tribute to high rates in given neighborhoods. The students can check all the right answers on the next quiz: broken homes, school dropouts, faulty parent-images, poverty, gang traditions. But how much more meaningful it is to live through the experiences with Nick Romano; to feel the oppressiveness of social injustices; to hope for release from the slum, then to slip back; to know the crushing millstone of poverty; to be tethered to the dead weight of family and peer values; to sit in murderer’s row awaiting execution. And then to be stood on a corner on Halsted Street by the author and to be asked whether you want to meet another Nick Romano. “Knock,” he says, “on any door.” It is as hopeless as that.

To secure maximum benefit from the vicarious participation of the student in social problems, we developed at Anderson College a new approach to social problems education. We reasoned that if we could lead the student to feel with his emotions the meaning of victimization we might make a more lasting and effective impact upon him. We discarded completely all our traditional academic reading and concentrated upon producing a forceful experience with strong emotional content. We want our students to regard Holden Caulfield (The Catcher in the Rye) as a friend and to identify with him.

Our social problems course this year studies the following books as a class: The Addict, Animal Farm, Black Like Me, The Call Girl, Cry, The Beloved Country, Days of Wine and Roses, Death of a Salesman, Gandhi, Liza and David (Jordi), Knock on Any Door, My Eyes Have a Cold Nose, and A Tree Grows in Brooklyn.

Each student reads the book, preferably in one sitting the evening before it is discussed. A part of the class acts as a panel for the first part of the discussion, with time reserved for discussion by the total group. In addition to these twelve books, each student reads and writes a report on twelve others taken from our carefully selected list of about 300 suitable paperbacks. The instructor lectures on the subject at the beginning of each unit so that the class has some indispensable theoretical understanding of the problem before reading the novel. Panel and class discussions are guided by the instructor to be sure they do not bog down on nonessentials and that they do not miss touching on important points.

The new approach we are making is new, not in the use of fiction and biography, but in the way we use them. First, we use them exclusively, except for background lectures. Second, we frankly aim at emotionally-based experiences on the part of the students. We are happy with the results. We believe our alumni will benefit from having met Francie Nolan (A Tree Grows in Brooklyn) long after they have forgotten how to distinguish between endogamy and homogamy.

The greatest handicap is to keep the reading list up to date. Paperbound books go in and out of print like Yo-Yos, and some have as many as seventeen different publishers. It is a major task to keep the list reasonably fresh. It currently contains about 300 titles, and covers the major social problems of our day. As a service to our colleagues we will be glad to send a copy for what it costs us to put it in their hands (25¢ coin or stamps).* A selected list dealing with family-centered fiction or biography is offered below. Intended for the college and adult education level, many titles are suitable also for high school classes.**


** “Repeatedly I am impressed with the maturity of the reading demands made upon high school students. I have three sons in high school at the present time and some of the reading they are doing is comparable to what I did in college. I am constantly amazed at the intellectual maturity of the younger generation, and give credit to the increased efficiency of our formal education system and to TV, in spite of its shortcomings one of the most effective educational devices ever produced.” Personal communication from Professor Clear. (Note by the editor, Teacher Exchange).

The Use of Drama in Teaching Family Relationships*

LAURENCE E. SMARDAN**

* Based on a talk given at the Annual Meeting, National Council on Family Relations, Toronto, October 1965.

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years and all over the world, elders have aided the socialization of their young by having the latter, as audience, witness performances of plays, each usually designed to teach some specific lesson about life. The Greeks were particularly noted for their use of dramas to prepare young people to see life as inevitably having some tragic meaning. What is relatively new and perhaps even unknown by many people working in the field of family life education is that plays, or more appropriately, family dramas, are excellent sources for teaching about almost all aspects of interpersonal relationships within the family. In fact, it is not far amiss to say that many of our better family dramatists merit the additional title, family life educator.

Major Family Dramatists

Among those who deserve such recognition are Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, William Inge, Eugene O'Neill, and Frank D. Gilroy. These five men, prize winners all, have received great acclaim and justifiably so for having written deeply sensitive, insightful studies of family life. Each is gifted in being able to help the viewer or reader of his creative work understand some of the reasons why family members behave as they do. In some of their plays answers are provided to "burning" family issues; in others the play ends with certain family matters unresolved, questions are posed, and it is up to the reader or viewer to give thought and concern to possible answers. To view or read a family drama by one of these playwrights, or one written by many other excellent family dramatists, such as Henrik Ibsen, Lillian Hellman, and August Strindberg, is always another opportunity to strengthen one's ability to understand better the dynamics of family living.

Ways of Using Family Dramas

The teacher of family relationships at any academic level, and this includes, of course, extension work, can use the creative efforts of the family dramatist in two ways—as supplementary material or as the only material used to help his students gain deeper and broader insights relating to the family.

As supplementary material, dramas can be treated in case-study fashion to illustrate or support what scholars say about family relationships. Many family life educators want their students to be able to apply, in some practical way, what they have learned from books or lectures. Those who are opposed to students' getting too personal, that is, examining their own families in front of fellow students or in written analyses, can find it very helpful to have the Loman family (Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman, the Clearys (Frank D. Gilroy's The Subject Was Roses, or the Tyrones (Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night) become the subjects of intensive classroom analysis.

The writer has found it especially useful to have students read such works as Levy and Munroe's The Happy Family,1 Evelyn M. Duvall's Family Development,2 and parts of Nathan W. Ackerman's The Psychodynamics of Family Life,3 prior to analyzing relationships in family dramas. What Makes for Strong Family Life4 and an exciting model of family relationships designed by Otto Pollak5 are two other sources providing much "food for thought" about interaction in families created by the playwright.

The five references mentioned above are merely illustrative of those that can be used by the teacher. Naturally, the latter should use material geared to the academic level and interests of his students.

Some teachers would probably find it both challenging and stimulating to have their students read, or listen to, family dramas "cold," without relating what they have heard or read to the thinking of scholars. In other words, they are eager to have their students see what they can "dig out" on their own. When a lengthy class discussion elicits a wide range of sound ideas expressed by the playwright in his drama, it is a clear way of showing how sensitive and skillful certain dramatists are as family life educators.

Specific Advantages

Dramas offer the advantage that they can be observed "live" by students. Many fine family plays are produced on television, and the little theatre movement has spread to such a degree that at certain times of the year in certain

places there are actually choices to be made among several good family dramas.*

A newly formed group, the American Playwrights Theatre, is sponsoring the performance of new plays in over 125 community and university theatres throughout the country. The first two plays, Robert Anderson’s *The Days Between* and William Inge’s *Not Quite A Love Song* are both family dramas. Mr. Anderson’s play has already been published, and affords the teacher the opportunity of reading it before the play arrives in his community. He can design questions for his students to “take” to the theatre; answers can be shared during classroom discussion.

Still another advantage is that several outstanding family dramas are available on long-playing records: Edward Albee’s *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, Frank D. Gilroy’s *The Subject Was Roses*, Eugene O’Neill’s *Strange Interlude*, and Murray Schisgal’s *Luv* have been recorded by Columbia records. Cademon Records has released Tennessee Williams’ *The Glass Menagerie*; Arthur Miller’s *After the Fall* is a Mercury release.**

The family life educator should always ‘preview’ the record first to be certain students’ needs would be met by listening to it. Unfortunately, most of the records listed deal with rather sophisticated, sometimes psychoanalytic approaches to family study. This could restrict their usage in certain academic situations.

The recordings do tend to be somewhat expensive but when widely used by many people in a given community, the cost is less prohibitive. Special attention should be given to the use of records when students are slow learners or have serious reading problems.

An interesting technique to use with recordings is to avoid playing the last scene until students have had the chance to suggest how they think the play “should” end. If the play is read aloud by the teacher, the same approach can be used.

* Cooperation with the school’s own theatre and drama classes and clubs may result in the selection of plays with a family focus to be performed by the students. Cf., Hubert C. Helfner, “Theatre and Drama in Liberal Education,” *Teachers College Record*, January 1965, pp. 311-317. Also, Glenn M. Loner, “Theatre and College: Adventure in Liberalization,” *Teachers College Record*, March 1965, pp. 693-701. (Note by the editor, Teacher Exchange).

** Also now available is Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*, a release of the Theatre Recording Society. (Note by the editor, Teacher Exchange).


Unfortunate Tendency

During the past fifteen years or more, most serious family dramas, for example those by Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, and others who are mildly or strongly psychoanalytically oriented, have ended on a realistic but also a tragic note for most, if not all, of the family members in the play. A content analysis of serious family dramas of the past two decades would probably be heavily slanted in the direction of family neurosis, if not family psychosis. One of the unfortunate tendencies has been to present happy and healthy—or even halfway happy and healthy—families through the comic form. Surely the playwright who uses comedy as his forte can have a serious message he is trying to put across. Many times the situations and relationships appear unrealistic or even highly exaggerated to the observer or reader.

Teachers using comedies should take note.*

Two Valuable Family Dramas

Two dramas the writer has found particularly useful in teaching are Moss Hart’s *Christopher Blake* and *The Subject Was Roses* by Frank D. Gilroy. Mr. Hart’s play was probably one of the finest treatments of divorce ever written. With keen insight and through heavy use of fantasy, he explores what it means to a 12-year-old boy when his parents are in the throes of marital failure. No case study known to the writer is as moving as this analysis. For many years students have remained spellbound when parts of the play have been read aloud.

The central theme is that for some people divorce may be the wisest step. The Blakes are just such people. Much of the play is devoted to the emergence of insight and maturity on the part of the young son. Careful attention is given to the parents as well. More than one student has reported that the play was recommended to family or friends anticipating or al-

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* Perhaps note should also be taken of the charge that family pathology in recent serious plays reflects the faulty vision of the dramatist who “writes of marriage and of other relationships about which he knows or cares little.” If it is true, as alleged, that “postwar American drama presents a badly distorted picture of American women, marriage, and society in general,” the teacher who assigns such plays may find them more illuminative of selected interpersonal processes than of broad social reality. Cf., Stanley Kauffman, “Homosexual Drama and Its Disguises,” *The New York Times*, January 23, 1963, Section 2, p. 1.


ready experiencing divorce, and that family discussion following the reading aloud proved most beneficial.

The Gilroy play deals with the Clearys, an Irish-American family of three living in the Bronx. During a marriage of over twenty years, the parents have used their son as a pawn. Upon returning home from the army, the latter is determined that interpersonal relationships in his family must change and that he has to assume the initial responsibility to bring this about. Students have found it rewarding to read Harry Milt's Young Adults And Their Parents before listening to the play. While the Clearys are beset with many intrapersonal and interpersonal problems, there is no suggestion that they are deeply disturbed individuals. They must come to grips, though, with dependency and indecision issues discussed so thoroughly by Milt. This drama is especially good in that the potential for growth is apparent. Those working with both young adults and those who would be in their parent generation can find much of value in this highly provocative family study.

**Annotated Bibliography**

The following annotated bibliography, however brief, illustrates the wide range of topics handled in over 20 plays dealing with family relationships. Written originally for either the stage or television, the plays are available in inexpensive paperback editions. This means it is often possible for teachers to encourage students to purchase their own copies. Even when this is not possible, the low cost should mean that the school library could provide several copies.

1. *A Very Special Baby* by Robert Alan Aurthur, Samuel French, Inc. The 34-year-old son of a tradition oriented Italian-American father resolves a conflict concerning his identity. Considerable attention is given to sibling relationships when brothers and sisters are all adults.


3. *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry, Signet. Three generations of a Negro-American family come to grips with many ordinary day-to-day issues. Much of the emphasis in on different values that tend to weaken family ties.

4. *Blue Denim* by James Leo Herlihy and William Noble, Bantam. This play focuses on relationships between teen-agers and their parents. Absence of communication between parents and children—and marital partners as well—receives special attention. An attempt is made to offer some explanation for teen-age pregnancy.

5. *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs* by William Inge, Bantam. An Oklahoma family in the early 1920's faces some of the issues that have weakened interpersonal relationships within their family. Considerable attention is given to the meaning of masculinity in contemporary America. Issues facing this family are not unique to the time or the place.

6. *Special for Women* by George Jeffers, Avon. This is a collection of eight television plays focusing on as many problems facing the American woman and her family. Almost every stage of the family life cycle gets some attention. Each play is followed by a brief discussion in which a leader in the field of family life education expresses his thinking about the key issues in the play.

7. *Three Comedies of American Family Life; Three Plays about Marriage*, ed. by Joseph Mersand, Washington Square Press. Each book edited by Mr. Mersand includes three plays. The first includes, "I Remember Mama," "Life with Father," and "You Can't Take It With You." While all three are comedies, each handles serious issues pertaining to day-to-day family living. The second book includes, "Craig's Wife," "Holiday," and "They Knew What They Wanted." The first play handles a domineering, cruel wife; the second focuses on marriage in the upper classes; the third treats a May-December marriage.

8. *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller, Compass Books. Miller's famous play deals with a man aiming to live "the American dream." Willy Loman's inability to accept reality has a profound impact on his relationships with family members, especially his sons.

9. *The Wooden Dish* by Edmund Morris, Dramatists Play Service, Inc. A Texan in his forties tries to be a good husband, father, and son. He realizes how difficult it is to be all three in his family. The play focuses on both the needs, especially housing, of the elderly and their children.

10. *All the Way Home* by Tad Model, Avon. This is a Pulitzer Prize play based on James Agee's *A Death in the Family*, a very sensitive study of what it means to Rufus, aged

*Professor Smardan considers 1 through 11 could be used with high school students. Personal communication, March 22, 1965. (Note by the editor, Teacher Exchange).

*Harry Milt, *Young Adults and Their Parents, No. 355, New York: Public Affairs Pamphlets, 1964.*

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six, when his father suddenly dies. The meaning of death to other family members also receives attention, while the continuity of family life is stressed.

11. *Long Day's Journey into Night* by Eugene O'Neill, Yale. O'Neill’s play is an autobiographical drama of a family of four beset by many crises: tuberculosis, narcotic addiction, and alcoholism. Family loves and hates lead to continual conflict and the inability to relate on a warm, tender basis.

12. *Period of Adjustment* by Tennessee Williams, Signet. This play is a tragicomedy dealing with the inability of man and woman to relate to each other in a deep, intimate way. Special attention is given to a young husband, fairly neurotic, who cannot approach his wife on a sexual level.

**TWO BASIC SOURCES**

Family life educators are encouraged to send for the current catalogues of the two leading publishers of plays: Samuel French, Inc., 25 W. 45th St., New York, New York 10036; and Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 440 Park Ave. So., New York, New York 10016. A careful analysis of these publications can help each teacher decide what plays would be most appropriate for his students. Listed below are some recommended family dramas available through both publishers:

Samuel French Inc.

*All Summer Long,* Anderson.
*I Know My Love,* Behrman.
*Middle of the Night,* Chayefsky.
*The Fourposter,* deHartog.

Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

*Who'll Save the Plowboy,* Gilroy.
*A Gift of Time,* Kanin.
*A Worm in Horse-radish,* Kaufman.
*Five Finger Exercise,* Shaffer.

Who else wants to have fun with their family? Take a Giant Step, Peterson.
*A Majority of One,* Spigelgass.
*Black Chiffon,* Storm.
*Our Town,* Wilder.
*The Rope Dancers,* Wishengrad.

*BE YOUR AGE* by Denham.
*The Heiress,* the Goetzes.
*Mrs. Dally Has a Lover,* Hanley.
*The Little Foxes,* Hellman.
*For Love or Money,* Herbert.

Dear Ruth, Krasna.
*John Lover Marry,* Krasna.
*All my Sons,* Miller.
*Edward, My Son,* Morley and Langer.
*A Roomful of Roses,* Sommer.

The Happy Time, Taylor.

Prior to being published in paperback form, many fine family dramas appear in hardback editions, and are available in local libraries.* We have many outstanding “family life educators” among our playwrights. Their dramas are merely waiting for us to become their readers, their observers, always their students.

* Especially useful is the series in Crown’s Basic Theatre Library, edited by John Gassner, including *Best American Plays,* in which many play titles suggested in the article are brought together in convenient collections. Crown Publishers, 33-20 Hunters Point Avenue, Long Island City, New York, will supply on request its catalogue, "Books on Theatre and Film." (Note by the editor, Teacher Exchange).

The Short Story and Family Insights in Secondary Schools*

**ROSE M. SOMERVILLE**

IT WOULD SEEM highly appropriate for the interdisciplinary field of family study to add the human relations aspects of imaginative literature to the findings culled from sociology, psychology, biology, anthropology, home economics, religion, law, and philosophy. The neat fit between the use of fiction and the outcomes sought in family life education has already been described.1 Also, for the college and adult

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1 Rose M. Somerville, "Imaginative Literature in Family..."