended to me."

"Because we're forced to read."

"I have nothing else to do."

"Truthfully, for book reports."

"I like food for thought."

"Some books I read because I must; some I read because I've heard about them; some I read because of my own personal choice."

"Because the titles were interesting and appealing."

"To forget my troubles."

³⁹ William S. Gray, Reading in General Education, Washington, American Council on Education, 1940, p. 265.

Table IX.

Answers and Corresponding Percentages to the Question:
"Why Do You Read What You Do Read?"

Reason	Frequency	Total Number	Percentage
<u>Pleasure and recreation</u>		220	47.8
To enjoy leisure	99		
To live another life in books	81		
To feel various emotions	40		
<u>Self-improvement</u>		155	33.6
To educate myself	82		
To become versatile	14		
To improve my English	59		
<u>Inspirational reasons</u>		63	13.6
To imitate a great character	26		
To follow ideals	25		
To fill my mind with good ideas	12		
<u>Miscellaneous reasons</u>		19	4.1
To forget my troubles	12		
To evade housework	1		
To quiet my nerves	6		
<u>Unanswered</u>	3	3	.6

"Because I like to study characters and compare their problems with mine."

"To see how other teen-agers re-act to the same problems I have."

"To find out what vocation in life would suit me."

"Because reading helps me to understand people better."

"Because I like to read stories in which I can place myself as a character."

"To improve my own character."

"Because I enjoy science fiction."

"I don't go on vacations; reading helps me to go places where I've never been."

"I read books because they are advertized in newspapers and in magazines."

"Because I feel I benefit spiritually and intellectually."

"Since I am not allowed to have a dog of my own, I read about dogs."

"I read books based on movies, because I like to compare them."

"For self-improvement and inspiration."

"Since I enjoy reading, I read everything and anything by rotation."

Other answers to the question "Why do you read what you do read?" may be induced from the data in Table IX, which, it was hoped, may provide the basis for comparison of additional facts in the succeeding chapters. However, from the brief inventory of replies stated above, one may conclude that some high-school students know how to regard serious matter seriously. Again, other statements point to the need of guidance, especially in the area of identification of oneself with the characters in the book, and of reading only those books that are advertized in newspapers.

As pointed out earlier, attitudes, modes of interpretation, and patterns of thinking vary with purposes of reading. "The book which may feed the imagination of one may provide

information for another."⁴⁰ On the whole, the findings suggested a fairly varied range of motives, many of which involved intellectual, inspirational, recreational, and above all, individualized reasons. One fact was obvious. There was sufficient evidence secured through the responses to the given questions to point out the importance of guiding the students toward a better appreciation of superior reading material and to the development of more discriminating judgments in their selection and evaluation of books.

The generalizations in the foregoing chapter point out clearly that guidance in reading is a necessity. The discussion indicated that the extent of reading is conditioned by many factors. Hence, consideration was given to the power of influence exerted by the new media of communication, especially the motion pictures and the television. Environment, inadequate time, intelligence, and lack of consistent motivation were studied as possible explanations for the apparent decline in reading among the high-school pupils.

In general, the tabulation showed that the Catholic high-school girls' reading activities, measured in terms of the number of books read and the amount of time devoted to reading, compared fairly well with the results of previous studies. Of

⁴⁰ A. L. Le Fevre, "Books - The Roots of the Rock," in The Catholic Library World, Vol. 26, issue of December 1954, p. 72.

course, one cannot help noting that majority of the girls are neither "bookworms" nor "literary fans."

Many pupils, unaffected by the competing attractions of the movies or the fascination of TV, still found time to do "outside" reading. In fact, there was no significant difference in the number of books read between those who seldom or never went to the movies during the past school year and those who attended the movies regularly once a week.

In the same manner, television seemed compatible with reading. Even those who chose television as their chief hobby read one book a month. A comparatively small percentage of girls (9.3%), classified as omniverous readers, reported an unusual record of books read, ranging from 30 to 80 in number. The group as a whole read on the average of about 13 books per capita during the eight-month period.

As has been reported in previous studies, the bright students do more reading than any other group. But the superior group in this study, having read on the average of 16.4 books for the eight-month period, has not met the average quota of books read by the gifted children in other studies.

Some of the questions had for their objective to explore roughly the intensity of the girls' attitude toward reading as a pleasurable activity. It was found that only 30 per cent of the students considered reading as the most favorite

diversion, and gave it priority over all other forms of entertainment. Almost 70 per cent of the students ranked listening to the radio, attendance at movies, and viewing of the television higher than reading. In consequence, a general inference was drawn that in some schools little had been done to stimulate wide reading, so that the students would "want to read" despite the advantage of new entertainments.

A number of motivating devices was suggested for "selling" good reading material. For example, inexpensive books in paper-bound editions and reading periods, intelligently-planned and well-supervised, and held during the classroom schedule have been viewed as a possible solution to the problem of increasing and motivating interests and of forming carry-over habits of reading.

Literary appreciation apparently must not be a by-product of increased reading skill, since most of the girls, good and poor readers, bright, average, and the dull chose for their best-liked book an adolescent love story, Seventeenth Summer. The criterion was obvious. If the book contains the element of adolescent romance, it will be popular with the high-school girls.

The importance of average reading ability was apparent in the pupils' responses regarding books disliked. It was suggested that teachers exercise judgment as they recommend

more mature reading material to pupils. Classics, together with modern literature, "must meet on a middle-ground" to satisfy the needs, interests, and tastes of the young people. It was hoped that from the responses to the questions regarding books the girls liked or disliked, the teachers and librarians may learn what draws the teen-agers to the book and what impels them not to read.

Some interesting reasons were advanced by the girls in answering the question, "Why do you read what you do read?" In general, the analysis of the girls' reading in terms of the three questions, How Much, What, and Why might make possible for the teacher a wiser approach to the problem of "outside" reading.

Majority of the adolescent girls will have completed their formal education with the high-school graduation. They will face the challenge of a new leisure. Of paramount importance is, therefore, the fact that they be given ample time to read for enjoyment from a variety of books, old and new, fictional and informational, suitable to their needs, and written at a level they can understand, so that reading could become something that will be "a part of" not "apart from" their lives.

CHAPTER IV

POOLED JUDGMENT ON TYPES OF READING

Closely related with the ideas on HOW MUCH, WHAT, and WHY the Catholic high-school girls read is the controversial issue regarding "outside" reading. Commonly speaking, "outside" reading embraces all types of reading: recreational, curricular, optional or "free", and required or compulsory.

"Recreational reading is reading which is done primarily for personal enjoyment, with gains in knowledge or understanding of secondary importance." Curricular reading consists of a list of books used for the purpose of supplementing or enriching a course or subject offered in an educational institution. Optional reading is often called "free" reading, and includes all reading done voluntarily. The use of the term "free", however, has been objected on the grounds that it implies reading that is unguided. Required reading consists of all types of assigned reading, even if the students have the choice of selecting titles from extensive lists.

Each type, no doubt, is important, and each aims to fill a need in the pupil's life. There is definite relationship among all these types. Yet, in actual classroom situation, each type must be distinguished, because each has its own particular objectives to be achieved.

1. Reaction Toward Compulsory Reading.

The practice of demanding from the pupils some compulsory or required reading has been the subject of persistent controversy among the secondary-school teachers. As a result, three views of the argument have been advanced. Some advocate required curricular reading and assign a definite quota to be read per month or semester. Others offer suggested lists but not required reading material; and still others urge free reading only. All these divisions of reading have been subjected to critical analysis with regard to their limitations and potentialities.

Tozier observed that "in practice, required reading, which is inappropriate to maturity level and reading ability of many pupils, has caused a great number to hate not only the required classics which they read, but all reading."¹ Such pupils tend to associate all reading material with the few difficult books through which they had struggled to do their reading assigned by the teacher.

This contention was endorsed by Rachel de Angelo. "A good way to stifle interest and enthusiasm for reading," she wrote, "is to give the pupils a list from which he must

¹ Virginia Tozier, "What Motivates Secondary School Voluntary Reading?" in Wilson Library Bulletin, Vol. 30, issue of October 1955, p. 80.

choose a book for his monthly report."² Sister M. Archangela believed that "a single book which fills a need in the life of a child will do more toward satisfying his personal interests in books than all the prescribed lists ever printed."³

The demand for required reading has been frequently criticized on the grounds of its unpsychological and unpedagogical approach. For most students the psychological effect of the word "required" removes the urge for further reading. It "seems to be a symbol of forced labor."

There is no doubt that both voluntary as well as required reading are related to interests; hence, both may offer enjoyable reading experiences. From the variety of the students' responses to the item which called for a frank opinion with respect to required reading, one may conclude that for some it was a pleasure; for others, a task or routine.

Since both "reading readiness" as well as "interest readiness" vary with each individual, it is to be expected that reaction toward required reading will be determined by the range and type of the pupil's reading experiences. There

² Rachel de Angelo, "Reading Future Tense," in Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Catholic Library Association, held in Buffalo, Villanova, Penn., The Catholic Library Association, 1958, p. 80.

³ Sister M. Archangola, "Selecting Books for Youthful Readers," in The Catholic Library World, Vol. 13, issue of November 1941, p. 57.

Table X.

Negative Attitude Toward Required Reading

<u>Comments</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Total No.</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
<u>Resist compulsion</u>		103	22.4
Don't like to be forced to read	57		
Books are not interesting when forced to read	29		
Prefer books of my own choice	16		
It's no fun for me	1		
<u>Criticism provoked</u>		29	6.3
Books were educational but not interesting	14		
Some books were boring	8		
Hard on pupils who cannot read easily	5		
Makes people acquire good and bad habits of reading	1		
Good for elementary school pupils	1		
<u>Indifferent disposition</u>		70	15.2
Depending on what one must read	48		
It's nice reading sometimes	11		
Books must be read, so we read them	7		
Don't care much for it	4		
<u>Total</u>		202	43.9

was, therefore, a divided picture of the students' attitudes regarding compulsory reading. A sizable percentage found the assigned reading both delightful and stimulating. There were those who strongly opposed the idea of being forced to read (28.6%), and there were some who were indifferent (15.2%).

Honesty and sincerity seemed to have characterized their replies which, for the sake of brevity, have been assembled under three major headings in Table X and Table XI. Several sample answers, however, make more evident the girls' attitudes toward that type of reading.

"Required reading doesn't give you a chance to choose that what interests you."

"It takes all the enjoyment out of reading."

"You must read books you don't like."

A few said that being forced "to read a book, spoils it." Others, who considered it optional because they "like to read," expressed such statements as:

"Required reading makes people acquire good and bad habits of reading."

"Required reading is, of course, more helpful than written assignments."

"Okay, if you can pick out your own book from the list."

A considerable number (51.9%) of the students favored assigned reading. The reasons, cited below, illustrate their approval.

"I think required reading is a safeguard against non-reading."

"It is a good idea because some wouldn't read at all."

"It is a means of becoming acquainted with good reading material."

"A good idea. You know you have to and you benefit, too."

Table XI.

Favorable Reaction Toward Required Reading

<u>Comments</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Total No.</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<u>Cultural and intellectual motives</u>		158	34.3
Reading is essential	56		
Reading enriches our minds	34		
It helps to understand our problems in life	25		
It develops character	18		
Gives good ideas and good ideals	13		
Improves our reading tastes	12		
<u>Derive satisfaction and pleasure</u>		57	12.4
Find required reading enjoyable	25		
Required reading is a good idea	19		
It's a fine way to encourage reading	9		
One can try to enjoy it	3		
More helpful than written assignments	1		
<u>Miscellaneous</u>		24	5.2
Like it but have no time for required reading	8		
It's a safeguard against non- reading	7		
Keeps teen-agers out of trouble	6		
Required books - not for all	3		
<u>No answers</u>		19	4.1
<u>Total</u>		258	56.1

Like many other problems, required reading has two sides to the question of its practicability. Some pupils in this survey acknowledged that they had read better books because the titles were assigned to them. Some admitted they would have never read nor developed an interest in reading, if it were not for the compulsory reading.

On the other hand, many students do their required reading under pressure, which, of course, is hardly conducive to enjoyment. They resent also the time specified and prefer to read at their own pace. Some complained that required reading reduced their time for personal reading.

No one will dispute the fact that to suggest the right book for all types of readers is a task of no small consequences. Not all teachers have broad experience and familiarity with teen-age books. General information about books is essential, but having the knowledge of the contents of the book will enable the teacher to determine its suitability for the particular student. Some pupils' interests deviate from those of the majority. There must be, therefore, a deliberate effort on the part of the teacher to locate reading materials suitable to the diverse reading interests and abilities represented in her class.

Ideally, the classroom teacher and the high-school librarian should be an authority on adolescent literature, an expert in analyzing the problems involved in reading, and

a specialist in the field of adolescent psychology. It is not likely, however, that one may find many who meet such requirements. The next best technique, therefore, would be to work out lists of books of several levels of maturity and difficulty on the various problems or themes in which teenagers are interested.

The teacher should be intellectually honest; no one expects that every teacher be a book specialist. But she should make a serious effort to acquaint herself with the increasing number of useful aids.

There are many ways of locating reading materials suitable for pupils of different grades, different abilities, and different interests. Nevertheless, to compile a list of such "best" books has always presented a problem. In view of such factors as, the great diversity of tastes, slow and reluctant readers, and preferences for one's special line of interest, it is almost inconceivable that any one list of books can claim to give perfect satisfaction to all pupils.

In the current study, 46.7 per cent of the group found the books on the required lists interesting, informational, and inspirational (Table XI). But 40.9 per cent (Table VIII) recorded objections and critical comments on books assigned for "outside" reading. Some of the students (11.3%) considered them too difficult. Individuality of tastes is perhaps one of the main reasons for not restricting the students

to a particular reading list.

Yet, if one agrees with Handlan's observations of students' reading, then a reading list, especially well-annotated, can be used on a mass scale for guidance purposes, since as she pointed out, high-school pupil "chooses the easiest and the shortest rather than the more difficult and more developed; the familiar rather than the unfamiliar."⁴

Besides, not all pupils find it easy to decide on the type of book suitable to their reading pattern. Doris Smith suggested that the teacher be armed with many "reading lists which students may use for suggestions."⁵

It is a practical advice, because there is no book suitable only for the "average" or "superior" sophomore or senior. There is no exact vocabulary for any particular grade." The terms "easy," "average," and "difficult" are only relative in their description of the maturity of a given book, and are subject to different interpretation by different individuals. Moreover, the same book may serve different purposes and affect differently the minds of different readers.

⁴ Bertha Handlan, "The Fallacy of Free Reading as an Approach to Appreciation," in The English Journal, Vol. 35, issue of April 1946, p. 183.

⁵ Doris Smith, "Guided Free Reading," in Illinois English Bulletin, Vol. 45, issue of May 1958, p. 8-9.

The teacher must be mindful also of the fact that interest and reading level do not always converge. Neither does reading skill alone make good readers, nor interest completely compensate for lack of reading skill. On this point Goebel's advice may also prove helpful:

In selecting books for young people ... check both juvenile and adult aids, keep in touch with their school curriculum ... Place here, too, the books you know he wants, the books he wants but doesn't know it, and the books you hope he will want.⁶

Excellent as some of the standard book selection tools are, the librarian must exercise prudence and judgment in deciding which books, recommended in those catalogs, will she include in her Catholic library or in the pupils' reading lists. Neither a "standard booklist nor a standardizing agency should blind the Catholic librarian to the fact that the selection of books must be made in accordance with the philosophy and the principles governing the school of which the library is an integral part.

In connection with this particular question of compiling a booklist, the Catholic librarians and teachers may find it profitable to read Sister Ann Frederick's forceful article "Personal Standards of Book Selection," wherein suggestions have been offered with regard to development of

⁶ Goebel, Op. Cit., p. 942.

personal standards based on established criteria. "To rely solely on the tools of book selection," argued Sister Ann Frederick, "is to expose oneself to error." According to Sister's advice, the librarian "must have fixed standards" which, of course, necessitate understanding and ability how and when to apply them.⁷

Most of the teachers, no doubt, have standards of what they consider a good book for the adolescent pupil to read. The titles of books, listed by the girls in the study under consideration, reflected to a considerable extent the judgment of their teachers and librarians whose task it was to evaluate the books before their actual circulation among the students.

Unfortunately, there is no law for evaluating books as specific and as definite as Newton's law of gravity. The subjective estimate and personal view seem to emerge from almost every technique devised for the appraisal of reading materials. Nevertheless, some pattern of values must be followed in the difficult task of purchasing books, in compiling book lists, and above all, in guiding the reading interests of the pupils.

No one will question the fact that for comparison and judgment standards are indispensable. Nor will anyone doubt

⁷ Sister Ann Frederick, "Personal Standards of Book Selection," in The Catholic School Journal, Vol. 58, issue of February 1958, p. 25-27.

the truth that personalized guidance is more effective than a prescribed list of books. That some reading must be required is also based on evidence, confirmed by experience and contact with teen-agers. Few teachers will deny the fact that there are some pupils who will not read unless trapped by the demand for a book report.

Reading lists are, therefore, in place, and may serve a practical purpose, although no list can be a substitute for the teacher's first-hand knowledge of books and readers. It is advisable that some latitude in the choice of reading matter should be allowed. It makes the students feel they are doing "independent" rather than required reading. After all, "the development of true taste in reading is possible only on the basis of individual preferences built around definite purposes."⁸

Above all, the reading lists must include books to challenge the bright pupils' interests, to satisfy the needs of the average readers, and to give the reluctant students reading material "just for fun" as a needed stimulus to more desirable appreciation of good books.

⁸ Brother Climachus Boyle, The Correlation Between I. Q. and Reading Interests on the High School Level, unpublished Master's thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of the Catholic University of America, Washington, The Catholic University of America, 1949, p. 27.

2. Librarians' Report.

The librarian in the high school holds a strategic position to observe existing reading interests of young people. In virtue of her professional background and wide experience, she is qualified to record her observations and share her views with others. Thus, valuable information was obtained for this investigation by means of a short questionnaire, sent to seventy high-school librarians, who were actively working with the adolescent students in the Archdiocese.

Of the forty-five that were returned, forty-two questionnaires were completely filled out. The information sought was based chiefly on the following questions:

1. What ten books are most popular with the teenagers in your school library?

2. What two books, either fiction or non-fiction, would you recommend for general reading, as first and second choice, to the seniors, juniors, sophomores, and freshmen?

3. What constitutes the bulk of circulation: books withdrawn for required reading, or books withdrawn as "free" or voluntary reading?

4. Send, if available, the "Recommended Lists for Reading" or the "Required Reading Lists."

Many sent their "Recommended Lists." Some had no reading lists; others claimed their lists were in the process of revision.

The most popular titles of books, listed by the librarians, provided an interesting basis for comparison of the

facts about the choice of books, and the likes and dislikes in reading as reported by the girls. The twelve most widely liked books, listed by the librarians, have been ranked in Table XII with the students' first-choice titles, which were given in Table VI.

There was a decided similarity in these lists. That such resemblance in reading preferences should result, despite the fact that the librarians represented forty-two different high schools from widely different areas of the Metropolis, seems to reflect something fundamental in the qualities of the books.

It was interesting to note also that the girls' choices of books coincided with the selected titles endorsed by authorities on adolescent literature. However, no attempt was made to determine to what extent conventional standards have been met, since some of the books were of more recent date than those published in the "standard" book lists, and some of the Catholic reading material, even though of excellent quality, is not always included in those printed lists.

One of the questions, proposed to the librarians, was whether the books withdrawn by the pupils were read voluntarily or as required or curricular reading. Of the forty-two librarians reporting, twenty-seven (64.4%) answered that the majority of the pupils read books voluntarily, while fifteen librarians (35.6%) said that the bulk of their normal

Table XII.

Comparative Rank of Most Popular Books
Submitted by High-school Pupils and Librarians

Students' Choice	Rank	Librarians' Vote	Rank
Seventeenth Summer (Daly)	1	Seventeenth Summer (Daly)	1
Little Women (Alcott)	2	Silver Chalice (Costain)	2
The Foundling (Spellman)	3	Karen (Killilea)	3
Love Is Eternal (Stone)	4	April Time (Meller)	4
Red Shoes for Nancy (Hamilton)	5	St. Maria Goretti (Buehrle)	5
Kon-Tiki (Heyerdahl)	6	Tomorrow's Memories (Ayd)	6
Sue Barton's Books (Boylston)	7	God Goes to Murderer's Row (Raymond)	7
Going on Sixteen (Cavanna)	8	The Foundling (Spellman)	8
Seven Storey Mountain (Merton)	9	Love Is Eternal (Stone)	9
God Goes to Murderer's Row (Raymond)	10	Sue Barton's series (Boylston)	10
Silver Chalice (Costain)	11	Seven Storey Mountain (Merton)	11
Karen (Killilea)	12	Spear (DeWohl)	12

circulation consisted of books found on the required reading lists. The predominance of voluntary reading among the Catholic high-school students, as asserted by the greater number of librarians, should be an evidence that the young people are being encouraged to read. Yet, the number of books read by the girls in the present study was far from presenting an impressive total.

One of the stumbling processes, that perhaps defeats its own purpose, is the indiscriminating adherence to "essentials." Four librarians reported "Must" books which the students were expected to read before they were allowed the latitude of personal choice. Some of the titles prescribed for this reading were: Life of Christ, Life of the Blessed Virgin, Life of the patron saint, several short stories, a novel, biography, several long narrative poems, and few essays.

Such demands made upon the students may be in place as a part of curricular reading. But even then, provision for individual differences, including the pupil's reading ability and his rate of comprehension, must be considered.

In addition, each librarian was asked to indicate titles of books, either fiction or non-fiction, as first and second choice, which she would recommend for general reading to the average pupils in the four high-school grades. It was assumed that such recommendations would be based on the judgment of a well-trained person, whose chief role, after all, is

that of a reader adviser.

Undoubtedly, such a selection has its values and limitations. Librarians' judgments are subjective, limited by the span of experience, levels of professional competence, and keenness of observation. But it was not expected that those recommendations should take on the stature of finality. The list of 250 recommended titles was a fairly good index to the collection of books which, in the judgment of the forty-two librarians, have been voted as suitable and interesting material for the distribution among the pupils of the different grades for their general reading.

However, several speculative questions immediately arise as to the evaluation of the list: Are those books indicative of what is best for the student? Are these selected books liked by the pupils? What standards do they reflect? What conclusions may be drawn when that list is studied by maturity level? Will the books stimulate the pupils to do more and better reading? Or, will they tend to stifle interests and discourage the pupils from further reading?

Even a partial attempt to answer the foregoing questions suggested involved analysis. Besides, it was evident that to advance any tenable hypotheses, there was need of additional and more specific information. For that reason, the list was submitted to ten independent judges for their appraisal, since as it is generally assumed, pooled judgment

of experts might prove more reliable than the opinion of the examiner alone.

The Committee of judges who so generously offered their time to rate the books was composed of the following specialists in the field of teen-age literature:

The librarian of the Priory High School, Washington, D. C. (member of the Benedictine Order)

Librarian - member of the Jesuit Order

Religious of the Dominican Order and Instructor of Adolescent Literature at the Catholic University

Librarian of the Catholic High School, Baltimore, Maryland

Religious of the Dominican Order and Instructor at Rosary College, River Forest, Illinois

Librarian of a Catholic High School - (member of the Franciscan Order)

Librarian of a Catholic High School - (member of the Notre Dame Order)

Librarian of the Resurrection High School - (member of the Resurrection Order)

Assistant Supervisor of Work with Young Adults, Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Assistant Coordinator, Work with Young People, Chicago Public Library, Chicago, Illinois

No attempt was made to include all the titles, recommended by the librarians, in the classification list, because the judges were not familiar with all the books. As a result, the number was reduced to 213 titles. The rating of the majority was adopted for classification. As an aid to the understanding of the data analyzed, the list, arranged alphabetically, has been inserted in the Appendix.

There is no doubt that the procedure for obtaining an index of maturity, as adopted in this survey, is not without limitations. A workable technique for measuring maturity of

reading, which would differentiate with greater accuracy the quality of books than the subjective standards of experts, would prove of great value. The judgment of experts and the opinion of the reader may be frequently at variance.

It is also true that such broad levels of maturity as "low," "Average," and "High" do not allow for such discrimination of quality. Books differ in degree as well as in kind of maturity. Only content and style of the book were the major factors in guiding the judges' opinions.

"No simple criteria for maturity exist," despite several attempts that have been made in that direction. Consequently, the judgment, wide experience and acquaintance of books of the selected librarians and teachers, whose services of evaluation were asked, were considered authoritative enough to equal the weight of scientific procedure.

Although the judges were not always in full agreement as to the placement of some titles, the vote of the majority concurred with the rating found in such lists as Reading for Living, Reading Ladders for Human Relations, and the lists published by the National Council of Teachers of English.

The librarians' list of "Recommended Books" bore out several important factors in determining the character of reading done by the pupils. Yet, one may question whether the books suggested by the librarians would actually interest the students. Perhaps the list was merely the result of their

ideas of what books should appeal to the high-school students rather than getting the genuine picture as to the type of books which the pupils would enjoy reading.

To determine the degree of difference or similarity between the librarians' and the students' choices, a comparison was made between the two lists. The results have shown considerable similarity and agreement between the students' lists of "Best-liked Books" and "Books Read Last" (Table VI) and the librarians' list of "Recommended Books" (Appendix I).

On the whole, the librarians' list included different types of books of sufficient interest to attract the attention of different types of pupils, provided they really cared to read. There was some traditional emphasis obvious in the selection, but very few classics were mentioned. There were many current titles, a substantial number of good Catholic books, but majority of the titles were books written specifically for adolescents.

That the reading suggested was more largely for recreation than for information was apparent from the small number of titles on science, social problems, and books dealing with health, and personality development.

To sum up, the factual information, submitted by the Catholic high-school librarians, proved a fairly reliable source for correlating their responses with those of the girls.

It served as a partial check against the items in the students' questionnaire to analyze the validity of the girls' answers. It offered additional data on the question of required and voluntary reading.

However, the data were not conclusive enough as basis for judging whether, in addition to the available reading material, guidance to familiarize pupils with the pleasures of reading was being offered. It is, of course, an accepted principle that one will not desire to possess anything, unless he considers it worthwhile and good. Skillful motivation and enthusiastic guidance may lead the students to independent or personal reading, which they can enjoy throughout their adult lives not only as a pleasant recreatory activity, "but as a force of intelligent activity."

3. Conflict of Opinion on Teen-age Reading.

One of the common criticisms among adults is to characterize high-school pupils' reading as juvenile and immature. The fact that a high-school pupil is immature, argued Sister M. Hester, is no disgrace; "if he were not, he would not be an adolescent."⁹ Nevertheless, literature for teen-agers has

⁹ Sister M. Hester, "Teenagers and Reading Today," in Catholic Library World, Vol. 24, issue of March 1953, p. 191.

been the target of critical examination. In this connection, the classification of books by the ten experts provided ground for more carefully-drawn inferences.

Based on the opinion of the ten judges, majority of the books read by the girls and those recommended by the librarians were assigned an "Average" level of maturity. In this subdivision, 45 per cent of all the books were listed. The percentage of "Low" or juvenile books was the smallest of the three classifications. It consisted of 25 per cent, while 30 per cent of titles were included in the "High" or adult list.

Students do not ordinarily confine themselves to the reading of juvenile or immature books. Library withdrawals reflect that adult books also are in frequent circulation, although, as the findings of this investigation have indicated, teen-agers are chiefly interested in young people's life and problems.

The position of teen-age stories and romance, as first choice of high-school girls' reading, has been the subject of discussion in practically all surveys dealing with reading interests of the adolescent girls. The conflict of opinion that modern youth is being fed on "thin fare from literary point of view" gave rise to the question as to the desirability of the quality of teen-age books. Criticism has been leveled at their literary merits and values.

In view of this censure, some observers support the contention that all adolescent light love stories, mystery, and detective stories have no particular worth. They argue that there are many high-school pupils who are ready for more mature reading than the "neatly-turned plots and happy endings" so prevalent in the junior novels.¹⁰

Emphasizing the importance of providing more challenging reading material to "help youth to evaluate attitudes and to prepare for adult experience," LeFevre cautions those charged with the responsibility for building the book collection for young people.

Anxious to provide books that are short and simple in style and fast-moving enough to compete for the attention of the modern TV and radio-fed person, we are unconsciously weaving a reading pattern on too weak a thread to achieve the purpose of a school library, namely, to share in the building of character and to create a permanent enjoyment in reading. The book selector who will provide a strong book collection, geared to the intelligence, interests and moral purpose of a wide range of young people, cannot waste funds on the "harmless" book even though it may appear on recommended lists.¹¹

According to Bertha Handlan, many stereotyped ideas as embodied in young adults' books, have had an unfortunate

¹⁰ As quoted in E. E. Ahlers, "What Have Books to Say to Young People?" in Wilson Library Bulletin, Vol. 29, issue of November 1954, p. 234.

¹¹ Le Fevre, Op. Cit.

effect upon young readers. They fail to tell the truth about human experience. To satisfy the young readers' taste, the authors frequently present exciting action on almost every page, and then end the stories with a striking climax. Very little attention is given to the portrayal of character or the explanation of motives.¹²

For Betty Cavanna, one of the most popular authors with high-school girls, "real family problems do not exist." Young girls know how to wheedle flatteringly their indulgent fathers and mothers, and lead them almost to frustration.¹³

Walraven deplored the limitations characterizing young people's books, and pleaded with librarians to seek ways and means for improving the reading tastes of boys and girls.¹⁴

Teen-age literature was the tenor of thought discussed in Donald Adams' article, which appeared in New York Times, January 1, 1950. According to that well-known book reviewer, "the teen-age book ... is a phenomenon which belongs properly to a society of morons ...". Adams disputed the literary

¹² Handlan, Op. Cit., p. 182-188.

¹³ Dwight Burton, "The Novel for the Adolescent," in The English Journal, Vol. 40, issue of September 1951, p. 363-369.

¹⁴ M. K. Walraven, "Today's Challenge to School Librarians," in Library Journal, Vol. 76, issue of January 15, 1951, p. 93.

qualities and values of the books written for adolescent readers. He believed that young people should be exposed to adult literature and that the writers who cater to the immature tastes of the adolescents "are doing their readers a disservice."¹⁵

Despite the adverse criticism, the teen-age novel is not without defense. Many, of course, admit it has its weaknesses, but majority agree that it has a definite purpose, especially in arousing among the indifferent readers an interest in reading. They must first like to read books in order to love literature.¹⁶ The teen-age story is a tool to adult reading.

Dr. Carlsen agreed that some teen-age stories are "good filler reading, depending for their effect primarily on incident and action," but he recognized also the fact that many adolescent novels can be helpful in certain areas of problem solving.¹⁷

Burton presented evidence in his report of a project, conducted with high-school pupils, that individual reading of

¹⁵ J. Donald Adams, "Speaking of Books," Book Review in New York Times, issue of January 1, 1950, p. 2.

¹⁶ Margaret A. Edwards, "Rise of Teen-age Reading," in Saturday Review, Vol. 37, issue of November 13, 1954, p. 89.

¹⁷ Carlsen, "Behind Reading Interests," Op. Cit., p. 7-12.

stories about young people and their problems can not only stimulate further interest in reading, but be of great value in their personal development.¹⁸

Contrary to Donald Adams' critical opinion, many librarians and teachers believe that authors of teen-age books have rendered a major service to the field of adolescent guidance. Especially pupils who are less mature and whose reading ability is limited have profited from that intermediate collection. The teen-age books filled the gap between the books for children and the books for adults.

The best chance of arousing the adolescent girl's interest in critical reading is to follow the generally-accepted pedagogical principle and begin at the pupil's interest level, that is, with the adolescent novel. With its youthful characters and its simplicity of language and plot, it is well attuned to teen-age interests. Usually the main characters pass through stages of conflict, uncertainty, anxiety, and other experiences which beset many modern teen-agers. Such novels, as Burton has already intimated, though lacking the depth of maturity found in adult fiction, help the pupil in his personal and social adjustments, as well as in cultivating healthy emotional responses.

¹⁸ Dwight Burton, "Books to Meet Students' Personal Needs," in The English Journal, Vol. 36, issue of November 1947, p. 469-473.

Interest factors, classified in terms of elements and qualities inherent in a book, can aid the teacher in guiding the students to find deeper and greater significance in their reading.

To learn more about the sources of interest, the girls were asked what elements or qualities in books appeal to them most strongly. A variety of answers was given to that question. It was found that students favored principally scenes portraying home and school life; they wanted interesting plot, adventure, mystery, and romance. They preferred incidents and characters that were true to life, rather than those that were imaginative and melodramatic. Above all, they stressed action, teen-age life and teen-age interests. Summarized and categorized results of their responses have been given in Table XIII.

Because the adolescent novel holds such an important position in the preferences of the high-school girl, it is obvious that in that area she is most in need of guidance. Naturally, the student cannot appreciate the implications embodied in any reading material unless he knows how to discover the meaning inherent in the content. The teacher may well consider the possibilities of utilizing this type of literature as a means for developing character and proper attitudes, and as a guide for critical thinking and discrimination - phases of guidance that always need emphasis.

Table XIII.

Percentage Distribution by Type
of Interest Factors Inherent in Books.

<u>Elements</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Total No.</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
<u>Recreational</u>		348	75.6
Teen-age life	125		
Adventure	99		
Mystery	74		
Humor	26		
Sports	15		
Animal stories	9		
<u>Informational type</u>		231	50.2
Self-improvement	69		
Biography	37		
Travel	35		
Vocational	29		
Historical	25		
Scientific	17		
Family life	14		
Music	5		
<u>Literary</u>		226	49.1
Interesting plot	120		
Action and realism	86		
Happy ending	20		
<u>Inspirational themes</u>		47	10.1

Though the teen-age collection of books may include excellent "starters" toward a more mature development of interests, it should be recognized, however, that concentration on merely adolescent literature will not produce a well-balanced literary diet for growth in maturity. If properly guided and encouraged, pupils can become interested in exploring wider fields of reading.

Perhaps a concise summary of the foregoing discussion can be made by quoting Witty's timely and comprehensive statement:

When children and youth have broad experiences in reading which have been meaningful, they will develop an attitude which will cause them to turn habitually to reading as a means of securing information in many fields and as a source of genuine pleasure and enjoyment. Thus they will have attained one of the marks of a mature reader, and they will continue to read and enrich their lives through reading.¹⁹

In general, it is expected that the teacher will make all types of reading requirements so interesting that the pupils will want to read and like it. In addition, she will aim to make reading, including adolescent literature, serve a two-fold purpose of recreation and education.

¹⁹ Paul Witty, "Immediate, Mental, Emotional, Social, and Physical Status of the Reader," in Promoting Growth Toward Maturity in Interpreting What Is Read, compiled and edited by William S. Gray, The Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Reading, held at the University of Chicago, Vol. 13, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 74, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1951, p. 28.

CHAPTER V

DISCOVERING STUDENTS' READING PATTERNS THROUGH FICTITIOUS TITLES AND TOPICS

The aim of the second area of the study was to secure a comparative picture of the reading patterns of the four grades and the three ability groups: the bright, the average, and the dull. The incentive for this basic idea came primarily from the reading of Thorndike's monograph, Children's Reading Interests,¹ discussed in the chapter under "Related Literature." As previously stated, Thorndike's measuring technique and his method of computation of interest scores was adopted in this survey, with certain modifications made necessary by the size and uniformity of the reader groups examined herein.

Although the current study has some resemblance to Thorndike's procedure, especially from the standpoint of its emphasis on the area of subject-matter in books rather than on specific titles or authors of books, it has several distinctive features of its own, differing chiefly in its purpose, subjects, grouping of pupils, classification of titles, annotated reading materials, and in the net result of findings.

To identify accurately the interest element in reading, it is important that pupils' choice of reading be

¹ Thorndike, Op. Cit.

unbiased by school-room influences, curriculum assignments, availability, and attractive physical characteristics of books. To this end, a list of fictitious titles, briefly annotated, and representing different types of reading material, was compiled and presented to 460 Catholic high-school girls.

It was presumed that the data thus obtained would be more definite, since the mere reading of brief annotations would eliminate influential factors, such as motivation of course requirements. Besides, the pupils were not asked to record what they had read, but what they liked, disliked, or regarded as indifferent or undecided. When the list of titles was submitted to them, they were requested to indicate their interest by making one of the three responses, that is, to encircle "Yes," if they were interested; "No," if they did not care to read the book, or circle the question mark (?), if they were undecided.

In the fictitious titles, an attempt was made to identify interests not in terms of actual titles, but in terms of themes, problems, or situations found in a book. It was assumed that if a certain element is found to be of interest to a large number of students, that element will interest them wherever it is found; and that statements, giving the nature of what might be the content in a given book, could serve as a formula that might be applied to several books of a similar type. The implication of this

idea was expressed by Arbuthnot in her book, Children and Books. Referring to Rankin's study Children's Interests in Library Books of Fiction, published in 1944 by Teachers College, Columbia University, Arbuthnot said "if that study were repeated today some of the titles might differ but the types of books would probably be much the same."²

The objectives of the thumb-nail descriptions of fictitious books were 1) to secure a more adequate picture of the prevalent reading tastes according to the high-school grades, 2) to determine the differences in subject interests among pupils of different mental abilities, 3) to draw from their responses general inferences regarding their spiritual, social, emotional, and intellectual maturity, and 4) to compare the data obtained on books actually read with the topics inherent in the annotations of fictitious books. The last objective was of greater importance than the rest, since it served as an additional check against other responses to determine validity.

On the basis of the students' replies, it was hoped to ascertain to some extent the status of the girls' reading tastes and attitudes, to assist in promotion of more desirable reading purposes and reading habits.

² May H. Arbuthnot, Children and Books, Chicago, Scott, Foresman, 1957, p. 599.

1. Levels of Preference by Grades.

One of the objectives, as stated above, was to determine whether the pupils of different high-school grades showed different patterns of appeal in their choice of free reading. As revealed in Table XIV, the normal or common pattern for interests was considerably the same for the high-school grades, despite individual differences. The brief inventory in Table XV also tends to confirm the assumption that if a book has a common denominator of interest, its popularity among high-school pupils will be alive, irrespective of grade.

Tables XIV and XV indicate also a fair degree of homogeneity among the girls in their choice of titles. The significance of this study, however, lies primarily in discovering the attitudes toward specific themes or subjects chosen by the Catholic high-school girls. It was gratifying to note, therefore, that a religious theme in the book, The Sacred Charm, was selected by the girls as a book of first choice. Similarly, His Last Words had a considerable interest appeal.

In all grades, teen-age life and romance, as illustrated by the title, Eighteenth Summer, ranked comparatively high. The girls even in the ninth grade showed definitely interest in stories having love for their main feature.

The greatest change in rank was noticed in historical fiction, wherein the title, Rainbow in the Dark, rose from

Table XIV.

Composite Picture of the Interest Level
in the Fictitious Titles According to Grades*

Title	Grades				Average Per cent
	9 (156)	10 (115)	11 (102)	12 (87)	
The Black Shadow	58.9	56.5	56.4	40.8	52.6
Have a Hobby?	17.9	22.1	16.1	17.8	18.4
Too Late	51.2	55.6	62.7	47.1	54.1
Behind the Award	73.4	73.4	71.5	74.7	73.2
The Perennial Drive	33.0	36.5	37.7	40.8	37.0
Calling All Youth	85.9	88.7	76.9	77.0	82.1
His Last Words	92.6	95.2	91.6	89.0	92.2
The Magic of Music	46.4	38.2	40.2	54.6	44.8
The Sacred Charm	82.3	92.6	86.7	89.6	87.8
And Then What?	48.4	46.5	51.4	56.3	50.6
Look at the Birdie	49.0	42.6	36.7	34.5	40.7
'Tis My Country	57.0	60.0	48.5	50.5	54.0
Absolutely True	81.7	88.7	77.4	75.8	80.9
Want to be a Big-Leaguer?	25.9	24.3	30.9	26.4	26.8
Rainbow in the Dark	82.0	92.6	91.6	90.2	89.2
Science in Action	50.3	56.9	47.5	46.5	50.3
Make Yourself Pretty	74.3	81.3	93.6	71.2	80.2
Larry Hayes	81.4	87.8	80.4	82.1	82.9
I Live in the U.S.A.	53.2	55.2	39.7	54.0	50.5
Eighteenth Summer	81.7	86.9	85.3	76.4	82.5
Captain Gil	72.7	70.0	70.5	63.2	69.1
To Be or Not ...	63.4	66.5	60.8	63.2	63.4
Unexpected Inheritance	22.4	24.8	25.5	23.5	24.0
Why Not?	41.0	50.8	58.8	53.4	51.0
Carlos the Toreador	43.8	34.8	38.7	37.9	38.5

*See Appendix 2 - (A)

the ninth place in the freshman year to the third place in the senior year. The simple, wholesome type of fiction, as suggested by the title, Absolutely True, seemed to have lost its popularity in the third and fourth years, decreasing in rank from the fifth and sixth places in the first two years, to tenth and thirteenth places respectively in the last two years.

Contrary to Brink's findings, in which he asserted that "books dealing with personal appearance, etiquette, and homemaking do not appeal strongly to pupils at any grade level,"³ there was evidence of increasing interest among the girls in the area of personality development. Calling All Youth held the fifth place among the sophomores and seniors, and seventh place among freshmen and juniors. The freshmen, however, showed less interest in the serious subject of immortality implied in the annotation under the title And Then What?

The apparent consistency in taste among the girls in all the four grades was further evidenced in Table XV by some of the titles that often run parallel. For example, The Sacred Charm has been chosen as the first-choice book among the majority of the pupils in the four grades. Sophomores and seniors assigned the same rank in preference to three titles: Eighteenth Summer, Calling All Girls, and And Then What? There was only a slight deviation between two other titles, The Rainbow in the Dark and His Last Words.

³ Brink, Op. Cit., p. 613.

Table XV.

Popular Fictitious Titles According to Grades,
Rank Preference, and Maturity Level*

Title	Grade and Rank				Maturity Level*
	9	10	11	12	
The Sacred Charm	1	1	1	1	B
The Rainbow in the Dark	9	2	2	3	B
His Last Words	4	3	3	2	A
Eighteenth Summer	2	4	4	4	B
Calling All Youth	7	5	7	5	C
Too Late	3	13	6	8	B
Behind the Award	6	11	5	10	A
Absolutely True	5	6	10	13	C
Larry Hayes	8	9	13	6	B
And Then What?	13	7	12	7	A

*Tentative rating in imitation of Foster's subject scale⁴

⁴ J. H. Foster, An Experiment in Classifying Fiction Based on the Characteristics of Its Readers, unpublished Doctor of Philosophy dissertation presented to the Graduate Library School, University of Chicago, 1935, 196 p.

At any rate, both the teacher and the librarian may become better informed in their work of creating and supplying a well-selected demand for books, after discovering some of the general trends implicit in the data given in Table XIV and in Table XV.

a) Reading maturity. - The annotated list of fictitious titles was designed also to yield at least a partial evidence of the girls' reading maturity in terms of theme selection. It has been commonly held that the reading of sensational and emotional literature is associated with the adolescent mentality.

Since, as has been already discussed in the previous chapter under "Librarians' Report," simple criteria for maturity that could be easily applied to both fiction and non-fiction have not as yet been devised, an attempt was made to follow the broad classification, used by Foster in her experiment, despite its old date.⁵ Her categories and criteria of judgment were found unsuitable to serve our purpose, but her approach to the problems of assigning some degree of maturity to different fiction books was found feasible and was adopted with, of course, necessary deviations.

Foster classified fiction with respect to general type of subject matter, and then distinguished degrees of

⁵ Foster, Op. Cit.

maturity within the subject. In group A and B, she included classics, standard authors, moderately good modern fiction, biography, and most of the non-fiction. Light fiction, mystery and detective stories received the rating of C.

There is no doubt that to place in any classification items objectively is a difficult process, because much variation is found among different raters with respect to the elements which should be considered in the building of a good maturity scale. Foster's experiment is no exception. Despite its limitations, however, the influence of Foster's general plan prevailed in the grouping of fictitious titles according to subject matter, inferred from the annotations.

At first glance, the grouping in Table XVI, arranged by theme and in order of maturity, will appear relatively simple. But librarians and teachers must be aware of the different range and discrepancies in the levels of maturity. Before deciding on grouping the significant books for the mature readers, it is advisable that careful consideration be given to the community and students' attitudes. Maturity is generally viewed in the light of the complexity of influences that play upon individuals and groups. It is not automatic, nor is it spontaneous. Its growth is gradual. Hence, it is well for the teachers and librarians to bear in mind that even the senior in high school needs help and guidance to read from an adult point of view.

Table XVI.

Basic Theme and Maturity Level
of the Annotated Books*

Title	Theme or Subject Matter	Maturity Level
Behind the Award	Duty, Charity, Heroism	(A)
The Perennial Drive	Materialism vs happiness	(A)
His Last Words	Faith reigns supreme	(A)
The Magic of Music	Music and its effect	(A)
And Then What?	Immortality	(A)
Science in Action	Medical research	(A)
Unexpected Inheritance	Divorce, a social menace	(A)
Too Late	Marriage triangle problem	(B)
The Sacred Charm	Religion, a universal language	(B)
Look at the Birdie	Techniques of photography	(B)
'Tis My Country	United States History	(B)
Rainbow in the Dark	Life adjustment	(B)
Larry Hayes	Character study	(B)
I Live in the U.S.A.	Travelogue	(B)
Eighteenth Summer	Real-life situations	(B)
Captain Gil	Delinquency, a social problem	(B)
To Be or Not ...	Vocation	(B)
Why Not?	Sex education	(B)
The Black Shadow	Mystery story	(C)
Have a Hobby?	Hobbies, Career, Aviation	(C)
Calling All Youth	Advice for adolescents	(C)
Absolutely True	Light fiction, adjustment	(C)
Want-to-be Big-Leaguer?	Sports	(C)
Make Yourself Pretty	Hints for teen-agers	(C)
Carlos the Toreador	Adventure, Sports	(C)

*See Appendix 2 - (A)

b) Maximum interest. - An attempt was also made to discover the general trends of interests according to some degree of intensity. The scale used in Table XVIII, slightly modified in range from Thorndike's monograph,⁶ does not identify with accuracy the intensity of interests, but it serves as another auxiliary factor in the assessing of the girls' reading tastes.

Reference to Table XVII reveals that non-fiction fared poorly in contrast with themes which seem ageless in their appeal. It is an established fact, and corroborated by data in Table XIII, that among high-school students motives for reading are chiefly pleasure and self-improvement.

The eternal feminine was also evident. Love and romance, as illustrated by the titles, Rainbow in the Dark, Eighteenth Summer, and Absolutely True, maintain a high level appeal today just as they had ranked in popularity among teenagers decades ago. This singular preference among girls, perpetuated from generation to generation, evoked the critical comment of Bertha Handlan in her article, "The Fallacy of Free Reading as an Approach to Appreciation." Handlan found fault with the feminine public that shows excessive fondness for literature dealing exclusively with the experiences and personalities of women. She believed that if reading of the young

⁶ Thorndike, Op. Cit.

Table XVII.

Levels of Interest Showing Choice
of Fictitious Titles in Descending Order

Titles	Very high (over 80%)	Rather high (60-79%)	Moderate (40-59%)	Rather low (30-39%)	Low Below (30%)
His Last Words	92.2				
Rainbow in the Dark	89.2				
The Sacred Charm	87.8				
Larry Hayes	82.9				
Eighteenth Summer	82.5				
Calling All Youth	82.1				
Absolutely True	80.9				
Make Yourself Pretty	80.2				
Behind the Award		73.2			
Captain Gil		69.1			
To Be or Not ...		63.4			
Too Late			54.1		
'Tis My Country			54.0		
Black Shadow			52.6		
Why Not?			51.0		
And Then What?			50.6		
I Live in the U.S.A.			50.5		
Science in Action			50.3		
The Magic of Music			50.3		
Look at the Birdie			40.7		
Carlos the Toreador				38.7	
The Perennial Drive				37.0	
Want-to-be a Big-Leaguer?					26.8
Unexpected Inheritance					24.0
Have a Hobby?					18.4

girls were guided more tactfully, than nonfiction books, such as current events, dealing with international and political problems, would also be found among the "girls' books."⁷

Implicit in the annotation under the title And Then What? was reading that challenged thinking. Only 50.6 per cent of the group had chosen it for their reading. Perennial Drive was another example of a subject which has fallen under the "traditional lag." Only 38.7 per cent have indicated preference for this adult subject, although the entire group is on the threshold of the adult world.

The fact that only 51 per cent of the girls should be interested in the title Why Not?, which deals with sex education, stands in direct opposition to the popular opinion on that question. The girls' interest in the subject of divorce (Unexpected Inheritance) was indicated by a very low figure, 24 per cent.

Similarly, their moderate, almost low interest in Fine Arts (The Magic of Music) and in scientific material (Science in Action) was quite consistent with the findings of other studies. The need for guidance and assistance in the field of non-fiction was obvious. Competence in any major area of living cannot be developed, unless the school will first develop interest in that area.

⁷ Handlan, Op. Cit., p. 186-187.

Over 80 per cent of the girls chose the titles Calling All Youth and Make Yourself Pretty, both non-fiction books, because the theme was based on the topic of self-improvement. Fiction, featuring teen-age problems, need not be excluded, but the school must see that high-school pupils' reading be extended into broader areas, "and take in literature dealing with social conditions, with philosophical and ethical problems, with another age, another culture, another social stratum ...⁸

In one respect, however, the Catholic high-school girls differed from their peers in public schools. Contrary to the findings of some researchers, who reported that public high-school pupils failed to show interest in books that emphasize spiritual values, the girls showed interest in religious themes. This favorable attitude was brought out especially in the high percentage of students selecting such titles as His Last Words (92.2%) and The Sacred Charm (87.8%), wherein religion predominated.

The significance of these responses became more apparent when viewed in the light of the common core of the girls' interests, since, as mentioned previously, the answers did not indicate books read, but types of books the girls would like to read.

⁸ Carlsen, "Behind Reading Interests," Op. Cit., p. 10.

On the basis of themes implied in the annotations, it seemed fairly accurate to warrant that high-school pupils' reading patterns could be reliably categorized into three major types: 1) inspirational, including the religious element, 2) recreational, including teen-age stories, having true-to-life situations, and 3) informational, including character development and self-improvement.

It may be well to draw attention to the fact that the girls' choice of "Best-liked" books actually read (Table VII) corresponded with the type of books for which preference was indicated (Table XVII). This correlation was not so apparent in the range of titles and maturity of reading material as in the matter of general type of appeal.

One may discern trends of the same dominant elements of appeal in the ten most popular books actually read (Table VII) and in the choice of books the girls would like to read (Table XVII). Romance, inspiration, sacrifice, realism, emotional release, adolescent problems are categories of interests inherent in the ten titles, listed in both tables according to the popularity vote and special appeal.

The points discussed in the foregoing paragraphs are in agreement with the conclusions of Thorndike,⁹ particularly with respect to the common pattern of interest appeal.

⁹ Thorndike, Op. Cit.

Thorndike's study illustrated the fact that irrespective of age or grade level the book may appeal to the pupil, provided it is interesting and easy to read. The data in the current investigation confirm these conclusions. In most of the preferred areas of interest, there appeared the same stamp of approval, with only slight variation, from grade to grade.

As a guide in the selection of books for the high-school pupils, these common impressions gathered from the findings may prove a welcome aid for the busy teacher and librarian. But knowledge of the dominant interest appeal among adolescents does not excuse the teacher from the responsibility of guiding the pupils into new fields of interest.

Inasmuch as particular themes and subjects help the teacher to generalize in regard to types of books preferred by the high-school girls, it will be of more profit to her to find out why the teen-agers do not show greater interest in other valuable types of reading material. It is evident that the school must be concerned not only with the establishing of the habit of reading, but also with directing pupils toward more extensive and discriminating areas of reading. This apparent weakness, indicating interest appeal within the confines of a few preferred themes, necessitates continuous guidance. More diversified reading activities related to the interests and reading abilities of student groups as well as individual pupils should be the goal of every high school.

c) Topical classification. - For the purpose of further analysis and comparison, the girls' choice of reading was studied according to topical classification.* Again, except for few freshman-senior differences, the findings indicated that there was no striking degree of variability in the types of literature preferred by the girls in the four high-school grades. In the selection of topics, as in the choice of fictitious titles, it was clearly discernible that the girls' preferences were fairly similar from grade to grade.

A comparative reading pattern of preferred topics and subjects, arranged in descending order according to the four grades, was incorporated into Table XVIII. From the data shown in this table, several inferential facts can be drawn.

The most noticeable feature of Table XVIII was the position which humor held as a factor in the reading interests of the girls. It outranked every other class (88.8%). Such high appeal was not registered in any of girls' previous answers. According to frequency of mention in Table XIII, only twenty-six pupils reported humor as a major element of interest. While it may not be possible to account for this difference in the pupils' responses, it does appear significant that the girls apparently found it easier to check a given item than to specify the subject of interest.

*See Appendix 2 - (B)

Table XVIII.

Classification of Reading Material in Order
of Preferences According to Grades

Subject Class	Grade				Average Per cent
	9 (156)	10 (115)	11 (102)	12 (87)	
Humorous stories	82.0	85.2	94.1	94.0	88.8
Personality & Self-improvement	84.6	83.4	89.2	75.7	82.9
School and teen-age interests	84.6	87.8	85.2	68.9	81.6
Lives of Saints	83.9	84.3	74.5	74.7	79.3
Careers	75.0	78.3	73.5	77.0	75.9
Adventure	76.9	72.1	77.5	65.5	71.2
Family and Home	63.4	66.9	58.8	68.9	64.5
Biography	54.4	52.1	53.9	80.4	60.2
Mystery & Detective stories	67.3	49.5	67.6	51.7	59.0
Religious Life	62.8	57.3	50.9	51.7	55.6
Catholic Action & Missions	66.0	72.1	42.1	42.5	55.6
Sex, Courtship, Marriage	40.3	44.3	65.6	55.1	51.3
Social Problems	43.5	48.6	49.0	51.7	48.2
Psychological stories	33.3	41.7	51.9	56.5	45.8
Animals	46.1	43.4	37.2	51.7	44.6
Historical events & people	44.9	48.6	37.2	45.9	44.1
Science	44.2	35.6	39.2	31.0	37.5
Sports	35.8	40.0	39.2	28.7	35.9
History	34.6	37.3	29.4	34.4	33.9
Hobbies	39.1	39.1	28.4	25.2	32.9
Art, Music, Painting	41.6	32.1	23.5	32.1	32.3
Geography and Travel	32.0	28.6	16.7	29.8	26.7
Philosophical themes	8.9	14.7	28.4	18.3	17.5
Political & Economic Problems	10.2	14.7	13.7	21.8	15.1

That humor makes a strong appeal to secondary-school pupils has been confirmed by previous investigators.^{10, 11} It is the contention of some writers that the teacher should consider it her social responsibility to educate the students' sense of humor.

Sterner believed that "humor may have therapeutic value; humorous material of the leisure language activities of young people offers many opportunities for the development of more discriminating taste."¹² More emphatic in his plea for humor was Father Sheerin in his stirring article, "Let's Have Some Humor!"

... I propose ... a crusade for more humor. In this exciting time we need a balance-wheel to keep public opinion from spinning off into extravagant attitudes and fanatical phobias ... A sense of humor is a sixth sense that looks trouble in the face and laughs at it. Humor lifts the heart and mellows the mind and gives to the eye the right perspective on the problems of life.¹³

Similarly, Arbuthnot believed that latent in good wholesome humor are spiritual values. "Laughter provides a catharsis

¹⁰ Dale Zeller, Relative Importance of Factors of Interest in Reading Materials for Junior High School Pupils, Teachers College Contributions to Education, No. 841, New York, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1941, p. 73.

¹¹ Norvell, Op. Cit., p. 66.

¹² Sterner, Op. Cit., p. 71.

¹³ John B. Sheerin, "Let's Have Some Humor," in The Catholic World, Vol. 179, issue of April 1954, p. 2.

for heavy spirits and a release from tension."

Unfortunately, there is a surprising dearth of stories for adolescents to indulge in good, wholesome and "subtle" humor. The teacher should decide on the suitability of humor of any particular book before recommending it to her pupils.

It was interesting to note that humor seemed more important in the upper grades than in the lower. Also, when the four years were considered as a unit, humor stories held first place among all the girls.

School and teen-age interests, however, have undergone a considerable decline in the senior year. Biography on the other hand, made comparatively a noteworthy advance in the fourth year. The freshmen showed more interest in science, but the difference in ranking was not significant.

Personality and self-improvement have apparently a decided hold on the adolescent girl. The average percentage recording interest in this topic was 82.7. The popularity of mystery and detective stories, and the rank of family and home stories fluctuated in successive grades.

Religious life, as a vocation, showed a relative amount of interest in each grade. But there was an abrupt fall in interest in Catholic Action and missions at the eleventh and twelfth grade levels. Nor have the upper grades shown any greater interest in history than the lower classmen.

The downward trend in interest was especially surprising in the subjects involving hobbies and sports. Art, music, and painting were also in the category of topics, showing low percentage (32.3%). Interest in geography and travel was very meager throughout the four years.

According to Table XVIII, the girls seemed, for the most part, to care but little for philosophical subjects, and by far, the smallest number registered interest in political and economic problems. Evidently, these subjects are unfamiliar to the majority of pupils in the secondary schools, and since these topics belong to a class of literature which tends to tax one's powers of thinking and reflection, many girls label this type of reading as "boring."

The perusal of combined percentages would at first impress the casual observer that trends in reading among the Catholic high-school girls are commendable. Upon more careful scrutiny of the tabulation, however, this first impression partially gives way.

The findings gave evidence that the teen-age girls' reading is not sufficiently varied. There is still much to be desired in the development of a catholicity of reading interests. There is a tendency toward reading with indiscriminate choice and inadequate balance. That the predominance of reading material which is generally easy should rank the highest in the Catholic high-school girls' reading tastes

is a fact that should not be ignored.

The adolescent period is comparatively too short to be utilized on reading only humorous and teen-age stories. Growth and maturity in reading cannot be developed if the teen-age girl indulges in reading only for "entertainment, amusement, and escape from boredom."

True, reading can be fun, but it need not rule out purposeful and serious reading from one's literary diet. Through reading guidance, the adolescent girl can cultivate a sense of awareness regarding her duties and responsibilities in a changing and challenging world. However, she will not go higher than the values with which she was made acquainted. Reading, therefore, must yield also a spiritual and intellectual profit if it is to play a significant role in the future of the girl.

2. Interest Appeal by Ability Groups.

The consistency of the foregoing results was further reinforced by the tabulation of topics according to three ability levels: Low, Average, and High.

As stated in the chapter under "Method of Research," the grouping of the pupils according to mental abilities was done primarily to ascertain whether interests in reading are dominated by levels of intelligence. Accordingly, three terms were used to indicate the degree of the students'

general intellectual ability: low, average, and high.

For convenience in tabulating the girls' responses the twenty-four topics, listed in the questionnaire and inserted in Appendix 2, were reduced to ten general classes. The over-all picture of the girls' topical interests was presented in Table XIX.

Despite the different range in mental maturity among the students, the uniformity of interests was again rather striking in most of the areas. Even when answers were studied by ability levels (Table XIX), teen-age stories continued to hold predominant place. Of interest also was the general agreement of the three groups in their choice of religious topics and social problems.

The ranking of some subject classes was almost identical with those classified topically in Table XVIII. Most pronounced similarity in their range of appeal was found with Social Problems, including Family and Home; with light reading, such as the mystery and detective stories, and with the Political and Economic Problems.

When the type of reading material was separated into immature, medium, and mature levels, the High group showed higher percentage in the choice of such items as biography and philosophical and psychological stories. There was a slight tendency for the Low group to show greater interest in science than their peers in the High group.

Table XIX.

Choice of Reading Material According to Topical Classification
by Three Ability Groups

Categories	Ability Groups			Average Per cent
	High (131)	Average (185)	Low (144)	
School, Teen-age interests, careers	83.4	84.7	86.4	84.8
Catholic Action, Lives of Saints, Religious Life, Missions	72.0	73.7	76.4	74.0
Biography	72.6	66.0	59.5	66.0
Light Reading: Adventure Animals, Hobbies, Sports	63.0	62.7	59.6	61.7
Social Problems, Marriage Home, Sex Education	65.3	64.1	64.1	64.4
Natural Science Aviation, etc.	48.8	47.3	53.4	49.8
History, Geography Travel	49.1	40.1	46.1	45.1
Philosophical themes, Psychological Stories	48.7	35.7	38.2	40.8
Art, Music, Painting	40.3	43.4	39.8	41.1
Political and Economic Problems	25.9	18.3	21.4	21.4

Again, from the standpoint of appeal, the girls' selection of topics (Table XIX) showed close relationship with their preferences in fictitious titles (Table XVII). Teen-age interests, self-improvement, and the religious element ranked very high. On the other hand, some subjects, such as biography, family and home, history, science, political problems and Fine Arts fell under the column of either moderate or low interest level. The same phases of similarity in the girls' reading tastes were the chief features of most of the data incorporated into the tables.

The main purpose of arranging the data in tables was to make necessary comparison of the ranks of the titles and topics so as to throw some light on the consistency with which the levels of interest occurred. Such tabulation showed also the students' narrow range of interests. An example which was well borne out was the excessive interest in humor. Over eighty-eight per cent of the girls expressed preference for this "escape" type of literature. It was one of the chief weaknesses of the girls' reading habits, revealing the lack of initiative for more serious, aesthetic, and literary values in reading. As indicated in Tables XVII and XVIII, almost all of the subjects, which foster thinking, have been listed within the moderate or the lowest brackets of interest level.

The results of this and other comparative studies justify the conclusion that guidance in reading has been recognized as a necessary factor in developing favorable attitudes, tastes, and interests of the adolescent pupils. Most significant of all, perhaps, is the fact that there is a great need of stimulating through reading a wide knowledge and critical thinking in the educational, social, and economic world, in which the Catholic girls showed relatively little concern. Yet, the rapid advance in science and industry, the uncertain political developments, and the growth of the mass media of communication all have emphasized the importance of cultural, interpretative, and critical background for the proper understanding of contemporary problems.

The study, therefore, pointed out the challenging opportunity to give adequate consideration to the major areas of weaknesses, and to utilize the findings as a stimulus and starting point for a broad and enriched reading guidance program in the Catholic high schools.

CHAPTER VI

INTEGRATING GUIDANCE WITH READING ACTIVITIES

Any discussion about a curricular subject involves in one way or another the role of guidance. Just as the teacher's responsibility is necessary to adopt suitable techniques and procedures for guiding the pupils in their personal, educational, social or vocational problems, so she is equally responsible for expanding and enriching their experiences and growing needs through reading.

Guidance is one of the words that may connote different interpretations. In reading it means giving assistance to the reader, so that he can find a book, written on the level of his interests, his comprehension, and his ability, thereby satisfying his needs -- the term need being defined as "that which is necessary for an individual to reach an end, immediate or ultimate, as long as it is commensurate with one's nature, origin, and destiny."¹

A rather broad interpretation of guidance is needed when the term is applied to the secondary-school level. Reading guidance on that level must deal not only with adolescents of many different backgrounds, tastes, and levels of ability,

¹ Brother Elmo Bransby, "Developing an Adequate Guidance Program," in Proceedings and Addresses of the National Catholic Educational Association, Vol. 51, Washington, National Catholic Educational Association, 1954, p. 391.

but also with all kinds of reading, voluntary, required, curricular, and recreational. It must stimulate interest if it is dormant, and use it for variety of purposes, if it exists among the high-school students.

Guidance in reading is especially relevant to the period of adolescence. Young people need literature which will help them to interpret their youthful experiences and personal problems; they need guidance in reading so that they may acquire wholesome reading habits, which will help them to establish values for their entire life.

During these growing years there is a great deal of pressure upon the student, both from within and without. He is tempted to independence of thought and judgment, and he has within himself uncertain feelings or moods and impulse. His physical development, I. O., self-control, emotions, and his ideals will have an effect on his whole being.²

Through judicious planning and guidance, the teacher can provide reading material gauged to the personal needs and interests of the high-school pupil.

Staff co-operation and mutual recognition are essential for effective guidance service in reading. Teachers in every curriculum field have some bearing on pupils' reading; all have, therefore, some contribution to make. Guidance in reading should, as a consequence, be the function of every

² Sister M. Lawrence James, "Understanding the Adolescent," in The Catholic School Journal, Vol. 59, issue of December 1959, p. 14.

professional person connected with school work.

With these facts in mind, it was desirable to view with some consideration the guidance practices adopted by the Catholic high schools, and which were described indirectly by the girls in their responses. The concern with the nature and extent of guidance service through reading led to several questions, among which the following was included: "Has reading recommended by your teachers helped you in any way to solve your personal problems?"

The answers to this question were definitely disappointing. More than half of the number (52%) of the students reported that they found no help in solving their personal problems from the books suggested for reading by their teachers. Of course, it would be absurd to assume that books alone produce a magic capsule formula for solving the problems of the reader. However, in combination with other factors which enter his experience, books can be instrumental in his personal development.

Generally, all problems create serious situations for the youth. To meet these problems and to see their situations reflected in different books is an enjoyable and meaningful experience. Books holding developmental values supply much-needed directed reading through which young people can gain insight and better understanding with regard to their own situations and problems of adjustment. But students must

have access to books that have sufficient variety of themes. Discriminating guidance can bring together the relation of reading to individual needs.

1. Effects Attributed to Reading

Among other facets relative to guidance and reading problems is the effect of reading on the moral and emotional experiences of the reader. There should be no need to reiterate the fact that reading produces effects both desirable and undesirable, even though the validity of the assumption has been challenged scientifically by educators. Statistical evidence as to the influence of reading on overt behavior and the structure of reader's personality is still lacking reliability and completeness. However, "lack of research," as pointed out by Russell in his summaries of articles on the influence of literature, "must not be construed to mean that reading has little or no impact on people."³

De Boer expressed a similar point of view in his discussion of the effects of literature on human behavior. Granted that experimental studies have not as yet yielded valid and adequate results, "nevertheless," he argued, "we have assumed, and must assume, that the reading of good books will

³ David H. Russell, "Some Research on the Impact of Reading," in The English Journal, Vol. 47, issue of October 1958, p. 410.

influence the manner of one's thinking, feeling, and acting."⁴

That reading can be a powerful influence for either good or evil has been demonstrated by Sister M. Corde Lorang's study.⁵ Similarly, Kirsch believed that "not a single thought enters the mind which has not its subconscious effect in some degree."⁶

In view of these observations, several items in the questionnaire aimed to ascertain the attitude of the Catholic girls toward the moral problems found in books. There is no denying that "some printed matter is intended to deceive, to confuse, and to corrupt." This, of course, makes the question of influence a difficult one to solve.

But it is the task of educators to fortify the young people with sound, clear-cut Christian principles, and train them to exercise the right judgment with regard to the application of these principles to a wide variety of situations found in their reading matter. Wise guidance should lead the youth to secure a well-balanced set of ideals, and to acquire generalized standards and beliefs to judge what is desirable, approved, and right, and what is undesirable and morally wrong.

⁴ John J. De Boer, "Literature and Human Behavior," in The English Journal, Vol. 39, issue of February 1950, p. 76.

⁵ Sister M. Corde Lorang, Op. Cit.

⁶ Felix M. Kirsch, "There's Something about a Book," in The Catholic School Journal, Vol. 40, issue of March 1940, p. 68.

This contention was upheld by Father Gardiner, the literary editor of America, whose remarks on the question of realism aroused among some critics controversial repercussions. Writing in his challenging booklet, Tenets for Readers and Reviewers, Father Gardiner called attention to the fact that

Our courses in literature and religion ought to equip future readers with stability and moral poise enough to enable them to read books that are realistic ... For there is nothing wrong with realism in art and literature; it is a necessary ingredient. It is only when realism descends to utter naturalism and pornography that it becomes false art.⁷

Since our young people are not immune to the sensational and lurid that often color their viewpoint, reading guidance is naturally necessary to minimize the possibilities of undesirable effects of reading. Some questions were specifically designed, therefore, to find out whether the girls' environmental background, predispositions, and favorable attitudes, nurtured in a Catholic atmosphere, bear significant relationship to their ability to "think Catholic."

The results, given in Table XX, revealed that the majority of the girls have a fairly balanced judgment of their own upon which they can rely for their choice of books. Obviously, the unprincipled philosophy of "Everybody's doing it" has not as yet imbued the minds of all our Catholic youth.

⁷ Harold C. Gardiner, Tenets for Readers and Reviewers, New York, America Press, n.d., p. 24.

Table XX.
Students' Self-revelation in the Area
of Reading Effects

Basic Questions	Per cent		
	Yes	No	No answers
Has reading influenced your actions, conduct, or thinking?	60.7	37.1	2.2
Do you share the experiences of the characters as you read?	89.1	9.1	1.6
Have you read books which gave you wrong ideas about sex or love?	9.0	89.0	2.0
Do you read books which you could recommend freely to others?	90.6	8.0	1.3
Do you feel that you must read the so-called "Best Sellers"?	16.0	82.6	1.3
Do you think parents and teachers are unreasonable in censoring your books?	23.2	76.0	.7

True, the findings, as indicated in Table XX, are not a guarantee that the pupils' knowledge of what is morally right or wrong will insure good conduct, or that from the standpoint of transfer, they will translate the religious ideals into action. Yet, one could tentatively predict from the responses that since the majority of the girls in this study "think Catholic," they do and will invariably "act Catholic."

An analysis of the answers to the questions on the effect of books gave additional proof of the formative influence of reading in the life of the adolescent girl. To the question "Has reading influenced your actions, conduct, or thinking?" 61 per cent of the group acknowledged that books had a decided influence in their lives. The thumbnail summary, implied in the following statements, supports further the assumption that pupils gain insight into their own reactions by reading books. Typical replies were as follows:

"The book made me want to be better."

"I tried to live up to the lesson I derived from the story."

"I obeyed my parents more readily."

"I began to see God in my neighbor."

"I became more aware of the fact that God was near me."

"I was cautious not to make the mistake the main character did."

"I became kinder to people by reading that book."

"I tried to control my temper."

"I was more cautious how I acted and what I said."

"It made me more humble."

"It helped me to make a decision."

Over 89 per cent of the girls admitted that they share and participate with the characters as they read the stories. More than 25 per cent of the pupils wrote that they had tried to imitate the characters portrayed in the books. One student remarked, "I felt as if I had lived the story all over again."

The impact of characters, encountered in reading, stamps itself unmistakably on the mind of the reader. By means of personal and situational identifications, the reader frequently finds not only the ideal person who becomes his model for emulation, but also a solution to some of his personal problems. Through wholesome identification, he is inspired to do what is right and to avoid what is wrong.

But the mechanism of identification can suggest both edification as well as its opposite. It is necessary, therefore, that teachers find out what effect has this "mysterious process" of identification on the changing thought, attitudes, and behavior of the adolescents, and "through wise guidance of young people's reading, carry on what may be called preventative bibliotherapy"⁸ to counteract the tendency toward indiscriminate and questionable reading. The following expressions illustrate the girls' reaction after reading such literature:

⁸ De Boer, "Literature and Human Behavior," Op. Cit., p. 77.

"I was ashamed."
"I became worse."
"I found out things I never knew before."
"It just stayed in my mind."

Nine per cent of the group admitted that some books they read gave them wrong ideas about sex and love. Eight per cent of the girls read books which they would not recommend to others (Table XX). Such answers make guidance not only an aid but a necessity.

Kevin Lynch, editor of the Information Magazine, who spoke in respect to young people's religious reading at the Annual Conference of the Catholic Library Association, held in Chicago in 1959, offered some practical suggestions, which can be applied also to the present discussion.

In our zeal to shelter young students from bad literature, we must neither stifle their reading interest nor destroy their confidence in us as reasonable guides ... Could not the senior year in high school be a period when a carefully planned and judiciously supervised reading program is instituted that would provide transition from high school to life in college, or life in the market place, and at the same time not be an occasion of sin? This is something that requires thought and study, but it is a problem that must be faced.⁹

This idea was endorsed by Father Bouwhuis, who maintained that some "students can go through high school with

⁹ Kevin Lynch, "Religious Reading for High School Students," in Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Catholic Library Association, held in Chicago, Villanova, Penn., The Catholic Library Association, 1959, p. 181.

closed, constricted minds," unless they have access to mature reading. "High school," he argued, "is not too soon for the students to form the habit" of analyzing critically challenging reading matter.

Foremost among the advantages of extensive reading is the attainment of a discriminating comprehension. Consequently, a wide and critical reading can help the student not only to read a book "with an eye to the truth," but also to pass judgment upon different areas of interest, such as the movies, television, and radio programs, and articles found in the press.

There are many possibilities offered to the classroom teacher to train the pupils how to pass judgment upon the reading matter assigned to supplement the curricular subjects. Especially in non-textbook materials, representing the best that may be found in the different fields of thought, can the pupils learn to think, abstract deeper meanings, and evaluate constructively and creatively.

Unless guidance be given freely and tactfully, some pupils will inevitably fail to understand the great potentialities and values found in books. Careful guidance should assist the pupils in their efforts to grow into discriminating readers. The books, however, must be related to the readers' needs and interests in order to produce desirable effects.

2. Attitude Toward Catholic Literature.

In accordance with the general purpose of the investigation, an effort was made to determine the attitudes of the Catholic high-school girls with regard to Catholic literature. By the term "attitude," as it is broadly used in this discussion, is meant the "tendency to accept or reject some situation, and frequently the presence of an emotionalized tendency is indicated."¹⁰

The element of acceptance-rejection plays a major role in the pupil's reading taste and in his critical interpretation of reading matter. Professor De Boer, writing on discrimination in reading, described this approach to the printed page.

Acceptance-rejection may take place on a predominantly emotional or predominantly intellectual level. The reader may accept a story emotionally because it harmonizes with a passing mood, or because it provides a kind of emotional security, as when a character meets and overcomes a difficulty shared by the reader. Or the reader may reject a solution to a human problem on the ground that it contradicts what he knows, or as he thinks, about people.¹¹

¹⁰ Helen C. Crossen, Effect of Attitudes of the Reader upon Critical Reading Ability, a Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Division of the Social Sciences in Candidacy for the Doctor of Philosophy, Department of Education, The University of Chicago, 1947, p. 2.

¹¹ John J. De Boer, "Cultivating Powers of Discriminating in Reading," in School Review, Vol. 57, issue of January 1949, p. 29.

McKillop¹² investigated the effect of attitudes on the reader and was led to believe that students reject reading because of attitudes. She pointed out in her study how student's entire response to reading depends upon his attitudes.

Since attitudes and other environmental factors tend to exert dominating influence over the individual's behavior and his choice of reading, one can naturally conclude that those attitudes and factors ought to determine the pupil's reaction to selective reading, such as Catholic literature. The Catholic high-school student brings to his background such important determinants as the "Catholic climate" of the home, the Church, the Catholic school, and social experiences which should condition his reactions to the printed page.

Consequently, the girls' answers to the questions on Catholic literature can be appraised in terms of transfer -- as by-product of guidance -- by means of which the teacher can gain insight regarding the relationship between pupils' appreciation of Catholic literature and their religious education. After all, the Catholic high-school girls, who believe in the tenets taught by the Church, should know not only how to evaluate the problems and situations found in

¹² Anne McKillop, Relationship Between the Reader's Attitude and Certain Types of Reading Response, New York, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1952, p. 101.

books in the light of the established Catholic standards, but also become aware of and appreciate the growth of our cultural heritage and the best Catholic thought.

One way of discovering what popularity do Catholic books enjoy among teen-agers is to have the high-school students express, without fear of reprisal, their reaction toward Catholic books which they had read. Such expressions will naturally show the desirable and undesirable sorts of human excellence that go to make up teen-agers' critical evaluation of life as portrayed in literature. It must be remembered that young people, on the whole, do not consciously seek books which have values for their spiritual or intellectual development. Only through guidance will they acquire a positive taste for books which reflect Catholic spirit, Catholic ideals, religious and ethical convictions.

However, most of the girls (92%) answered favorably to the question whether they liked or disliked the reading of Catholic literature. But, to quote Bishop Sheen, "It is sometimes not so important what a person says, but why he says so."¹³ It was of interest, therefore, to learn what draws the teen-ager to a Catholic book. The following reasons, expressed in the pupils' own words, were given as an answer to

¹³Fulton J. Sheen, Telecast Speech on the Influence of Karl Marx, Station WGN, Channel 9, Chicago, February 16, 1956.

the question: "Why do you like to read Catholic books?" The responses, indicative of both serious thought and common sense, brought into limelight the influence of religious education.

"The Catholic book gave me an insight and better understanding of my faith."

"The Catholic books give the right slant and philosophy of life."

"I like them because I feel they give me the right sense of values."

"Because they provide for me clean, wholesome entertainment."

"Because if you get the right Catholic book, you get the right answer to your problems."

"They help to show the purpose of life, and give us excellent examples to follow."

"Because they help me to apply religion to my daily life."

"Because they usually contain a moral, which I can apply to myself."

"Because they contain the truths we are taught."

"They increase my knowledge about my religion, and do this in a very pleasant way."

"They show the Christian way how to react in conflict."

"Most of the books I read make me proud of my religion."

"Probably because the people concerned lived by the same principles as I do."

"They enrich my mind with wholesome and inspirational thoughts."

"Many of them give important views on subject and problems which might effect our lives in the future."

"They bring out in a vivid way the ideals of my faith."

"Because some phases of religion which are too obscure in the religion class become real in reading lighter Catholic books."

A surprising degree of agreement in wholesome attitudes toward Catholic literature was predominant. Nevertheless, there was a smaller group of indifferently and negatively disposed readers, who let their feelings be known also

with regard to Catholic literature. Although constituting the minority (7.8%), those pupils had shown, through their critical responses, that religious training and the Catholic atmosphere to which they had been exposed do not always blend with their activities, not at least in developing an appreciation of the value of Catholic reading.

Those who assumed a neutral position regarding Catholic literature expressed their opinion as follows:

"I like a Catholic book if it is centered around an interesting theme."

"I would like the Catholic books if there would be less of the plain drawn-out religious instruction."

"Some books are too holy; you would think it's an impossibility to become a saint."

"Sometimes they're good, but sometimes they have in them the stuff you hear about every day."

"I neither like nor dislike the Catholic books; it depends upon the story and how it is written."

"I find nothing wrong with some Catholic books, but some are positively boring."

"Some of them are too preachy."

"I like to read any book that stimulates the mind, whether it's a Catholic book or not."

More hostile in their judgment of Catholic books were four seniors. Their remarks below are being quoted verbatim.

"I dislike all books about saints. Catholic books bring in too much religion. They should deal more about modern life today."

"They emphasize too much religion and neglect the plot."

"There is too much emphasis on religion in the Catholic books; it makes it sound like a sermon."

"I don't like to read Catholic books because they seem to play too much on virtue."

An added responsibility, resting on the shoulders of both the teacher and the librarian, is to give individual

attention and adequate guidance to pupils who, despite environmental advantages of being exposed to Catholic literature and to the influence of a Catholic school for nearly the maximum number of their school years, still subscribe to an adverse opinion about Catholic literature. From the group of four, mentioned above, one student attended the public school for nine years, while the other three attended the Catholic school for twelve consecutive years. A conscious effort on the part of the teacher to provide such pupils with interesting Catholic books to satisfy their personal interests, or to quote ingeniously certain Catholic books to arouse their curiosity might have ridded them of their unreasonable aversion to Catholic reading.

There was a striking consistency in the answers to the combination questions, given specifically to challenge the validity of the girls' responses with regard to voluntary or "free" reading of Catholic books. One question designed for that purpose read as follows: "Do you read Catholic books only because they are on the required list?" The other, "Do you read voluntarily Catholic books at home?"

The tabulation of the replies yielded identical results; 87.6 per cent of the group responded "No" to the first question, and 87.6 per cent answered "Yes" to the second. Ten per cent of the girls admitted candidly that they read Catholic books only because it was a part of their required

reading, while nineteen per cent found no enjoyment in reading books recommended by their teachers.

Perhaps no questionnaire will serve as a standard of infallibility for estimating data. Yet, the general impression gathered from the findings, tends to confirm the fact that a validity of a measuring device may be implicit in its structure. In submitting to the students the questions in relation to the attitudes toward Catholic literature, it was assumed that the pupils would comprehend the questions, and answer honestly without fear of being censured for their frankness. The questionnaire, therefore, was believed to measure what it was designed to measure. Although the data were not subjected to statistical testing, the consistency which characterized the answers of the respondents, offered further assurance regarding its reliability.

As a supplement to a more satisfactory appraisal of Catholic books, Table XXI gives additional examples of remarks made by the majority of the students who liked Catholic books, while Table XXII gives the dissenting opinion of the minority. The reactions were broken down into categories, so that from the grouping of comments, the teacher can derive a clearer conception of the benefits students had derived from Catholic reading, and adopt appropriate techniques of guidance and motivation for developing desirable reading attitudes among those whose judgment is either immature or perverted.

Table XXI.

Summary of the Opinions Expressed by Students
Who Liked to Read Catholic Books

Categories of Comments	Frequency	Total Number (460)	Per cent
<u>Influence of religion</u>		99	21.5
"They help me to understand my religion better"	38		
"They show how religion can be applied to one's life"	20		
"I learned to love God more"	15		
"Helped me to be a better Catholic"	10		
"Made me proud of my religion"	9		
"Made me stronger in my faith"	7		
<u>Inspirational reading</u>		90	19.5
"They gave me models to imitate"	29		
"Offer inspirational material for meditation"	23		
"They influence me toward good"	18		
"They give good thoughts to think about"	12		
"They lift up my spirit when I feel let down"	8		
<u>Right attitude toward life</u>		75	16.3
"They show me how to live"	21		
"Give a Catholic viewpoint"	15		
"They blend with my training"	13		
"Give the right slant on life"	9		
"Help to solve problems in life"	8		
"Show the sense of values in life"	5		
"They make me think"	4		
<u>Miscellaneous</u>		119	25.8
"They are interesting, instructive, worthwhile, and different"	60		
"Provide enjoyment and sound principles"	22		
"I'm sure I'm reading good books"	22		
"Because they are the kind I like"	15		
<u>Total</u>		383	83.1

Table XXII.

Contrasting Attitudes Toward Catholic Books

Typical Remarks	Frequency	Total Number (460)	Per cent
<u>Too religious</u>		22	4.8
"They are too preachy"	10		
"Too much about saints"	6		
"Virtue exaggerated"	4		
"Too much emphasis on religion"	2		
<u>Too boring</u>		21	4.6
"No realism"	11		
"No plot, no action"	10		
<u>Indifferent</u>		25	5.4
"Depends upon my mood"	10		
"Have nothing against Catholic literature"	8		
"Depends on the story"	5		
"Nothing wrong with Catholic books"	2		
<u>Unanswered</u>		9	1.9
<u>Total</u>		77	16.7

According to the data, gleaned from the pupils' responses, the Catholic high-school girls do read Catholic literature, read it of their own volition, and majority of them like it. But even if this fundamental condition for acquiring appreciation of good literature exists among the majority of the group, there is no guarantee of assurance that Catholic literature will have priority in their reading hours as an adult activity. Only if effective guidance toward the formation of character through permanent and discriminating taste for the best that is written will create in them an enduring interest in Catholic literature during the plastic years of adolescence, will they find lifelong satisfaction and enjoyment in reading Catholic books as adults.

3. Reading Viewed by Educational Objectives.

The subject matter of this investigation was further pursued with a view to make necessary observations regarding the realization of the Catholic philosophy of education as an integrating factor in the field of reading. Evidence secured from the replies to the Questionnaire supported the implication that there was an apparent lack of a unified direction in interpreting and applying our educational objectives so as to include a more active responsibility on the part of the teachers and the school librarians for a more effective guidance in the field of diversified reading.

Guidance in any school must be oriented in the light of the professed philosophy of the school. The teaching of all curricular subjects, including reading, should, in some measure, reflect that philosophy. The philosophy on which the education of a Catholic child is based, is best summed in the classic quotation of the encyclical "Christian Education of Youth."

The true Christian, product of Christian education, is the supernatural man who thinks, judges, and acts constantly and consistently in accordance with right reason, illumined by the supernatural light of the example and teaching of Christ ...¹⁴

Reflection of the principles of the Catholic philosophy of education, as outlined in the encyclical, was absorbed in the seven objectives, set up by the National Catholic Educational Association for the secondary schools. These seven criteria were the subject of detailed discussion in an article, written by Father Maline in the April issue of the Catholic School Journal, 1949.¹⁵

In the opening "Sermon" at the annual meeting of the Association, held in Atlantic City, New Jersey in 1955, Monsignor O'Connell also expounded the statement of philosophy

¹⁴ Pope Pius XI, "Christian Education of Youth," in R. B. Fullam, The Popes on Youth, Buffalo, New York, Ceniscus High School, 1956, p. 31.

¹⁵ J. J. Maline, "Aims and Results of Catholic High Schools," in The Catholic School Journal, Vol. 49, issue of April 1949, p. 146-149.

as established by the National Catholic Educational Association.¹⁶ In his analysis, he underscored chiefly the outgrowth of the educative process which includes the fullest possible development of the individual as an

intelligent Catholic
spiritually-vigorous Catholic
cultured Catholic
healthy Catholic
vocationally-prepared Catholic
socially-minded Catholic
American Catholic

These principles are well known to the Catholic educators. But it might be profitable to refresh our memories and to re-assure ourselves that each objective is given proper emphasis and allotted due proportion within the framework of the whole educational structure, especially in the field of reading. These criteria are the "rule of action" in our Catholic school system; they should serve also as the center of focus in determining the core of the guidance program in reading.

It was decidedly in place, therefore, to inquire as to the application of the principles outlined in the criteria of the Catholic secondary education. Is the Catholic teacher using the opportunity, offered by the curricular subjects she teaches, to achieve those aims, so frequently reiterated in

¹⁶ J. E. O'Connell, "Sermon," in Proceedings and Addresses of the National Catholic Educational Association, Vol. 52, Washington, National Catholic Educational Association, 1955, p. 33-36.

Catholic literature and at educational meetings? "The realization of our Catholic philosophy of education rests on the teacher."¹⁷ Her personality, background, experiences, and viewpoint on life determine the degree to which the objectives of the school are achieved.

With the emphasis on educating the child "as a whole person," it is obvious that guidance must be concerned with his growth and development in all areas of life -- spiritual, moral, educational, vocational, and social. The purpose of such emphasis is, of course, the preparation of the pupil for "life adjustment," both natural and supernatural.

Evaluation of the girls' reading, in the light of the objectives of Catholic education, revealed several weaknesses in the subject pattern of their reading. Reading is a means by which general education can be implemented. But teenagers' reading, as was indicative in the current study, will have little instrumental value for them, if they limit themselves chiefly to light fiction, or, as frequently styled the "escape" literature. That over 80 per cent of the girls' reading choices were confined to the selection of books concerned with school, teen-age life, and adventure leads to the

¹⁷ J. F. Lenny, "Realizing the Philosophy and Objectives of Catholic Secondary Education," in Proceedings and Addresses of the National Catholic Educational Association, Vol. 52, Washington, National Catholic Educational Association, 1955, p. 246.

conclusion that the Catholic high schools have not as yet attained the full significance of the concept of all-sided development of the "whole person" through reading.

It would seem that, at least, the bright pupils should have developed interests in several types of literature other than fiction. Yet, over 83 per cent of the girls in the High I. Q. group preferred school and teen-age stories to any other type of reading (Table XIX). Almost half of the group reporting read books chiefly for pleasure (Table IX).

From the tabulation, it was clearly discernible that preference for reading material in the field of music, art, science, social, political, and economic problems gave way to the preference for adolescent stories, dealing with mystery, courtship, marriage, and vocational novels. The range of interest for the former was between 15 per cent and 48 per cent, while the level of interest for the latter lay between 51 per cent and 89 per cent (Table XVIII).

This poverty of reading interests, so prevalent among high-school students, supports the assumption that teachers might have been negligent in expanding certain important areas in the adolescents' reading. After all, the quality of WHAT is being read by the high-school pupils indicates broadly the status whether the school's purpose in improving the teenagers' tastes in reading has been fulfilled. All-rounded reading is an index of pupils' growth.

The reading pattern of the Catholic high-school girls presented a rather distorted scale of values. Evidently, the underlying aim of our educational system, which embraces not only the religious and moral aspects, but all fields of secular learning has not been developed harmoniously, so as to perfect the potentialities of the individual pupil. On this point, Monsignor Johnson made an appropriate comment.

Our physical health, our economic well-being, our social and civic relations, our cultural development, all are bound up in the most intimate manner with our moral and spiritual progress. To educate the child, consequently, means to promote his growth in all these spheres. To neglect any one of them means to stunt his growth in all.¹⁸

The data in Tables XVIII and XIX substantiate the evidence that in the pursuit of arts and sciences, and several other intellectual and vocational fields, high-school reading was not closely associated with the objectives of Catholic education. At any rate, the findings, supplemented by observation and experience, confirm the fact that the objectives were not always kept in the minds of the teachers when they had suggested books for outside reading.

For example, on the basis of the responses, one may gain the impression that students were not sufficiently

¹⁸ George Johnson, "Education for Life," in Commission on American Citizenship, Guiding Growth in Christian Social Living, Vol. 3, Washington, The Catholic University of America, 1951, p. 4.

encouraged to read extensively about the different aspects of science. Only 50 per cent of students showed interest in that useful field. Yet, the impact of the laws of science, so manifest in everyday living, should have enlisted the concern, at least, of the majority.

Relative to the importance of understanding our relation to the physical world as represented through basic knowledge of sciences, Thornton wrote the following:

For the balanced development of personality, your mind needs the sharpness and discipline of scientific reading ... A balanced appreciation of science and its aims will aid materially to your stability and intelligent understanding of the times in which you live.¹⁹

Perhaps more forceful on this point was Dr. Johnson:

As rational beings it behooves us to acquire at least a basic understanding of the material world in which we live and of the laws that govern nature. Ignorance on this score renders us ineffective in the service of God and of our fellowman and prevents us from utilizing the discoveries of science for our own personal improvement ... At the same time, a working knowledge of things scientific enables us to play a more intelligent role in human affairs and to understand what it means to live in a technological civilization. Science can be made to minister unto the preservation of health, the making of a living, the creation of social solidarity; and it has contributed largely to the diffusion of culture ...²⁰

¹⁹ Francis B. Thornton, How to Improve Your Personality by Reading, Milwaukee, Bruce, 1949, p. 153.

²⁰ George Johnson, Op. Cit., p. 13.

If "all teaching must be complimented by reading," then the secondary-school teachers should feel responsible to fuse outside reading with the subjects they teach. Apparently, some teachers still cling tenaciously to the basic text, unmindful of the fact that varied reading is more effective than a single textbook in increasing learning power and understanding.

The words of Pope Pius XII, no doubt, best sum up this discussion. In his address to the participants in the Second Congress of the Italian Catholic Union of Secondary School Teachers, Pope Pius XII, exhorting the teachers to form "perfect Christians" of their pupils, gave the following clear explanation of the frequently-quoted phrase:

By the perfect Christian We mean the Christian of today, child of his own era, knowing and cultivating all the advances made by science and technical skill. He is a citizen and not something apart from the life led in his own country today. The world will have nothing to regret if an ever increasing number of these Christians is placed in all sectors of public and private life.²¹

Though social studies provide the context for developing reading interests, their potential, too, has not always been realized. Despite the emphasis, which has been placed

²¹ Pope Pius XII, "Religious, Moral and Intellectual Training of Youth," an Address to the Members of Italian Catholic Union of Secondary School Teachers, September 4, 1949, in R. B. Fullam, The Popes on Youth, Buffalo, New York, Canisius High School, 1956, p. 34.

on the importance of inculcating the Christian ideals of social living, many adolescents show little interest in the great social movements of our day and times past. The moderate and rather low interest levels, as indicated in Tables XVIII and XIX by the percentages assigned to the responses with respect to history, social and political problems, geography and travel, attest to the fact that pupils need steady direction and proper incentives for wide reading experiences in the various subject areas.

Where but in a school system that is steeped in Christian principles will the students acquire a proper understanding of the worth and dignity of human personality, the social nature of man, the rights of men and human equality, the rightness or wrongness of class distinction, their share in community living, including even recreational facilities, their participation in the duties, the rights, and privileges concomitant with the general welfare and the common good?²²

Society imposes upon the shoulders of the teachers the heavy task of preparing youth for living. True, "books are no substitutes for living," but they open avenues to valuable experiences in life, supplying clues to a better understanding of self and other people.

Among the techniques to be employed for a more intensive and sure forming of the mind along the lines of our social teaching, reading ranks especially high. For reading stimulates the emotions

²² Sister Mary Isabel, "Realizing the Catholic Philosophy Through the National Problems Course in the Secondary School," in Proceedings and Addresses of the National Catholic Educational Association, Vol. 52, Washington, National Catholic Educational Association, 1955, p. 315.

and the will to carry out the findings of the mind. Literature dramatizes social relations, helps the students see real people in their intersocial contacts against a historical, geographical, economic, political, cultural background. A reading list to guide growth in acquiring such insight should be part of every course in the social studies.²³

In view of the present-day needs, the Catholic school must by its very nature and purpose spare no effort to provide more books that apply Christian principles to many fields. With interest in reading as a foundation, the high-school teachers can use the content subjects to broaden pupils' reading activities. However, strong motives must be provided. "Young people need to be inspired and encouraged; they also like to be challenged."

There is much interaction between the school library and guidance service. Reading guidance is one of the major tasks of the school librarian. In fact, "the successful school librarian is recognized as an unofficial guidance counselor and an instructional materials specialist."²⁴ Like the teacher, the librarian holds a key position to encourage and guide the adolescent boys and girls in discovering books that meet their needs and interests.

²³ Ibid., p. 318.

²⁴ Sister Mary Alma, "Better Libraries for Better Schools," in Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Catholic Library Association, held in Louisville, Kentucky, Villanova, Penn., The Catholic Library Association, 1957, p. 20.

Basically, both the librarian and the teacher are irrevocably entrusted with guidance in reading. However, the librarian has many and varied opportunities for guidance in different kinds of reading. The classroom teacher, acting under the pressure of time, often fails to give the much-needed personal guidance. "The library's service often makes up for the lack of personal direction from the teacher."

But the library's effectiveness as a guidance center has meaning only in terms of its co-ordination with the general educational program of the school. Since the objectives of the Catholic library are essentially identical with those established by the school, it naturally follows that the nature and the variety of the reading material in the school library ought to reflect those objectives, and the pupils' reading should contribute to the attainment of those aims. Briefly, school-library practices must adhere harmoniously to the basic philosophy, bearing out meaningfully its implications for reading.

In harmony with the principles of Catholic education, the library collection must be stocked with reading material which contributes to the spiritual, social, and cultural growth of the young people. Since, according to current practice, first recognition in book selections must be accorded to curricular requirements, the library must of necessity make a direct contribution to the learning objectives

of content subjects.

However, in view of the findings that certain areas of the Catholic high-school girls' reading need to be improved, and their reading tastes re-directed, the librarian in the Catholic high school must make certain that books of many types, in various classifications, are available in order that our educational goals with which the library is closely allied, can be realized.

In the words of LeFevre, "No library can be stronger than the strength of its book collection,"²⁵ while Kidder believed that "a well-selected group of books with a wide range of mental and emotional appeal is in itself the most potent guidance."²⁶

The selection and adequacy of the book collection and the circumstances under which it is used determine the whole raison d'etre for a Catholic library. For in the attempt to fulfill the educational objectives, the librarian can, through the general medium of books, contribute to the formation of intelligent, spiritually vigorous, cultural, healthy, vocationally-prepared, social-minded American Catholics.

²⁵ LeFevre, Op. Cit., p. 72.

²⁶ Eleanore Kidder, "Reading Guidance for Young People," in Bulletin of the American Library Association, Vol. 41, issue of November 1947, p. 443.

4. Need of a Reading Guidance Program.

Since the fundamental aim of the Catholic educational system is the development of the pupil as a "whole person," the corollary invariably is that suitable means must be utilized toward its fulfillment.

In the foregoing pages, the library's book collection was considered as a contributory factor for the advancement of the educational objectives. But the task of promoting growth and intensifying interest in reading among teen-agers is too great to be accomplished by the classroom teacher or by the librarian alone, although both are in the position to accentuate the value of good reading. Consequently, an important adjunct to our educational system would be to organize and to conduct a comprehensive reading guidance program on the secondary-school level.

While the reading program may not furnish the solution to all the reading ills, yet, studies have demonstrated that a reading program, well-organized and coordinated, can be a successful tool for attaining the desired objectives. Most of the teachers acknowledge the fact that even those of average and above average intelligence, as well as those with reading deficiencies, can benefit educationally from an appropriate reading program. Intensive instruction in reading may be provided by various methods and plans, described in literature by different names, depending

upon the organization and the emphasis. The kind and amount of reading instruction must be adjusted to the individual needs.

Basic in planning a reading program is, of course, a broad understanding and full acceptance of the principles of the philosophy of education by which the school is guided. Irrespective of the techniques used, reading, as a means, should contribute "to all-rounded development of pupils."

Witty²⁷ set up several characteristics of a systematic reading program. In an effective operation of the secondary-school reading program, wrote Dr. Witty, it is important that pupils are not only taught how to read, but also guided in selecting what to read. The reading program must reach all the pupils in school, and the instruction must be geared to meet the needs of all types of readers. This presupposes that an ample supply of appropriate reading material is available to serve the purpose of such a diversified program.

By offering wide reading experiences from a variety of carefully-chosen materials, Witty believed that the problem of individual differences might be solved, for one of the basic characteristic of a good reading program is to identify all types of readers.

²⁷ Paul Witty, "Developmental Reading in Secondary School," in The English Journal, Vol. 32, issue of February 1943, p. 74-80.

Such a provision would invariably mean that the high-school reading program include both the remedial and the developmental phases. Both programs render helpful service to the young people. Both serve as a means to growth for all students, aiming to bring each pupil up to his capacity.

There is a growing awareness among the high-school students themselves that a program for the improvement of reading would be of a definite advantage to them. In the present study, the girls endorsed the idea by the percentage of answers to the question: "Do you favor a remedial class in reading to help you if you are a poor reader?" Majority of them (67%) reported affirmatively, indicating they were desirous to participate in such a program.

Table XXIII yields evidence of the need of special classes for those pupils who had recognized their reading deficiencies. It shows several areas of difficulty, which they had encountered in their reading. Vocabulary (29.3%) and inability to concentrate (15.9%) ranked highest among the students' complaints. The types of reading problems, listed in Table XXIII, can serve as the remedial cues in the designing of a reading improvement program.

Many studies have demonstrated the need of providing corrective or remedial training for those students who are weak in reading skills and need specialized help. Dora Smith, Emeritus Professor of Education at the University of

Table XXIII.
Types of Reading Problems among Students
in Grades IX Through XII

Reading Problems	Grades				Total Number (460)	Per cent
	9	10	11	12		
	Frequency					
Vocabulary	47	38	29	21	135	29.3
Lack of concentration	28	13	15	16	72	15.9
No time for reading	13	10	13	17	53	11.5
Poor speed	3	10	8	8	29	6.3
Selection of titles	12	5	8	3	28	6.0
Lack of interest	4	6	9	8	27	5.9
Small type	3	2	-	3	8	1.7
Physical condition	4	4	-	-	8	1.7
No problems	19	10	6	4	39	8.5
Unanswered	24	17	13	7	61	13.2

Minnesota, made an appraisal of reading practices in secondary schools in 1942. The following statements sum up her observations:

It would profit little today to attempt a statistical presentation of reading in American high schools. The results would be discouraging and the undertaking futile. One school in six perhaps is sufficiently concerned with reading at the secondary-school level to be doing anything about it.²⁸

Writing on "The Improvement of Reading Abilities" Witty reported that "in many high schools, fully one-third of the pupils read poorly, and about 15 per cent are seriously retarded."²⁹

Failure to provide the pupil with the opportunity for continued reading instruction at the high-school level may be the cause for his lack of success in the different subject areas. It may also be the reason that "he loses status with his social group, forfeits his self-confidence, and develops deep feelings of inadequacy and insecurity."³⁰

²⁸ Dora V. Smith, "The Present Status of Reading in Secondary Schools," in The English Journal, Vol. 31, issue of April 1942, p. 274.

²⁹ Paul A. Witty, "The Improvement of Reading," in the Fifty-fifth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, Adult Reading, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1956, p. 252.

³⁰ Nila B. Smith, "The Role of Reading in Developing Today's Children and Youth," in Better Readers of Our Times, The Proceedings of International Reading Association, Vol. 1, New York, Scholastic Magazine, 1950, p. 11.

Guidance in reading must be not only corrective; to stimulate improvement in all aspects of reading, it should also be developmental. The developmental, would help both the average and the superior pupils to become better readers. It would help them develop reading interests in keeping with the kinds and levels of their abilities. Bright pupils, for example, need advanced reading material if they are to reach their full development. Many of them need to become more skilled in critical reading ability; others find difficulty in specialized vocabulary, found especially in non-fiction books.

Most reading specialists suggest guidance in reading through the high-school years and even in college. Reading skills are not easily acquired. Nor can these skills be adequately taught by mass methods. Reading as a developmental process demands from the individual to utilize various types of books in order to prepare himself for mature reading material as he advances to higher educational levels.

There are good and legitimate reasons for including a broad program of reading into the school's curriculum, but there is no one best program. An effective plan for the improvement of reading is designed primarily to fit the local needs. Consequently, the size of the school, its equipment, the staff, the type of community, and above all, the student population must be considered.

Fortunately, recent educational literature describes some of the facets in the organization of a reading program. Although it was not within the interests of this dissertation to discuss the various phases of reading guidance, teachers and administrators, who believe that reading improvement is desirable and possible, will want to read some of the selective references, reporting the specific practices in relation to the organizational patterns of reading programs.

An excellent manual for teachers and administrators, entitled Helping High-school Students Read Better, by Elizabeth A. Simpson, Director of the Reading Service at the Institute of Psychological Services in Chicago, gives examples which illustrate types of programs that are being carried on by high schools, providing evidence of success.³¹

The Forty-seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, 1948, in its special theme of the year, Reading in the High School and College, contains analyses of reading problems at the high-school and college level. It offers also specific guidance to teachers and school officers with respect to the organization, materials, and methods of an effective reading program for youth.

³¹ Elizabeth A. Simpson, Helping High-school Students Read Better, Chicago, Science Research Associates, 1954, 146 p.

Cleary's article, in the Education Magazine for May 1958, is concerned chiefly with the problem of projecting an effective reading program. The author sets forth several proposals. An adequate reading program demands a school-wide co-operation on the part of the teachers, librarians, and the principal. It demands some general agreement on objectives, the detailing of procedures, and the evaluation of results; library resources and facilities play an important role.³²

Aspects of high-school reading programs, though dealt in many periodical articles, are discussed more fully in the report of the 1946 Conference on Reading of the University of Chicago.

How to set the developmental reading program in action is well detailed by Brian in the article "High School Developmental Reading Program." Such questions as "Who should assume the responsibility for such a program?" the time element, structuring the course, mechanical devices, and references dealing with the various phases of reading problems in the secondary schools are also discussed.³³

³² Florence D. Cleary, "Reading Guidance Program, A School-wide Responsibility," in Education, Vol. 78, issue of May 1958, p. 550-554.

³³ M. Brian, "High School Developmental Reading Program," in The Catholic Educational Review, Vol. 51, issue of February 1953, p. 99-107.

Building a successful reading program is one of the problems confronting many Catholic high schools. Though with all fairness it can be assumed that in some of our Catholic secondary schools, directly or non-directly, programs for the improvement of reading have been conducted, it may be wishful thinking to presume that the responsibility, which such programs exact, have been regarded seriously by the teachers and administrators of every school.

Many high schools have not as yet made sufficient adaptations to fuse into their curricular offerings reading instruction. Not all teachers are competent and willing to attend to the reading needs and problems of their students. Yet, a program of "guided reading" would, to some extent, remedy the prevailing lack of provisions for individual differences, which our prevailing educational practices have not always taken into account, especially when forced to face realistically the classroom problems in reading.

Only through an extensive guided reading will the pupils develop the skills in the art of reading and improve in their reading habits. But to achieve this objective, a school-wide program, embracing the needs not only of the deficient readers, but also the developmental training for the average and superior students, must be devised. Such a program will answer a real need in the Catholic secondary schools.

Underlying the reading problems, discussed in the foregoing chapter, is the necessity of careful guidance. To make guidance in reading an integral part of school activities, certain aspects affecting reading must be recognized.

It is desirable that the teacher of general reading develop some inventory of factors necessary for all types of reading. This implies information about the readers - their reading achievement levels, their interests, and attitudes. Unless the teacher knows the pupil's feelings and his reaction toward all types of reading materials, including the required and the Catholic reading, the effort to encourage reading as a means for shaping the reader's outlook on life may fail to yield the desirable outcome which the school hopes to attain. Especially the negative effects of reading on the feelings of the pupils should not be disregarded.

If our educational objectives should be achieved, then reading must assume a more vital role in all curricular subjects. There should be an all-school reading improvement program, and a varied collection of the best of old and new books, which would satisfy the interests of all types of readers.

To make a maximal contribution to the development of the pupil as a "whole person," the teacher should introduce the pupils to books having developmental qualities by means of which they can meet their needs of life more effectively and make their lives richer and more meaningful.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The major focus of the study was directed chiefly to the identification of reading interests. However, the research problem centered around three objectives: 1) to attempt a qualitative analysis of the reading tastes as indicated by the girls' responses, and to discover factors effecting their reading habits; 2) to examine their attitudes toward different types of reading, including Catholic literature and its effect; 3) to appraise critically the students' reading preferences in the light of the Catholic educational aims, and thus give greater emphasis to some of the reading problems for guidance practices.

No effort was made to discuss the great variety of approaches by previous investigators. Only findings of research published during the last two decades have been summarized, and several earlier reports, conceived as contributory to a better understanding of the problems discussed, have been considered. However, a more detailed account was given to Thorndike's measuring device, because his inventory technique, as used in his study on Children's Reading Interests, has been adopted in the present survey.

The data were furnished by the Questionnaire, filled in by 460 high-school girls, under the direction of their classroom teachers. It was supplemented by another questionnaire,

which was completed by forty-two high-school librarians, and by an evaluative report on the girls' popular books, submitted by ten experts in the field of adolescent literature.

Although the responses to the Questionnaire were not validated by the criteria of the scientific method, the combination of consistency, which pervaded in the overall study, was indicative of the validity and reliability of the students' replies.

The sample of 460 girls was selected from five Catholic high schools, representing a cross-section of the Catholic adolescent population in a large cosmopolitan city. The students were included proportionately to the enrollment of the school, and classified by grades and intelligence quotients. The mean of the chronological age was 15.5. The range of the intelligence quotient was from the borderline to very superior, with a mean of 106.7 and the standard deviation of 16.5.

The purpose of the homogeneous grouping was to discover the differences in quality of reading tastes between the high and the low groups, and the shifts of reading interests, if any, according to the high-school grades. Although the majority of the students had been exposed to a Catholic educational environment throughout the consecutive years of their schooling, approximately, twenty-six per cent attended the public school on the average of three years prior to their enrollment at the Catholic high school.

Several general trends can be summed up from the pages of the preceding chapters. Broadly, the subject-matter areas of highest interest to the adolescent girls can be categorized as inspirational, recreational, and informational. Specifically, the content of their reading material deals with religion, ideals, romance, teen-age life, humor, and self-improvement.

With the exception of a slight variation and fluctuation, there was a fair degree of homogeneity among the girls in their choice of reading materials, despite the range in mental maturity, high-school grade, and chronological age. The study, provided, therefore, an important criterion in the selection of books, namely, that reading interests cannot be classified by the intelligence quotient or the chronological age of the pupils.

According to the judgment of ten experts, the following maturity levels were assigned to the books actually read by the girls and to the titles of books, listed by the librarians, as most frequently circulated: 30 per cent were classified as "High" or adult; 45 per cent were "average," and 25 per cent "Low" or juvenile.

On the whole, the students' reading patterns showed a narrow range of interests, and the quantity was disappointingly small. The total average during the eight-month period was thirteen books per capita. Yet, one cannot say that young people do not read. Even the attraction of TV has not eclipsed

completely the love for reading. Approximately, one book a month was read by TV fans. However, only 30 per cent of the students assigned to reading the priority rank over other forms of diversion.

Somewhat in contrast with other observations, only seven per cent of the group supported the contention that reading of the "Best Sellers" was indispensable to keep abreast with current literature. Majority of the girls showed a fairly balanced judgment with regard to questionable books. It was interesting to note also that ninety-two per cent liked the reading of Catholic literature, although it is obvious that these differences must be explained in the light of such factors as the school's objectives, pupils' predispositions, teacher motivation, and the type of books available.

Not all replies yielded a favorable impression. Many of the responses to the questions WHAT, HOW MUCH, and WHY students read revealed several significant implications, and brought into focus definite problems. Measured in the light of our educational objectives, reading activities of the Catholic high-school students should, like all other curricular offerings, contribute to the development of the reader as a whole person. Yet, implicit inferentially in the data was the fact that the value of all-rounded reading has not been sufficiently accentuated to attain the desired results.

There is no doubt that Catholic secondary-school teachers have indirectly and informally advanced the realization of the philosophical principles of education. But it is equally true that the application of these principles to the current situations and problems by the use of diversified reading, integrated with curricular areas, has been one of the habitually neglected aspects of our educational system. Data of the present research showed that majority of the teen-age girls lack balance in their choice of books, and fail to develop interests in various fields of knowledge.

In view of the present-day needs, the subject matter or what to read requires a program of guidance in more purposeful reading throughout the secondary school. Failure to achieve satisfactory results in the past testifies to the need of such a program. A well-organized program is the most promising avenue of approach toward the attainment of the school's objectives through reading. Of course, it necessitates the sustained effort, cooperation, and interest of the entire school staff, including the administrators.

Although there is value in studying the reading preferences of groups, sweeping conclusions can seldom be established from a single study. Additional data and more refined techniques are necessary to draw more valid generalizations. In fact, implications, drawn from the present investigation, project several ideas for further research.

For example, a study as to reasons for the absence of diversified reading among the adolescent girls might prove enlightening. Evaluation of the current practices in motivating challenging reading materials among the high-school students might make the work of reading guidance more successful. More research is needed for determining and analyzing the reading maturity of the secondary-school pupils.

While this research aimed to explore several aspects of reading, the major contribution to the field of reading interests was confined to the critical analyses of the adolescent girl's reading from the standpoint of the school's objectives. To meet the criterion of developing personal growth through reading, a re-evaluation of the techniques of motivation and of the methods of guidance was suggested, and an adequate reading guidance program was recommended.

From the composite picture of the girls' reading patterns and the reaction and effects of reading, the teacher can obtain a clearer insight into the problems of reader-identity and subject-interest. The findings may arouse a greater awareness on the part of the librarian when new additions to the library are contemplated. With the information gained from this investigation, the supervising and administrative personnel may want to abandon some of the inefficient guidance practices, and adopt or re-emphasize more effective methods to improve the status of reading in the Catholic secondary schools.

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Brian, Sister Mary, "High School Developmental Reading Program," in Catholic Educational Review, Vol. 51, issue of February 1953, p. 99-107.

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Brooks, Alice R., "Integrating Books and Reading with Adolescent Tasks," in School Review, Vol. 58, issue of April 1950, p. 211-219.

Describes the cooperative work of a group of students in adolescent literature, who, collaborating with the University of Chicago Materials Center, surveyed the materials at the adolescent level, and compiled a selective list of titles as an aid for young people in the achievement of their tasks.

Burton, Dwight, "Books to Meet Students' Personal Needs," in The English Journal, Vol. 36, issue of November 1947, p. 469-473.

As a stimulus to interest in reading, the author initiated a project in which books, closely attuned to adolescent problems, and with a wide range of maturity, were read and discussed by pupils.

-----, "Novel for the Adolescent," in The English Journal, Vol. 40, issue of September 1951, p. 363-369.

Gives the characteristics of a novel for the adolescent readers, and examples of titles of books and critical comments about authors who write "specifically for the adolescent public."

Carlsen, G. R., "Behind Reading Interests," in The English Journal, Vol. 43, issue of January 1954, p. 7-12.

In suggesting books to the students, teachers should consider their needs that seem to govern their choices.

-----, "The Magic of Bringing Young Adults to Books," in Wilson Library Bulletin, Vol. 33, issue of October 1958, p. 134-137; 139.

Presentation of issues and topics of general importance in stimulating and guiding the reading of the adolescent.

Carnovsky, Leon, "A Study of the Relationship Between Reading Interest and Actual Reading," in Library Quarterly, Vol. 4, issue of January 1934, p. 76-110.

A rather old study, but offers a challenging opinion with respect to reading interests. According to the findings, a book may be widely read because it was widely advertised, or made accessible, or is easy to read, or is written by a reputable author. Hence, interest in a subject may or may not be the reason for reading a book.

Carson, Thomas E and Ruth Ann Davies, "Know the Library Interests of Your Pupils," in School Review, Vol. 57, issue of January 1949, p. 42-44.

The results of this investigation, which deals chiefly with books liked or disliked, have been used as a guide in the selection and purchase of books.

Celeste, Sister Mary, "Librarian as Counselor in Reading," in The Catholic School Journal, Vol. 42, issue of December 1942, p. 300-301.

In tracing the role of the librarian as a counselor, the author stresses the importance of personal equipment, such as qualifications, knowledge of books and standards, and philosophy of literature.

Charles Marita, Sister, "A Librarian's Message to Teachers," in The Catholic School Journal, Vol. 60, issue of February 1960, p. 23-24.

Points out several reasons for the lack of diversified reading among the young people, and urges teachers and librarians to make a critical re-evaluation of their technique and approach to the reading problems prevalent among high-school students.

Chicago, University, Graduate Library School, Library Institute, Youth, Communication, and Libraries, edited by Frances Henne and others, Chicago, American Library Association, 1949, 233 p.

Sixteen contributors present different approaches to the problems of young people's reading.

Cleary, Florence D., "Reading Guidance Program, A School-wide Responsibility," in Education, Vol. 78, issue of May 1958, p. 550-554.

Cleary's article is concerned chiefly with the problem of projecting an effective reading program. Such a program requires a school-wide cooperation, general agreement on objectives, procedures, and a continuous evaluation of results.

Clifford, Mary, "Reading in the Junior High School," in Illinois English Bulletin, Vol. 44, issue of May 1957, p. 1-9.

Characteristics of a good reading program are given; materials, activities, and methods, development and guidance of reading interests, and motivating devices are described.

Cook, Walter W., "The Gifted, the Average, and the Retarded," in Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 34, issue of March 1958, p. 249-255.

Professor Cook proposes general patterns of grouping the gifted, the average, and the retarded pupils. He suggests grouping according to pupils' needs, since pupils differ in interests and ability.

Crossen, Helen J., Effect of Attitudes of the Reader Upon Critical Reading Ability, A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Division of the Social Sciences in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Department of Education, University of Chicago, 1947, 133 p.

Presents the results of a carefully controlled experiment involving 351 ninth-grade pupils. According to the findings, "the critical reading performance of pupils favorable to a topic was not significantly different from that of pupils indifferent to the topic."

Dayhaw, L. T., "The Measurement of Interest," in Canadian Journal of Psychology, Vol. 2, issue of June 1948, p. 71-80.

Summarizes some of the procedures used in the investigation of interests, and describes several interests tests. A number of projects for future exploration is also suggested.

De Angelo, R. W., "Trends in Reading in Senior High School," in Wilson Library Bulletin, Vol. 23, issue of May 1949, p. 675-678.

According to this study, adolescent interests fundamentally remain the same; however, present-day living provides a healthy stimulation for more challenging reading in social, scientific and vocational fields.

De Boer, John J., "About Reading and the High School Student," in The English Journal, Vol. 47, issue of May 1958, p. 271-281.

Describes some of the major findings of research workers relative to the characteristics of the adolescent's reading, his interests, and interrelationships between reading and such factors as intelligence, socio-economic status, and the effect of television on the reading habits of youth.

-----, "Cultivating Powers of Discriminating in Reading," in School Review, Vol. 57, issue of January 1949, p. 28-36.

Designed to acquaint the reader with some of the basic principles essential in the area of critical reading.

-----, "Literature and Human Behavior," in The English Journal, Vol. 39, issue of February 1950, p. 76-82.

Studies, based on general assumption, indicate that reading changes the structure of one's personality. Students should, therefore, be guided to those reading materials which provide a wholesome influence on their manner of thinking and acting.

Denise, Sister Mary, "Guiding the Growth of Our Budding Scholars," in Catholic Library World, Vol. 29, issue of April 1958, p. 384-387.

Emphasizes the responsibility of the teachers to "give the young emerging Christians the habit of wide, deep, critical reading."

Drerup, John, "Approaching Life Situations Through Reading," in The Catholic School Journal, Vol. 52, issue of November 1952, p. 290-292.

Calls attention to the effect of reading, and stresses the fact that the structure of the reading program must be drawn up with the view "not so much in terms of authors, but rather in terms of the life situations which the authors present in their books."

Bakin, Mary K., "A Method of Analyzing and Evaluating Children's Books," in Chicago Schools Journal, Vol. 32, issue of March-April 1951, p. 140-144.

Reports the procedure adopted by the Children's Book Center in Chicago with regard to the classification of books according to types as maturity level, values, appeal, etc.

Edward, Sister, "The Good Catholic Novel for the Adolescent," in The Catholic School Journal, Vol. 39, issue of March 1939, p. 86-87.

The criterion for a good Catholic novel may be presented in the form of the question: "Does it contribute to a more perfect understanding of the meaning of life?" In addition, it must have "enduring literary qualities."

Edwards, Margaret A., "Rise of Teen-age Reading," in Saturday Review, Vol. 37, issue of November 1954, p. 88-89; 95.

Historical development and characteristics of the teen-age novels. Though some are "thin fare from a literary point of view," they may be used as a springboard for a gradual rise toward better and more mature reading.

Faith, Sister Mary, "Give Them a Measuring Stick," in The Catholic School Journal, Vol. 51, issue of February 1951, p. 43-44.

Proposes as a measuring stick for evaluating reading materials, especially fiction, the following question: "What truths about life and people are revealed in this story?"

Fay, Leo C., "What Research Says About Reading in the High School," in the Journal of the National Education Association, Vol. 45, issue of November 1956, p. 488-489.

Outlines briefly the results of high-school reading programs, and concludes that guidance for all students - poor, average, and gifted should be provided.

Fitzgerald, W. A., "Counseling Responsibilities of the School Librarian," in Wilson Library Bulletin, Vol. 24, issue of January 1950, p. 357-359.

Guidance assumes very wide proportions when linked with the school library. By virtue of her status, the school librarian should so view the school's objectives as to include responsibility for unifying, correlating, and integrating the entire school program.

Fleege, Brother Urban H., "Reading Preferences of Catholic High School Students," in The Catholic School Journal, Vol. 40, issue of November 1940, p. 303-304.

Summarizes the findings of his investigation of 640 high-school students' reading preferences, and presents evidence of wholesome reading tastes prevalent among the young people of that representative Catholic high school.

Flynn, Dennis J., "Fostering the Habit of Reading," in The Catholic School Journal, Vol. 54, issue of February 1954, p. 36.

Reports on the experiment in silent reading which was made a part of the regular school day.

Frank, Josette, Your Child's Reading Today, Garden City, Doubleday, 1954, 328 p.

Growing out of the author's experience, the book presents information and guidance to help the teacher in developing reading tastes. Author explains reading motives and values, and answers questions pertinent to the effect of mass media communication on reading habits.

Fryer, Douglas, The Measurement of Interests, New York, Holt, 1931, 488 p.

Old but standard reference on the subject of human interests. Contains a critical and interpretative summary of the studies made for psychological measurements.

Gordon, Edward J., "Reading by Themes," in The English Journal, Vol. 42, issue of April 1953, p. 187-190.

Based on his experience, the author shows the logical connection from objectives to books, which can be used with the problem-solving techniques.

Grady, Sister Mary Pauline, "High Schools and Reading," in America, Vol. 91, issue of April 1954, p. 15-17.

Intended primarily for the personnel concerned with teaching adolescents to read more mature books.

Grambs, Jean D., The Development of Lifetime Reading Habits, A Report of a Conference Called by the Committee on Reading Development in New York, June 25-26, 1954, New York, R. R. Bowker Co., 1954, 23 p.

Gives a broad coverage of problems discussed by the participants of the Conference. Existing practices, the use of mass media, the school library, and suggestions concerning new techniques are the topics evaluated in terms of their probable effect on developing lifetime reading habits.

Gray, William S., Editor, Adjusting Reading to Individuals, The Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Reading, held at the University of Chicago, Vol. 3, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 52, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1941, 344 p.

Presents papers on the subject of individual differences that affect reading, on promoting growth in reading through content subjects, individual interests, and other related topics.

-----, The Appraisal of Current Practices in Reading, The Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Reading, held at the University of Chicago, Vol. 7, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 61, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1945, 255 p.

Papers given at the Conference dealing with such topics as: Reading programs, Reading materials, Adjustment to individual needs, Interpretation in reading, etc.

Gray, William S., "The Challenge Faced in Promoting Desirable Reading Interests," in Education, Vol. 79, issue of May 1959, p. 551-556.

Reviews briefly major trends during recent decades in the personal reading of elementary and high-school students, and reports pertinent findings of studies made on the subject.

-----, "How Can the Poor Reader in the Secondary School Be Rescued?" in National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, Vol. 36, issue of April 1952, p. 135-143.

Suggests eight essentials of a sound reading program in secondary school, which, if applied in principle, should promote growth in reading among all pupils, including the poor readers.

Gray, William S., Editor, Keeping Reading Programs Abreast of the Times, The Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Reading, held at the University of Chicago, Vol. 12, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 72, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1950, 247 p.

The papers deal with the major purpose of the Conference which was "to consider the types of changes needed in current reading programs in the light of recent educational and social developments.

-----, Promoting Personal and Social Development Through Reading, The Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Reading, held at the University of Chicago, Vol. 9, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 64, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1947, 236 p.

The report of this Conference is a discussion on the contribution reading might make to the development of an individual in harmony with his characteristics and needs.

Gray, William S. et. al., Reading in General Education, A Report of the Committee on Reading in General Education, Washington, D. C., American Council on Education, 1940, 464 p.

An exploratory study prepared by a group of reading specialists. Includes authoritative treatment of basic issues and trends in reading.

Greevey, William H., "Gifted Children Need Motivation," in Religious Education, Vol. 52, issue of September-October, 1957, p. 365-370.

Motivation is an essential quality in enabling the gifted pupil to realize his best potential.

Gregory, Margaret and William J. McLaughlin, "Advanced Reading for the Bright Child," in Clearing House, Vol. 26, issue of December 1951, p. 203-205.

The authors describe a miniature "Great Books" project that was initiated for a group of junior high-school students, selected in terms of I. Q., general school average, and reading grade.

Haebich, Kathryn A., "What Are Adolescents Reading?" in Wilson Library Bulletin, Vol. 20, issue of December 1945, p. 289, 295.

The writer, a librarian, conducted a survey through the English department of her school to find out the students' reading preferences and whether or not they feel that the school library is serving their needs.

Handlan, Bertha, "The Fallacy of Free Reading as an Approach to Appreciation," in The English Journal, Vol. 35, issue of April 1946, p. 182-188.

Based on her own experience, the author found out that free, unguided reading is not conducive to growth in appreciation, because students unguided "remain at a relatively low level of taste and maturity."

Harlow, Bruce, "Are the Heaviest Readers the Best Students?" in Wilson Library Bulletin, Vol. 16, issue of March 1942, p. 537-538; 543.

Finds a rather low positive correlation between amount of voluntary reading and school marks for 767 students. The study has a limitation in that no classification was made according to type of books read.

Harris, A. J., "Motivating the Poor Reader," in Education, Vol. 73, issue of May 1953, p. 556-574.

Considers four main aspects of a sound motivation program for poor readers.

Harris, T. L., "Implications for the Teacher of Recent Research in High School Reading," in High School Journal, Vol. 39, issue of January 1956, p. 194-206.

Brief descriptions of several studies in the area of reading, and the need for a more comprehensive research "evaluating the results of cooperative staff efforts in carrying out a developmental program for all pupils in the area of high-school curriculum."

Heller, Frieda M., "Free Reading in the Junior High School," in Educational Research Bulletin, Vol. 19, issue of April 10, 1940, p. 217-222; 243-244.

Analyzes the reading done by pupils to determine their interests and needs. Findings indicate that giving pupils freedom of selecting books for reading was not enough to develop their critical powers. Pupils need guidance.

-----, "Librarian Guides Reading," in The English Journal, Vol. 41, issue of May 1952, p. 262-264.

Directed toward helping the librarian in the field of reading guidance.

-----, "New Designs in Teen-age Reading," in American Library Association Bulletin, Vol. 34, issue of August 1940, p. 192-193.

A summary of the paper presented at the 1940 A. L. A. Conference, which dealt with the findings of two surveys of young people's reading interests. The studies established the fact that teen-agers' interests improve under guidance.

Hester, Sister Mary, "Teen-agers and Reading Today," in The Catholic Library World, Vol. 24, issue of March 1953, p. 190-191.

The tenor of the author's views is not to condemn the teen-agers for their immature reading tastes, but to treat them as adolescents, and give them books according to their intellectual growth and emotional maturity.

Huddleston, Martha, "Teen-age Reading Habits," in Wilson Library Bulletin, Vol. 22, issue of September 1947, p. 53, 68.

Presents a list of fifty most popular selections from among 600,000 books bought by 90,000 members of Teen-Age Book Club. Preferences for adventure and romance predominate, while popularity for Westerns has declined.

Hunt, J. T., "Reading: The High School's Problem," in High School Journal, Vol. 36, issue of October 1952, p. 2-6.

Presents facts concerning the status of reading in high schools and recommends both remedial and developmental reading as a means for improvement.

-----, "What High-school Teachers Should Know About Individual Differences in Reading," in School Review, Vol. 60, issue of October 1952, p. 417-423.

Discussion on the backgrounds of reading differences, their causes, and their implications.

Innocent, Sister Mary, "Catholic Teacher's Responsibility for Reading Guidance," in The Catholic Library World, Vol. 19, issue of February 1948, p. 147-149.

Reading has been and can be a means to an end. But such reading calls for careful appraisal of books, and personal individual interest in the students.

Ives, Vernon, "Teen-age Reading," in American Library Association Bulletin, Vol. 47, issue of October 1953, p. 400-404.

By means of a questionnaire, which was sent to high-school librarians in 32 states, and to all city, county, and state school library supervisors, the author obtained valuable information, which may be helpful to those concerned with young people's books.

International Reading Association, Better Readers for Our Times, edited by William S. Gray and Nancy Larrick, The Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting of the International Reading Association, held in Chicago, Vol. I, New York, Scholastic Magazine, 1956, 176 p.

A series of papers, dealing with various aspects of challenging problems faced in today's efforts to improve reading instruction at all levels from kindergarten to college.

Jensen, L. S., "Fostering Interest in Reading," in The English Journal, Vol. 42, issue of October 1953, p. 367-370.

As a motivating device, the author suggests monologues, mock radio and television programs, group discussion on themes or topics based on novels or biographies, such as: "The Human Side of Great People as Revealed in Biography."

Jerome, Sister, "Catholic High School Library, A Vitalizing Influence," in The Catholic Educator, Vol. 24, issue of September 1953, p. 11-15.

Discusses the philosophy of the school library service, and the importance of guidance on the part of librarian.

Jochem, Sister Anita Marie, "Guiding the Reading of Adolescents," in Catholic Educational Review, Vol. 44, issue of February 1946, p. 86-93.

Gives specific criteria for the teacher and for the student in connection with the problems of suggesting or choosing the right book.

John of the Cross, Brother, "What Price Book Reports?" in Wilson Library Bulletin, Vol. 28, issue of November 1953, p. 304-305.

The advantages and disadvantages of the commercially-prepared book tests are being discussed by the author.

Johnson, Eric W., "Stimulating Reading in the Junior High School," in The English Journal, Vol. 48, issue of February 1959, p. 74-77; 100.

Draws up on his experience to outline some devices for motivating good and challenging books.

Johnson, G. B., "Books and Five Adolescent Tasks," in Library Journal, Vol. 68, issue of May 1, 1943, p. 350-352.

Knowing which books to provide the adolescent so that he could accomplish the five adolescent tasks, as listed by Havighurst, is a problem which can, in some measure, be solved, provided the librarian knows books and the readers.

Josephine, Sister, "Building Character Through Reading," in The Catholic Educator, Vol. 25, issue of February 1955, p. 354-355.

Points out the possibilities for enriching the pupils' lives through guided reading.

Kidder, E., "Reading Guidance for Young People," in American Library Association Bulletin, Vol. 41, issue of November 1947, p. 442-444.

Suggests means of reading guidance: 1) Well-selected books with a wide range of mental and emotional appeal; 2) Well-annotated lists to steer pupils to more useful types of reading; 3) Displays keyed to pupils' interests, and 4) Book clubs for a limited number of the select few.

Klohn, L. L., "Right Book for the Slow Reader," in Library Journal, Vol. 81, issue of April 15, 1956, p. 992-993.

Proposes a plan for recording the level of reading difficulty for books, both fiction and non-fiction, in such a manner that these books can be located quickly.

Kramer, Sister Mary Immaculate, "The Reading Preferences of Elementary and High School Pupils," in The Catholic Educational Review, Vol. 37, issue of May 1939, p. 310-325.

Discusses a number of references which deal primarily with directing reading interests of pupils toward the formation of permanent and discriminating taste in reading.

La Brant, Lou L. and Frieda M. Heller, An Evaluation of Free Reading in Grades Seven to Twelve, Inclusive, Ohio State University Studies, Graduate School Series, Contributions in Education, No. 4, Columbus, Ohio, Ohio State University Press, 1939, 158 p.

Describe procedures used in a three-year study at the Ohio State University School, and summarize results in terms of books read and interest stimulated.

Lazar, May, "Individualized Reading," in Education, Vol. 78, issue of January 1958, p. 281-288.

Defines individualized reading approach, and describes its major features and general procedure.

La Plante, Effie and Thelma O'Donnell, "Developmental Values Through Books," in Chicago Schools Journal, Vol. 31, issue of March-April 1950, p. 1-21.

Evaluation of books in terms of developmental needs of adolescents.

Le Fevre, A. L., "Books: the Roots of the Rock," in Catholic Library World, Vol. 26, issue of December 1954, p. 72-75.

Emphasizes the importance of selecting books which provide challenge to youth. "No library can be stronger than the strength of its book collection."

Lewis, Philip, "High School Students' TV Habits," in Advertising Age, Vol. 22, issues of July 23, 30, 1951, p. 47-48; 39-40.

Interesting conclusions regarding high school pupils' habits of televising were made after an extensive series of questionnaires, follow-up discussions, and interviews at South Shore High School in Chicago. One important fact as revealed by the data was that there is a definite "tendency among the girls to watch television less as they get older."

Lorang, Sister Mary Corde, The Effects of Reading on Moral Conduct and Emotional Experience, Washington, D. C. Catholic University of America Press, 1946, 122 p.

Summarizes questionnaire replies from 2,308 high school pupils from widely distributed areas concerning their reading and its effect on them. Both quantitative and qualitative proof of the effects of reading material on adolescents have been made.

Lyness, Paul I., "Patterns in the Mass Communications Taste of the Young Audience," in Journal of Educational Psychology, Vol. 42, issue of December 1951, p. 449-467.

Gives report of the responses of 1,418 pupils in Grades III, V, VII, IX, and XI to questions relating to their preferred types of subject matter in communication media, including the reading of books.

McCarty, Pearl S., "Reading Interests Shown by Choices of Books in School Libraries," in School Review, Vol. 58, issue of February 1950, p. 90-96.

In a study of fifteen school libraries in Florida, the author found that over 40 per cent of the pupils in Grades VII through XII read predominantly fiction.

McCaul, R. L., "The Effect of Attitudes upon Reading Interpretation," in Journal of Educational Research, Vol. 37, issue of February 1944, p. 451-457.

An experiment conducted with pupils in Grades 7-10 showed that the interpretation of reading material is affected by pupils' attitudes, particularly with regard to motives which they ascribe to characters in the books. Girls seem less influenced by their attitudes than boys.

McCullough, Constance, "What Does Research Reveal About Practices in Teaching Reading?" in The English Journal, Vol. 46, issue of November 1957, p. 475-490.

Presents the picture of the current situation in the field of reading, giving an account of both quantity and quality of reading done by students, and of the procedures used to improve taste and literary appreciation.

McKillop, Anne S., "Effect of Reading on Personal and Social Development," in Developing Permanent Interest in Reading, compiled and edited by Helen M. Robinson, The Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Reading, held at the University of Chicago, Vol. 18, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 84, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1956, p. 69-73.

Describes the many ways reading has influenced people, although its effect is limited due to the reader's predispositions, attitudes, and previous experiences.

Mahan, Gertrude, "Creating Desirable Reading Habits," in Library Journal, Vol. 67, issues of September 1942, p. 769-772.

To encourage reading among students, pleasant reading experience must be provided, such as browsing, more "free" time, and various publicity devices. Sustained interest in books will lead to the development of the reading habit.

Maher, Katherine U., "Try Pocket-sized Books to Stimulate Reading," in The English Journal, Vol. 37, issue of October 1948, p. 421-422.

Motivated by the use of the pocket-sized books, students read from seventeen to twenty-five books during the seventeen-week experiment.

Maras, E. B., "Plea for Silent Reading Period," in The Catholic Educator, Vol. 27, issue of November 1956, p. 171-172; 191.

Offers practical suggestions for conducting a weekly period of "silent outside reading."

María, Sister, "Passport to Maturity," in The Catholic School Journal, Vol. 60, issue of February 1960, p. 97-98; 100.

Teachers should utilize their opportunities to stress the type of books from which youth can learn to deal with vicarious experiences and situations in a mature manner.

Marie Cecile, Sister, "Directed Reading," in The Catholic Educator, Vol. 25, issue of May 1955, p. 555.

Suggests procedures for launching a program that is directive in obtaining school goals.

Marie Helen, Sister, "Youth Changes Its Reading Interests," in The Catholic School Journal, Vol. 43, issue of February 1943, p. 41-42.

Report of a two-year follow-up study made to find out the amount and type of books, magazines, and newspapers adolescents were reading, and their motives and influences that directed their reading.

Matthew, Brother, "Formation of Lifetime Reading Habits," in Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Catholic Library Association, held in Buffalo, New York, Villanova, Penn., The Catholic Library Association, 1958, p. 59-61.

Tips on guidance. Brother Matthew advises to assume an attitude of "take-it-or-leave-it" when suggesting books.

Miller, June L., "Guidance in the School Library," in Illinois Libraries, Vol. 34, issue of April 1952, p. 141-144.

The scope, function, and philosophy of the school library in relationship to the field of guidance are discussed.

Minkle, Ida, "Role of the Librarian in the Secondary School Guidance Program," in Wilson Library Bulletin, Vol. 28, issue of February 1954, p. 493-496.

Discusses the responsibilities and contributions of the librarian in the guidance program.

Mooney, Ross Lawler, A Criticism of Measurements of Interests, A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Yale University in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 1935, 361 p.

Two dominant methods of measuring interests are analyzed in the light of historical and philosophical perspective. They are 1) the philosophic approach, patterned after such philosophers as Herbart and Dewey, and 2) the more specialized approach, evolving out of measurement techniques. The two methods are compared and contrasted.

National Society for the Study of Education, Reading in the High School and College, Forty-seventh Yearbook, Part II, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1948, 318 p.
Includes fourteen papers on practically all aspects of the reading program for youth.

-----, Development in and Through Reading, edited by Henry B. Nelson, Sixtieth Yearbook, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1961, 406 p.

Analysis of such topics as: the nature of reading development, factors and conditions influencing reading, material for instruction, remedial reading practices, and ways of developing growth of individual student.

National Council of Teachers of English, Reading in an Age of Mass Communication, A Report of the Committee on Reading at the Secondary and College Levels, English Monographs, No. 17, New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949, 108 p.

Deals with the changed role of reading in contemporary life due to the rapid development of other agencies of mass communication, and the implications of this development upon all aspects of the reading program.

Norvell, George, The Reading Interests of Young People, New York, Heath, 1950, 262 p.

Summarizes reactions of 50,000 secondary-school pupils throughout New York State to 1,700 literary selections commonly studied in high school. Neither interest scores nor the interest patterns differed significantly in the reading of bright, average, and dull children.

-----, "Some Results of a Twelve-year Study of Children's Reading Interests," in The English Journal, Vol. 35, issue of December 1946, p. 531-536.

Describes the general character and scope of a twelve-year study of children's interests, and presents findings concerning the order of preference of eight literary types.

Peebles, C. M., "Library and the Guidance Program," in Illinois Libraries, Vol. 31, issue of January 1949, p. 52-53.

Librarian's contribution to the field of guidance.

Powell, Florence, "Students' Choice," in Library Journal, Vol. 76, issue of March 15, 1951, p. 488-491.

The findings of a survey of 387 high-school students' preferences showed that the girls' choices reveal interest in 1) teen-age life, 2) romance, and 3) adventure.

Preston, R. C., "The Changed Role of Reading," in Reading in an Age of Mass Communication, edited by William S. Gray, New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949, p. 1-18.

In view of the impact of the mass media of communication, America's reading habits are rapidly changing. Critical reading is assuming a major role. As a result, students need more guidance to achieve the values in reading.

Reach, D. D. and F. D. Dotson, "Developmental Reading for High School and College Students," in American School Board Journal, Vol. 130, issue of May 1944, p. 36-38; 103.

To stimulate improvement in all aspects of reading, and to insure the maximum reading growth of every student, a well-organized reading program, enthusiastic motivation, and the right procedure are more important than equipment and mechanical aids.

"Reluctant Reader," in Child Study, Vol. 28, No. 2, Spring, 1951, p. 17-19.

A librarian, an educator, and a psychiatrist explain the causes of dislike of reading, and suggest possible ways of handling the problem.

Robert, Brother, "A Program of Wide Reading," in The Catholic Library World, Vol. 29, issue of April 1958, p. 361-372; 416.

A rather comprehensive article, presenting the procedure of inaugurating a reading program in a high school, having for its objective the motivation of reading by means of pocket-size books.

Robert, E. B., "Developing Permanent Reading Interests in Children," in The English Journal, Vol. 26, issue of October 1949, p. 329-331.

In a series of questions which take up the various aspects of reading, the author points out what should be the developmental pattern of guiding pupils' reading activities.

Robinson, Helen M., Compiler and Editor, Developing Permanent Interest in Reading, The Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Reading, held at the University of Chicago, Vol. 18, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 84, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 224 p.

Series of Conference papers, focused on the role of reading interests, with emphasis on promoting and improving reading taste at different grade levels.

-----, "What Research Says to the Teacher of Reading," in The Reading Teacher, Vol. 8, issue of February 1955, p. 173-177; 191.

Summarizes briefly the more important conclusions about reading interests, the methods, trends, and the value of cultivating permanent reading interests on the part of the youth before they leave school.

Rooney, E. M., "Morality and the Selection of Books for the High School," in The Catholic Library World, Vol. 28, issue of May 1957, p. 394-400.

General consideration of the moral principles, designed to aid the Catholic librarian in her selection of books for the adolescent readers.

Rose Irma, Sister, "Building the Reading Habit in High School Students," in The Catholic Educator, Vol. 21, issue of December 1950, p. 206-208.

Presents worth-while suggestions to enable teachers to help students in their reading problems, to train them in critical thinking by correlating reading with the curriculum.

Russell, David H., "The Development of Reading Preferences and Tastes," in his Children Learn to Read, Chapter XII, Boston, Ginn, 1949, p. 246-277.

This chapter is concerned chiefly with the following topics: Value of permanent interests in reading; Nature of interests; Studies of Children's interests; and Factors affecting reading interests.

-----, "Some Research on the Impact of Reading," in The English Journal, Vol. 47, issue of October 1958, p. 398-413.

A readable summary of information, gleaned from research on the subject. The process of effect is highly complex and not easily predictable. The impact is not the resultant of reading alone, but of such interacting variables as the reader's experiences, his personality, and his value system.

Schubert, D. G., "Interest: Key to Reading Retardation," in The Elementary English, Vol. 30, issue of December 1953, p. 518-520.

Points out that dislike of reading is a conditioned reaction. Suggests that non-readers be provided with books

which are on or below their reading level, and with books that relate to their present interests.

Schuster, Brother George N., "Why Don't They Read Catholic Books?" in Proceedings and Addresses of the National Catholic Educational Association, Vol. 39, Washington, D. C., National Catholic Educational Association, 1942, p. 360-369.

Gives suggestions how to arouse interest and develop a taste for reading Catholic literature.

Scott, C. Winfield, "A 'Forest' View of Present Research in Reading," in Educational Psychological Measurement, Vol. 14, Spring, 1954, p. 208-214.

Reviews the major characteristics of research in reading during the period 1940-1950, and makes constructive suggestions for the improvement of research in this field.

Shatter, Audrey, "A Survey of Student Reading," in The English Journal, Vol. 40, issue of May 1951, p. 271-273.

Analysis of the quantity and quality of books read by three groups in the sixteen-to-eighteen-year old range. Groups were formed within each class on the basis of interests or relative ability.

Simpson, Elizabeth A., Helping High-school Students Read Better, A Program Manual for Teachers and Administrators, Chicago, Science Research Associates, 1954, 146 p.

This manual offers: 1) suggestions on how teachers can assist all students to read with greater efficiency and enjoyment; 2) descriptions of methods to use in setting-up and conducting all-school reading programs; 3) information on available reading improvement aids - tests, devices, etc.

Slocumb, Herlin, "Books and Behavior," in The English Journal, Vol. 37, issue of November 1948, p. 463-467.

Describes a two-year experiment based on the principle that "the value of a book must be measured by the difference it makes in the life of the reader."

Smith, Dora V., "The Present Status of Reading in Secondary Schools," in The English Journal, Vol. 31, issue of April 1942, p. 274-283.

A clearly-stated overview and appraisal of reading practices in secondary schools. Identifies five broad trends. Emphasizes developmental programs of reading.

Smith, Doris, "Guided Free Reading," in Illinois English Bulletin, Vol. 42, issue of December 1954, p. 1-16.

A free reading program, if well guided by the teacher, is the only answer to the problem of individual differences. Author cites several studies and reports on reading interests.

Smith, E. R. et. al., "Evaluation of Interests," in their Appraising and Recording Student Progress, Chapter V, New York, Harper, 1942, p. 313-348.

Contains a description of a maturity scale, developed by the Committee on the Evaluation of Interests. This measure of maturity included about 1,000 authors, each being matched with those writers whose maturity has been determined objectively by a six-level maturity scale, ranging from 1 (very easy reading) to 6 (very difficult reading). The list provided a standard classification of fiction by type and maturity.

Smith, Nila B., "Reading in 1953," in Education, Vol. 73, issue of May 1953, p. 532-538.

In consequence of social and political needs of our contemporary life, more emphasis should be placed on critical reading. The pronounced reference for easy reading suggests that pupils need direction and guidance in their reading.

Stanislaus, Brother E., "How Can Our Educational Philosophy Influence Our Educational Practices?" in Proceedings and Addresses of the National Educational Association, Vol. 52, Washington, D. C., The National Catholic Educational Association, 1955, p. 132-136.

Catholic philosophy serves as a determinant of our curricula. Since it is the integrating factor, all educational efforts should be coordinated so that each subject be taught in the light of those philosophical principles.

Sterl, Artley A., "The Development of Reading Maturity in High School - Implications of the Gray-Rogers Study," in Educational Administration and Supervision, Vol. 43, issue of October 1957, p. 321-328.

Expresses a forward-looking point of view to the possibility of applying, with modifications, the maturity scale, devised by William S. Gray and Bernice Rogers, to secondary-school and college students' reading.

Sterner, Alice P., Radio, Motion Picture, and Reading Interests - A Study of High School Pupils, Contribution to Education, No. 932, New York, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1947, 102 p.

Based on the data of her study, the author draws the conclusion that it is interest rather than the medium that has the greater attraction for the adolescent.

Strang, Ruth, Constance McCullough, and Arthur E. Traxler, Problems in the Improvement of Reading, 2nd ed. New York, McGraw-Hill, 1955, 426 p.

Contains one of the best discussions on a good reading program, and describes approaches to common reading problems. Chapter XVI (p. 312-340), entitled "Reading Interests, Materials, and Equipment," contains results of studies, and suggests ways of developing interest in reading.

Strang, Ruth, Explorations in Reading Patterns, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1942, 125 p.

In her case studies of 112 individuals, ranging from thirteen to fifty, Strang discovered that environment, pre-dispositions, reading skill, age, sex, and intelligence influence the person's reading pattern.

-----, "Gifted Children Need Help in Reading Too," in Reading Teacher, Vol. 6, issue of January 1953, p. 23-27.

Offers a number of practical suggestions for the reading program of the gifted pupil.

-----, "Reading Interests, 1946," in The English Journal, Vol. 35, issue of November 1946, p. 477-482.

Analyzes the responses in Grades VII-XII in thirty schools to questions concerning their reading preferences to find out "if high-school pupils give stereotyped replies." Because the responses were so diverse in character, it was concluded that no stereotyped answers are given by the pupils.

Strickler, Robert, "Reading Instruction Throughout the High School Curriculum," in Education, Vol. 78, issue of September 1957, p. 22-26.

"Each teacher must not only acknowledge a responsibility for the improvement of reading, but also function within his particular instructional area as a teacher of reading."

Sullivan, Richard, "Definition of Catholic Fiction," in Books on Trial, Vol. 12, issues of January-February 1954, p. 157-158.

A fine interpretation of analyzing fiction from the Catholic viewpoint.

Tabackman, Sadie P., "Can We Make Non-Readers Like to Read?" in The English Journal, Vol. 37, issue of December 1948, p. 517-524.

Describes her procedure in getting a group of students with an I. Q. ranging from 89 to 107 to read four books on four different subjects before the end of a marking period.

Thorndike, Robert L., Children's Reading Interests, New York, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1941, 48 p.

A study of reading interests in Grades IV through XII, wherein by means of a questionnaire based on fictitious titles, the author discovered a consistent pattern of reading interests cutting across all age and intelligence differences.

Tozier, Virginia, "What Motivates Secondary School Voluntary Reading?" in Wilson Library Bulletin, Vol. 30, issue of October 1955, p. 166-169.

Outlines briefly the influential factors which stimulate students' reading. These are: comments by fellow-students, teachers, and parents; mass media; individual reading ability, background, and personal experience.

Vianney, Sister Mary, "Teach Purposeful Reading," in The Catholic School Journal, Vol. 49, issue of February 1949, p. 59.

Offers a proposal regarding the problem of raising the standards of Catholic readers' taste in fiction.

Vogel, Francis X., "The Skiles Program for Reading Improvement," in Clearing House, Vol. 35, issue of February 1961, p. 331-335.

The plan designed at Skiles Junior High School has several excellent features which can be adapted in most secondary schools.

Watts, D. R., "What's Happening to Reading?" in The English Journal, Vol. 43, issue of March 1954, p. 125-129.

Analyzes the prevailing reading problems, and suggests less concern about norms and numbers, surveys and statistics, and more interest in the individual reader.

Wheeler, Lester, "The Relation of Reading to Intelligence," in School and Society, Vol. 70, issue of October 8, 1949, p. 225-227.

Low mentality is not the cause of the majority of reading difficulties. Besides mental abilities and chronological ages, developmental opportunities should be given consideration.

Wheeler, L. R. and V. D. Wheeler, "Some Characteristic Differences Between Elementary and Secondary School Reading," in School Review, Vol. 63, issue of September 1955, p. 338-340.

To increase the level of reading power, and to meet the requirements necessary for more mature reading, the high-school student needs instruction.

Witty, Paul, "Effective Utilization of Mass Media - Effects on Children," in Childhood Education, Vol. 33, issue of November 1956, p. 104-108.

The amount of televiewing, its effects, and suggestions of constructive steps for coordinating reading with worthwhile interests engendered by TV.

Witty, Paul and David Kopel, "Interest as a Factor in Reading," in their Reading and the Educative Process, Chapter II, New York, Ginn, 1939, p. 25-66.

This chapter has as its major points of emphasis such topics as: decrease in the amount of reading and the decline in reading interests; the preferences of poor readers; and the role of interest and motivation in guiding reading.

Witty, Paul, Reading in Modern Education, Boston, Heath, 1949, 319 p.

Contains a number of useful summaries of research. Major consideration to the role of interest in reading is given in Chapter II (p. 21-54).

-----, "TV and Today's Children," in Today's Health, Vol. 35, issue of November 1957, p. 20; 40-49.

Among other points of emphasis, Dr. Witty summarizes his findings with regard to the impact of TV on children's habits of reading.

Wollner, Mary Hayden Bowen, Children's Voluntary Reading as an Expression of Individuality, Teachers College Contribution to Education, No. 944, New York, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1949, 117 p.

A study of voluntary reading of junior high-school pupils in which the following observations are made: 1) voluntary reading is dependent upon interrelationships of many factors; 2) interest in reading varies in proportion to one's mental and cultural development; 3) results based on coefficient of correlation alone are not adequate for guiding children's voluntary reading.

Wood, Brother Robert, "Problem for Leisure Reading," in The Catholic Educator, Vol. 20, issue of June 1950, p. 516-519.

Suggestions based on the concept that in leisure reading young people may find both pleasurable experiences and "at the same time profit by an increase in education," but they must be guided to the better books.

APPENDIX 1

List of Books Recommended by 42 Catholic High-school Librarians
and the Corresponding Maturity According to the
Pooled Appraisal of Ten Judges

Title of Book	Maturity* Level
Abbe Pierre	3
Adventure of the Amethyst	1
Adventure of Two Worlds	2
All American	1
All My Darlings	2
Ambassador Extraordinary	2
And Nora Said Yes	2
April Time	1
Babe Ruth	1
Barred Road	1
Beany Malone	1
Behold Your Queen	1
Bells of St. Mary's	1
Beloved Outcast	1
Betsy and Joe	1
Betty Starling	1
Big Doc's Girl	2
Black Stallion	1
Blue Willow	1
Boy Trouble	1
Bride for New Orleans	2
Broken Sword	1
Call of the Wild	2
Calvary in China	3
Candle Against the Sun	2
Cap for Mary Ellis	2
Captive Princess	2
Challenge to Marion	1
Cheaper by the Dozen	2
Christine and Betsy Allen	2
Class Ring	1
Cliff's Edge	2
Come Rack, Come Rope	3
Come In, Winifred	1
Cross Delahanty	2

* 1 - Low (Juvenile); 2 - Average (Adolescent); 3 - High (Adult)

Title of Book	Maturity* Level
Crown for Ashes	2
Damien the Leper	3
Dark Symphony	3
Date for Dianne	1
The Day Lincoln Was Shot	3
Deliverance of Sister Cecilia	2
Different One	1
Difficult Star	2
Don Camillo and His Flock	2
Doctor Ellen	2
Double Date	2
Dove Flies South	2
Edge of Doom	2
End of Eternity	3
Everybody Calls Me Father	2
Foreigner	1
Foundling	2
Fullback Fury	1
George Washington Carver	1
Girl Called Hank	2
Girl Can Dream	1
Girls You're Important	2
Go, Team Go	1
God and the General's Daughter	2
God Goes to the Murderer's Row	2
God's Underground in Asia	3
Going Steady	2
Going on Sixteen	1
Good Morning, Miss Dove	2
Gold Fishhook	1
Great Mantle	2
Greatest Book Ever Written	3
Greatest Story Ever Told	3
Green Grass of Wyoming	2
High Note, Low Note	1
The Hills Liars	3
Holding the Stirrup	3
Hiroshima	3
Hot Rod	1
How Do I Love Thee	2
I Hear in My Heart	2

*1 - Low (Juvenile); 2 - Average (Adolescent); 3 - High (Adult)

Title of Book	Maturity* Level
I Led Three Lives	3
I'll Cry Tomorrow	3
I'll Die Laughing	2
Immortal Wife	3
In a Mirror	2
Jane Eyre	3
Julie	2
Karen	2
Keepsake Ring	2
Kon-Tiki	3
Lantern in Her Hand	2
Larger Than The Sky	1
Lark's on the Wing	3
Lasse Your Heart	1
Last Crescendo	3
Last Man	3
Last Semester	2
Left Hand of God	3
Life Is Worth Living	3
Like a Sister	1
Little Women	1
Little World of Don Camillo	2
Living Wood	3
Loon Feather	2
Love Is Eternal	3
Love Taps Gently	2
Man Called Peter	3
Man for Marcy	1
Man on the Donkey	3
Man That Got Even with God	2
Mangled Hands	2
Maria Chapdelaine	2
Masterful Monk	3
Meet the Malones	1
Men in Sandals	2
Miracle of the Bells	3
Miracle at Carville	2
Miss Behavior	2
Mr. Blue	2
Moonflower	2
Monkey on My Back	3

*1 - Low (Juvenile); 2 - Average (Adolescent); 3 - High (Adult)

Title of Book	Maturity* Level
Murder in the Nunnery	2
Murder Takes the Veil	2
My Beloved	2
My Left Foot	2
My Russian Yesterdays	2
My True Love Waits	2
Night to Remember	2
No Other Man	2
No Secret Is Safe	2
Nun in Red China	2
Omnibus	2
On Wings of Fire	2
Onion in the Stew	2
Our F.B.I.	2
Our Lady in Our Life	2
Our Lady of Fatias	2
Out on a Limb	2
Outlaws of Ravenhurst	2
Passport for Jennifer	2
Personality Plus	2
Pray, Love Remember	2
Pride and Prejudice	2
Prima Ballerina	2
From Trouble	2
Promises to Keep	2
Quiet Light	2
Ramona	2
Random Harvest	2
Red Planet	2
Red Shoes for Nancy	2
Reproachfully Yours	2
Restless Flame	2
Right Job for Judith	2
Room for One More	2
Running Waters	2
Saint Maria Goretti	2
Scarlet Lily	2
Second Conquest	2
Senior Nurse	2
Senior Year	2
Separate Star	2

*1 - Low (Juvenile); 2 - Average (Adolescent); 3 - High (Adult)

Title of Book	Maturity* Level
Seven Came Through	2
Seven Storey Mountain	3
Seventeen	2
Seventeenth Summer	2
Shadow on the Cedarcrest	1
Shadow on the Earth	3
Shadows on the Rock	3
Shepherd's Tartan	2
Sherlock Holmes	2
Ship Without a Crew	1
Silver Chalice	3
Silver Chief	1
Six Feet Six	1
6 on Easy Street	2
Sixteen Is Special	2
Skygirl	1
Skymountain	2
Smarter and Smoother	2
Song of the Scaffold	3
Spare Me Not in the Making	2
Spear	3
Spring Comes Riding	1
Springs of Silence	3
Stage of Pools	3
Star of Jacob	3
Starring You	2
Steadfast Heart	1
Stepmother	1
Story of the Trapp Family Singers	3
Stranger	3
Sue Barton, the Nurse	1
Then There Was One	3
These Two Hands	2
Thinking Life Through	3
The Third Door	3
Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo	2
This Night Called Day	3
Three Is a Crowd	2
Three to Get Married	2
Tomorrow's Memories	2

*1 - Low (Juvenile); 2 - Average (Adolescent); 3 - High (Adult)

Title of Book	Maturity* Level
Treasures in the Depths	2
Trish	2
Triumph Clear	1
Tumbleweed	2
Twenty Thousand Leagues Under Sea	2
Two's Company	1
Vagabond in Velvet	2
Waterfront Priest	3
We Die Alone	3
White Fire	2
Wife Desired	2
Willow Hill	1
Witness	3
With a Young Heart	1
Yesterday, Today and Forever	3

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE - PART III (A)

In this section you will find a list of titles. Each is followed by a short description to tell you what the story is about. If you think that you would like to read the story, put a circle around (YES). If you think that you would not like to read the book, even though you had the time and nothing else to do, put a circle around (NO). If you cannot make up your mind whether you would like to read the story or not, put a circle around the question mark (?).

1. THE BLACK SHADOW Yes No ?
Who killed Bill McCarthy, the baseball rival? Giant footprints lead to the clue.
2. HAVE A HOBBY? Yes No ?
How making a model airplane in his early childhood proved an unusual aid for a young man in a hazardous flying trip.
3. TOO LATE Yes No ?
The story of a jealous husband who unwittingly kills his own son, whom he suspects to be the suitor of his wife.
4. BEHIND THE AWARD Yes No ?
First hand story of the heroism of the United States Medical Corps during World War II.
5. THE PERENNIAL DRIVE Yes No ?
The More-Money-Mania is the human cry of the centuries. Materialism and its effect on man's happiness.
6. CALLING ALL YOUTH Yes No ?
Hints on how to grow up and adjust yourself agreeably and satisfactorily for adulthood.
7. HIS LAST WORDS Yes No ?
About a dying prisoner whose innocence is proved too late. Nothing could destroy his faith and inner peace.

- | | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|----|---|
| 8. | THE MAGIC OF MUSIC
How the world-famous violinist, Jascha Heifetz, wrought charm over the musically spellbound audience. | Yes | No | ? |
| 9. | THE SACRED CHARM
Forced landing of an American Air Corps pilot brings him in contact with a semi-barbaric tribe in South Africa. A crucifix on his neck saves him from a brutal death at the hands of the savages. | Yes | No | ? |
| 10. | AND THEN WHAT?
Wondering what becomes of people when they die, a college professor decides to attend a debate on this subject, and learns that life is more than a set of chemico-physical phenomena. | Yes | No | ? |
| 11. | LOOK AT THE BIRDIE
Clear instruction on the art of photography for teen-agers. | Yes | No | ? |
| 12. | 'TIS MY COUNTRY
A brief but interesting history of American life. | Yes | No | ? |
| 13. | ABSOLUTELY TRUE
A little Hungarian girl loses both parents in the massive exodus during World War II. How she becomes an American "princess" sounds like a fairy tale. | Yes | No | ? |
| 14. | WANT TO BE A BIG-LEAGUER?
Training, hardships, disappointments and triumphs of the baseball stars. | Yes | No | ? |
| 15. | RAINBOW IN THE DARK
Blinded at Iwo Jima, Ken learns how to adjust himself in his relationship with others, and even finds the romance for which he has been looking. | Yes | No | ? |
| 16. | SCIENCE IN ACTION
The most recent scientific development in the fight against cancer by the American Medical Research Bureau. | Yes | No | ? |
| 17. | MAKE YOURSELF PRETTY
Things to do and not to do in order to look attractive. | Yes | No | ? |

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|-----|---|-----|----|---|
| 18. | LARRY HAYES | Yes | No | ? |
| | This is a story of a colored boy who took his studies and work seriously to get his people out of the slums. | | | |
| 19. | I LIVE IN THE U.S.A. | Yes | No | ? |
| | Well designed and illustrated travelogue filled with fascinating and important information about our country. | | | |
| 20. | EIGHTEENTH SUMMER | Yes | No | ? |
| | Self-centered Vivian Lou learns the hard way to face realities of life. | | | |
| 21. | CAPTAIN GIL | Yes | No | ? |
| | Gil helps to organize a remarkable sports team of newly-arrived immigrant boys, and thus aids in preventing a problem of delinquency. | | | |
| 22. | TO BE OR NOT . . . | Yes | No | ? |
| | After finishing his education as a law student, Jim Carroll discovers that for real happiness he must change his vocation. | | | |
| 23. | UNEXPECTED INHERITANCE | Yes | No | ? |
| | A novel in which divorce is thought to be the only cure for social maladjustment. | | | |
| 24. | WHY NOT? | Yes | No | ? |
| | Deals with wholesome methods of approach to sex education. | | | |
| 25. | CARLOS THE TOREADOR | Yes | No | ? |
| | Life and death in the bull ring. | | | |

QUESTIONNAIRE - PART III (B)

Do the same as in Section (A), that is, put a circle around YES, if you think that you would like to read that type of a book; circle NO, if you do not like to read that type of book, and put a circle around the question mark (?) if you cannot make up your mind.

School and teen-age interests	YES	NO	?
Political and economic problems	YES	NO	?
Catholic Action and the Missions	YES	NO	?
Personality and self-improvement	YES	NO	?
Mystery and detective stories	YES	NO	?
Geography and travel	YES	NO	?
Sex, courtship, and marriage	YES	NO	?
Philosophical themes	YES	NO	?
Art, Music, Painting	YES	NO	?
Character and psychological stories	YES	NO	?
Religious life	YES	NO	?
Historical events and people	YES	NO	?
Lives of Saints	YES	NO	?
Family and Home	YES	NO	?
Humorous stories	YES	NO	?
Social problems	YES	NO	?
Hobbies	YES	NO	?
Animals	YES	NO	?
Adventure	YES	NO	?
Biography	YES	NO	?
Sports	YES	NO	?
History	YES	NO	?
Careers	YES	NO	?
Science	YES	NO	?

APPENDIX 3

ABSTRACT OF

A SURVEY OF THE READING INTERESTS OF CATHOLIC HIGH-SCHOOL GIRLS¹ WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR GUIDANCE PRACTICES¹

Basically, the purpose of the present survey has been to determine the nature and extent of the girls' reading patterns in view of the need for a more effective guidance in the all-sided development of pupils through reading.

The data were based upon an Index of maturity of reading, and upon two questionnaires - one, administered to 460 high-school students; the other, much shorter, sent to seventy high-school librarians.

The sample consisted of 460 girls, Grades IX through XII, from five Catholic high schools, representative of the different communities of a large Midwestern city. The pupils were selected proportionately to the enrollment of the school, with equal-sized distribution in ages, grades, and intelligence quotients. The purpose of the grouping was to discover reading preferences by grades as well as by ability groups.

The data were not tested statistically, but the findings gave evidence of a striking consistency. Responses to the

¹ Sister Mary Gregory, CSFN., doctoral thesis presented to the School of Psychology and Education, University of Ottawa, Ontario, August 1961, ix-244 p.

combination questions, comparison between the books read by the girls and the librarians' report, close parallelism between best-liked books and the annotated fictitious titles were indicative of the validity and reliability of the answers.

The study revealed certain facts which may prove useful for further research in the area of adolescent reading.

The common pattern of appeal was considerably the same for the four high-school grades and the three ability levels. Neither the grade nor the intelligence quotient was a determinant of reading interests. Teen-age life, coupled with the element of romance, was the decisive factor in the first-choice reading material.

Neither the attendance at movies nor the wide use of television tends to decrease the amount of reading. Both media appear to be fairly compatible with reading.

Over 64% of high-school librarians reported that the majority of the girls read books voluntarily; 36% observed that normal circulation consisted of books on required lists.

According to the pooled judgment of experts, the most popular books, read by the girls, showed the following levels of maturity: 30% of the titles were classified as "High" or adult books; 45% were included in the "Average" list, and 25% were considered "Low" or juvenile.

Except for humor, which in the topical classification outranked every other subject, the theme selections with the highest interest appeal were: religion 92%; life adjustment 89%; character story 83%. Sports (27%) and hobbies (18%) fared lowest in the degrees of intensity of interest..

In the area of reading effects, 61% acknowledged that books had a decided influence in their lives, and 91% reported that the books they read could be freely recommended to others. A marked degree of agreement (92%) in wholesome attitude toward Catholic literature was predominant.

Several implications were drawn for more integrated guidance practices. The students' narrow range of interests showed much to be desired in the development of the more serious, aesthetic, scientific, and literary values in reading. There was an apparent lack of a unified direction in applying our educational objectives so as to improve the potentialities of the individual pupil through diversified reading. In order that our educational goals can be realized, the school must become more concerned with re-directing certain areas of adolescent reading, giving a more actual recognition to individual differences, and providing definite scheduled time in school for guided reading. To this end, a well-planned, co-ordinated, school-wide reading guidance is essential.