# Asilomar 40 Anniversary Celebration

## The Emergence of New Imperatives

Asilomar Conference Grounds Pacific Grove

September 28-30, 1990



Curriculum Study Commission Central California Council of Teachers of English



# **Asilomar 40**

### The Emergence of New Imperatives

"Had we but world enough, and time..."

Education, or rather the American system of imparting it to our youth and adults, is a coy mistress. In recent Asilomar conferences we have journeyed into knowing with a focus on students at risk (Asilomar 37), confronted the challenges of reform, even revolution, as English teachers (Asilomar 38), and considered how we ourselves might rebuild education with or without the reform movement (Asilomar 39). Yet, our mistress appears essentially unmoved by our flirtations, awaiting perhaps more enticing gubernatorial or presidential inducements.

As Miles Myers, NCTE's new Executive Director, announced in the several NCTE journals in December, however: the public appears to be changing its definition of an appropriate education–from local to multicultural perspectives, from reading as technique to reading as a reflective habit of mind, from writing as communication to writing as social negotiations and discovery, from computation to problem solving, from individual work to collaboration, from letters and numbers only to a diverse set of codes, including the visual.

Furthermore, Vartan Gregorian, former president of the New York Public Library and current president of Brown University, in conversation with Bill Moyers, states that "one way of paralyzing people is by inundating them with trivia. Giving them so much that they cannot possibly digest it all to make choices," that the explosions of information and of publication fragment knowledge. He then suggests that "education has to allow us to develop a critical mind in order to be able to differentiate between the chaff and the wheat, so that we know what information is truly obsolete, what is only obsolete in appearance, and what is potentially useful in ways that we don't know now." According to Gregorian, there are now two fundamental challenges for teachers: to provide a base of knowledge but also to provide connections.

Our own experience, moreover, informs us that more and more students come from single parent families or from families in which both working parents are away from home; that more and more students are non-native English speaking and return to a home culturally different from the school; that more and more students have part-time jobs that provide them with their own cars, electronic toys, telephones, and independence; that more and more students cope with threatening neighborhood environments, contemplate often unrealistically grandiose careers, or fear to dream at all.

All these conditions and challenges—public, pedagogical, social—create new imperatives for us as teachers. Andrew Marvell reminds us, "The grave's a fine and private place/But none, I think, do there embrace." At its fortieth anniversary Asilomar conference, the Curriculum Study Commission encourages us to share our concern, our insight, our expertise, our desire so that our coy mistress may say "Yes" to the demands of these new imperatives.

### Anniversary Celebration

**Purple**- Alexis Rotella

In first grade Mrs. Lohr said my purple teepee wasn't realistic enough, that purple was no color for a tent, that purple was a color for people who died, that my drawing wasn't good enough to hang with the others. I walked back to my seat counting the swish swish swishes of my baggy corduroy trousers. With a black crayon nightfall came to my purple tent in the middle of an afternoon.

In second grade Mr. Barta said draw anything, he didn't care what. I left my paper blank and when he came around to my desk my heart beat like a tom-tom. He touched my head and in a soft voice said the snowfall how clean and white and beautiful.

The Curriculum Study Commission dedicates this fortieth anniversary Asilomar conference to

#### **Janet Cotter**

(1914-1990).

Her devotion to poetry, her love of teaching, and her celebration of the joy of life have inspired its history.

### **Program**

### Friday, September 28, 1990

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3:30-9:00	Registration
4:30-6:00	CCCTE Reception
6:00-7:00	Dinner
7:30-8:30	General Session I
	Miles Myers,
	Executive Director, NCTE
8:45-10:00	Group Session I

### Sat

turday, Septem	ber 29, 1990	
7:30-8:45	Breakfast	
9:00-10:30	Group Session II	
11:00-12:00	General Session II	
	Sanford M. Dornbusch	
12:00-1:00	Lunch	
1:30-4:00	Group Session III	
5:00-6:00	Fortieth Anniversary Celebration	
6:00-7:00	Dinner	
7:15-8:15	Writer-in-Residence	
	Arturo Islas	
8:30-10:00	Around the Hearth	
	Informal discussions including a	
	symposium for department heads,	
	Asian films, Carmen (the dance	
	version), Arturo Islas,	
	grade level sharing, and more.	

### Sunday, September 30, 1990

7:30-8:45	Breakfast	
9:00-10:15	Group Session IV	
10:45-12:00	General Session III	
	Joy Carlin in Belle of Amherst	
12:00-1:00	Lunch	

The Asilomar conference is sponsored by the Curriculum Study Commission of the Central California Council of Teachers of English, an affiliate of the California Association of Teachers of English and the National Council of Teachers of English

### **Featured Presentations**

### **Miles Myers**

Most recently president of the California Federation of Teachers and associate director of the Bay Area Writing Project, Miles Myers has since April 2 become Executive Director of the National Council of Teachers of English. Most of us know him from his many years at Asilomar conferences (he was a featured Sunday presenter at Asilomar 20 as vice-president of CATE, speaking on "English as Woodshop," and chaired Asilomar 21 the next year) and from his many years of service to the profession in Oakland, at UC Berkeley, throughout California, and at NCTE. Among his publications are three important works published by NCTE: The Teacher-Researcher: How to Study Writing in the Classroom (1985), A Procedure for Writing Assessment and Holistic Scoring (1980), and Theory and Practice in the Teaching of Composition: Processing, Distancing, and Modeling (coedited with James Gray, 1983).

### Sanford M. Dornbusch

Sandy Dornbusch has been teaching at Stanford University since 1959. He is currently Reed-Hodgson Professor of Human Biology, Professor of Sociology, and Educational Director of the Stanford Center for the Study of Families, Children and Youth. Recognized for excellence in the classroom as well as among his peers, Mr. Dornbusch has received the Walter J. Gores Award for Excellence in Teaching and been elected head of both the Academic Senate and the Advisory Board at Stanford. He is the first sociologist to be chairman of three different Sections of the American Sociological Association (Methodology, Social Psychology, and Sociology of Education) and has recently been elected president of the Society for Research on Adolescence, the first non-psychologist to receive that honor. He has also taught at Ibadan (Nigeria), Harvard, and the Universities of Washington, Illinois, and Indiana. His most recent publication, among many, is Feminism, Children, and the New Families (Guilford Press, 1988), edited with Myra H. Strober.

### **Joy Carlin**

Associate Artistic Director of the American Conservatory Theatre, Joy Carlin has been a member of the company for many years. Among the roles she has played are Meg in A Lie of the Mind, Enid in The Floating Light Bulb, Miss Prism in The Importance of Being Earnest, Kitty Duval in The Time of Your Life, Ase in Peer Gynt, and Birdie in The Little Foxes, She has been Resident Director of the Berkeley Repertory Theatre and served as its Acting Artistic Director. Among her other directing credits are The House of Bernarda Alba, The Lady's Not for Burning, The Doctor's Dilemma, and Golden Boy at A.C.T. and productions at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival, the San Jose Repertory Company, a Contemporary Theatre of Seattle, and the Shanghai Youth Drama Troupe of China, where she directed You Can't Take It With You. Her Emily Dickinson received critical acclaim in San Francisco.

### Arturo Islas

Currently teaching literature as Professor of English at Stanford University. Arturo Islas has recently published his second novel, Migrant Souls (Morrow, 1990), as a continuation of the saga of the Angel family that he began in *The* Rain God, which was selected as one of the three best novels of 1984 by the Bay Area Writers Association. A native of El Paso, Texas, Mr. Islas investigates in these books the lives of those who "live on the border between a land that has forgotten us and another land that does not understand us," in the words of one of the Angel family. Mr. Islas reveals both the anger and the fear in the Chicano experience in el Norte.

# **Asilomar 40**

### Anniversary Celebration

### **Discussion/Workshop Sessions**

The Asilomar conference is based on sustained group discussion; each person meets with one continuing group for the entire weekend. Although each group includes a chairperson and one or more resource people, these individuals are not intended to function as lecturers. Rather, workshop participants share information and insights and collectively determine the direction of the evolving discussion. This emphasis on good talking, on pursuing intellectual interests together, has given the Asilomar conference its singular character and reputation. Please select a first and second choice workshop in which you would enjoy being a contributing member. (You are asked to submit two choices because the final scheduling of each workshop depends upon a minimum and maximum number of participants.)

Letters following group titles indicate their grade-level focus:

E Elementary

M Middle

S Secondary

G General (all levels)

1. Teaching English Today (S)

Group meetings will include discussion of the English classroom today, several ways to teach poetry, a presentation on teaching ESL in the regular English classroom, and on Sunday, a creating together of a thematic unit on identity. Participants should bring a lesson or two designed for ninth grade students, any ability level, and titles of novels and short stories that explore the theme of teenage identity or rite of passage.

2. Collaborative Learning (G)

The collective thoughts and experiences of students create a synergistic effect that exceeds what each student could accomplish alone. Group participants will share successful techniques for planning, conducting, and evaluation the collaborative learning process. Participants should bring some techniques that have worked for them and a literary work that they have used in the classroom.

. Writing on the Road (G)

Freeing students from the classroom for observing, investigating, and writing in the field can encourage experimentation with different points of view and genres. Group participants will select one of several local destinations (Point Lobos, Monterey Aquarium, Robinson Jeffer's Tor House) to explore and write about, then respond to one another's emerging drafts during the weekend with a view toward producing a classroom resource publication. A packet of information will be sent to enrollees.

4. Making the World Worth Saving-Children's Literature for the 1990s (E)

"Reading and discussing books is one way of humanizing our children. I am not so naive as to think literature will save the world, but I do believe it one of the things that make this world worth saving," wrote Charlotte Huck in 1982. Group participants will share children's literature as a way of helping to develop productive, thinking, and caring citizens of our world; with this goal in mind, they are asked to bring books and ideas to share.

## The Emergence of

10. Getting It Together in the Whole Language Classroom (E)

Abandoning worksheets and basals is not enough. Reading and writing are social as well as individual activities, and the classroom is a place where teacher and students share favorite authors, books, poems, ideas, and personal writings. Group participants will experience this social sharing in the structure of a reading/writing workshop to investigate the nature of their own literacy, engaging with each other as readers and writers to develop the nuts and bolts approaches needed to bring this framework back into the classroom. They should bring three favorite books with them to begin the process.

11. Beyond Assessment (G)

For the last two years there has been a group at Asilomar on "Portfolio Assessment." This year the group will focus on the uses of portfolios for instruction. What happens after students create writing portfolios? What instructional purposes do portfolios support? Participants will review and discuss actual student samples from various grade levels and are asked to bring as many samples of portfolios as they can. Teachers who are currently using portfolios and those who are interested in such projects are equally welcome to join this practical, working group and should bring any resources that have influenced their using portfolios in the classroom. Suggested reading: Roy Clark, Free to Write; Lucy Calkins, The Art of Teaching Writing; Glenda Bissex, GNYS A WORK: A Child Learns to Read and Write.

Instructing the ESL Student in the Regular Classroom (S)

Teachers who are coping with ESL students in their regular program are encouraged to join with two specialists in ESL teaching. Participants will work with models of effective lessons for such students based on current second language acquisition theory and not only share their problems but discover some approaches toward their solution.

13. Teaching David Copperfield (S,C)

Childhood experiences, growing up, death, first love, family life, and friendships create timely discussions for young people. This group will focus on making Dickens's *David Copperfield*, as well as some of his other novels, accessible by exploring a variety of teaching approaches and strategies for enhancing student understanding and pleasure. Participants will also examine the *DC* resource handbook prepared by the Dickens Project at UC Santa Cruz. Suggested reading: Dickens, *David Copperfield* (Penguin).

14. Composing at the Point of Utterance (M,S)
What happens in the transaction between readers and their texts? What are the implications of this transaction for teachers of literature? These two questions will be the focus of this group as participants examine current theory and research on oral response to literature and the ways in which student readers, individually and collaboratively, make meaning through talk. Participants are encouraged to

bring both oral tapes and written transcripts as well as thirty copies of the texts which prompted their students' responses. Suggested reading: Dias and Hayhoe, Developing Response to Poetry; Dias, Making Sense of Poetry.

### **New Imperatives**

### 20. The Literature Connection (E,M)

The emphasis of the new history-social science framework is to use literature to make the story of the past live for young people. Participants in this group will discuss the importance of integrating the very best of historical fiction and biographies, folklore, and other non-fiction into the curriculum; generate strategies for doing so; and share new books of the last five to ten years. They are encouraged to bring books and units that they have used successfully or intend to use in the classroom.

### 21. Short Novel Practicum (M)

In recent years the practicum has focused on the short story; this year the group will look at strategies for introducing middle school students to the genre of the novel, its structure and complexities of character, plot, and theme. Participants will apply modeling strategies for Steinbeck's The Pearl to Virginia Hamilton's Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush during the weekend and are asked to bring twenty-five copies of their successful teaching assignments along with titles of either other short novels or works from other genres that represent minority voices in the middle classroom. Suggested reading: Steinbeck, The Pearl; Virginia Hamilton, Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush.

#### 22. Families in Crisis (S)

Participants will review recent research about family composition and the impact of broken homes upon students in schools and then discuss possible school interventions with a major emphasis on uses of literature and film in English classrooms. The group will view some film excerpts to generate discussion. Participants are asked to bring materials related to the topic that are currently being used in classes.

#### 23. Perfidious Albion (G)

Like Napoleon, this group will talk about English treachery, but its focus is fictional betrayals set in past epochs of English historical mysteries. Participants will discuss how to "excavate" and use cultural information and insights found in tales of mediæval mayhem, Shakespearean savagery, and Victorian violence in the classroom and for their own delight. Suggested reading: Ellis Peters, A Morbid Taste for Bones; Leonard Tourney, The Players' Boy Is Dead; Peter Lovesey, Bertie and the Tinman; Anne Perry, Cater Street Hangman.

#### 24. A World of Difference (G)

Beginning with a review of the materials of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith on ethnicity (A World of Difference), this group will provide participants with a binder of suggested classroom and school materials. Participants will discuss activities in their department and school in response to growing ethnic diversity and engage in simulations, a review of classroom materials, and small group discussions. Participants should bring an ethnic profile of their school and descriptions of both department and school-wide activities relative to ethnic differences.

### 25. Perceiving the Poetic Persona (S)

Participants in this group will share favorite poems and ways

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### **On-Site Conference Bookstore**

Note: Suggested reading books will be available at the conference bookstore. To place orders for books prior to the conference, phone or write:

ARTIST PROOF 460 Magnolia Avenue, Larkspur, CA 94939, (415) 924-3801

### **Conference Fees**

### Registration

Because a predetermined number of rooms on the Asilomar grounds have been reserved for this conference, registrations are processed in the order they are received until all spaces are filled. Conference participants must register by paying all fees at the same time. **No on-site registrations are taken.** 

Early registration (by June 15)
Regular registration (by July 31)
Late registration (after July 31 if space is available)

Participants interested in registering after July 31 must call the Conference Registrar, John Cotter, (415) 357-5425, to determine whether rooms are still available.

### Accommodations (Lodging and Meals)

The accommodations fee includes two nights' lodging and six (6) meals (Friday dinner, served from 6:00 to 7:00 P.M., through Sunday lunch). Recent renovations have increased the fee for previously cheaper accommodations, and only a very limited number of single rooms are available. Rooms fill early and all room assignments are on a first-come first-served basis. Monterey Peninsula residents may register for the conference on a nonresidential basis by paying the off-grounds fee of \$15. Meals are not included; individual meal tickets, however, may be purchased at the Asilomar office.

#### Refunds

For cancellations **by September 15**, a refund minus a \$15 processing fee will be granted if requested. No refunds can be made after September 15, 1990.

Membership Fee

Members of Central California Council of Teachers of English or other affiliate of CATE pay the reduced registration fee. Those who pay the non-member fee automatically receive a one-year membership (\$30.00 until June 30, then \$40.00) in CATE effective October 1, 1990, entitling them to reduced rates at other conferences and the CATE convention and a one-year subscription to *California English*.

### IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS...

about registration or lodgings, or if you need extra copies of this brochure, write or telephone the Conference Registrar:

John Cotter (415) 357-5425

2882 Marineview Drive, San Leandro, CA 94577

5. War and Peace (S,C)

Elie Wiesel writes, "I believed that, having survived by chance, I was duty bound to give meaning to my survival, to justify each moment of my life. I knew the story had to be told." This group will explore the war experience (with special emphasis on Vietnam) as a vehicle for literary study, classroom discussion, research, writing, reflection, and peace activism through poetry, short stories, film, oral histories, letters, novels, and personal accounts. The group may also discuss oral history projects on war experiences, the use of veterans as speakers, recurring themes (veterans' re-adjustment, national reconciliation, etc.), and the possibilities for co-curricular teaming with social studies classes. Suggested reading: Ron Kovic, Born on the Fourth of July; Philip Caputo, Rumor of War; Tim O'Brien, If I Die in a Combat Zone, Box Me Up and Ship Me Home; Bobbie Ann Mason, In Country.

6. Willa Cather Revisited (G)

This group will discuss Cather's characters and settings, her ability as a story teller, and her place in American literature. Two short stories, "My Neighbor Rosicky" and "The Sculptor's Funeral" will be provided, but participants are asked to read My Antonia, O Pioneers, and Death Comes for the Archbishop.

7. Poetry Meets the Core Readings (S)

Participants will have the opportunity to generate dangerous liaisons between poetry and works routinely "required" in secondary schools, such as To Kill a Mockingbird, The Great Gatsby, Death of a Salesman, Animal Farm, and Oedipus Rex, by confronting a minimum of twenty poems and some teaching suggestions for each of these works and bringing copies of the poetry they use with any of these titles or any others commonly taught. Most of the value comes from adding to one's arsenal of teaching materials; most of the fun, from discussing the poetry in light of the core readings.

8. The Student Star (E,M)

Too often the only true reader of student writing is the teacher; yet, research indicates that writing improves when students communicate with a real audience. Group participants will share ideas for using video cameras, audio recorders, computers, and correspondents to make writing meaningful and turn the classroom into a stage on which student authors are the stars. Participants are invited to bring ideas or methods they have used successfully to expand their students' audience.

9. Earth Matters!

Exploring Environmental Writing (S)

Participants will discuss the use of ecological poetry and prose in the classroom, examining a number of environmental pieces by Dillard, Snyder, Ehrlich, Jeffers, Steinbeck, Hughes, and Lopez and how they might be used in a middle or secondary school setting. Participants will share some individual experiences with teaching literature that is evocative and often excitingly controversial and should bring any poems, essays, lesson plans, and student work appropriate to the topic along with suggestions for titles to create a master resource list. Suggested reading: Gary Snyder, *Turtle Island*; Robert Bly, *News of the Universe*; Gretel Ehrlich, *The Solace of Open Spaces*.

15. Making Differences Make a Difference (M,S)

English teachers in homogeneous classrooms face the problem of dealing with diversity. This group will focus on how to make use of diversity in the classroom: how to structure assignments, how to provide students with support, how to encourage good students to stretch while helping students with a history of failure. Participants are asked to bring a lesson, activity, or reading that has worked with a variety of students.

16. Add Amy Tan to Your Repertoire (S)

Conflicts between generations and between cultures often cause serious problems. When these conflicts occur in the intimate setting of family, the results are especially painful. Using Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*, this group will explore ways of understanding and overcoming communication barriers caused by generational and cultural conflicts and consider ways to approach the novel and, through written, dramatic, and artistic activities, to motivate students to seek solutions to such conflicts. Participants are asked to bring any materials and related fiction, essays, and poetry they think might work with this novel. Suggested reading: Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club*.

17. Connecting with

Latin American Literature (S,C)

The work of Latin American writers may well reflect a sensibility different from that of North Americans. This group will explore that possibility while examining the development of modern Latin American literature, reading and discussing several pieces of short fiction. Participants will experience a variety of strategies which can be used to help all students, from limited English-speaking to honors, to connect with these powerful works and to connect these works with a more traditional curriculum. Suggested reading: Pat McNees, editor, Contemporary Latin American Short Stories (especially "Big Precipice," "Journey Back to the Source," "The Vacant Lot," and "The Case of Señorita Amelia").

18. Literature Across the Curriculum (E,M)

This group will explore strategies for integrating literature and the language arts across the curriculum, especially math, science, visual and performing arts. Participants will evaluate model lessons, resources, and a variety of lesson ideas in order to create reading, writing, speaking and listening activities for use in class on many Monday mornings to come.

 The Graphic Connection to Drawing Your Own Conclusions (G)

This group is a practical workshop in using graphics as tools for comprehending and composing. Working primarily with graphic maps and with a variety of "quick draw" techniques, participants will experience visual ways of processing, organizing, and synthesizing information in order to develop techniques and design assignments for immediate use in the classroom.

of introducing and using poetry at all levels of instruction, especially secondary. While considering the poem as experience, as a language teaching device, as a focus for discussion, and as a catalyst for composition, the group will focus on sensing the voice in a poem, appreciating and responding to that unique persona. Participants should bring twenty-five copies of some favorite poems for sharing.

### 26. Theatre for Our Times (S,C)

What happens when the American Dream comes into conflict with the myths, values, and ideals of other cultures, no longer the minority cultures in America? Using three contemporary plays, this group will test their possibilities for our inner city and suburban classrooms. Participants should come prepared to read aloud, do scene work, and discuss the plays and their implications for the classroom. Suggested reading: August Wilson, Fences; Milcha Sanchez-Scott, Roosters; Davin Henry Hwang, FOB and The House of Sleeping Beauties.

27. The Art of the Impossible (G)

"In everyone there is some longing for humanity's rightful dignity, for moral integrity, for free expression of being and a sense of transcendence over injustice." These words by Vaclav Havel become a catalyst for this group's engagement in a weekend of reading and discussing the Czech literature of resistance and liberation from Kafka to Kundera. Through irony and skepticism, these Czech writers show us once more how the power of the word combats tyranny. Participants will celebrate this Prague Spring at the Fall Asilomar in texts and by examining the classic Czech firm, Closely Watched Trains. Suggested reading: Jaroslav Hasek, The Good Soldier Schweik; Milan Kundera, The Unbearable Lightness of Being.

28. Carmen, from Novella to Opera to Ballet (G)
Participants in this year's opera group will analyze the novella, opera, and ballet forms of Carmen and view both the opera video and ballet film. Participants should bring, if possible, copies of the Prosper Mérimée novella and Bizet libretto; other materials for the weekend's analysis will be provided.

29. Teachers Reflecting on Teaching (G)

Participants in this group will write and help others write anecdotes, poems stories, or tales that capture the essence of being teachers. These reflections may mirror ourselves both in and out of the classroom establishing human relationships with students, communicating subject matter, sharing advice and counsel, imparting the partial wisdom of our experience. The writings collected during the weekend may be published in future issues of *California English*, where previous teacher tales have appeared since the idea began at Asilomar 37. Suggested reading: Louis D. Rubin, Jr., *An Apple for my Teacher*.

### **Registration Form**

Please make out a separate form for each person registering

Drive, San Leandro, C	A 945//.	Date	Date	
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Early registration (all fees paid by June 15	<b>\$</b> 45	\$ 75		
Regular registration	\$60	\$ 90 (by June		
Late registration	\$75	\$100 (after Jui \$115	ne 30)	
(after July 31)	3/3	3113	\$	
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Interest in SCU Haywar	a Extension C	redit	Yes 🗆 No 🗆	

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