Whatever we teach, all of us teachers have an educational role to play — a statement no one would quarrel with. What does this mean? Any dictionary will tell us. To educate, according to one taken almost at random, is not only "to train, develop, cultivate the mind", but also "to form the moral character of oneself or another".

I suspect that at least some of us sometimes tend to forget the second part of the definition. We forget that, being what we are, we influence what young people will become. We forget that, if we take our duties lightly, we are telling our students, far more strongly than if we were using so many words, that responsibilities can be evaded, and all that matters is not work — the contribution we all owe to society — but the job, and the money it may (or may not) bring us. If we seem indifferent to the poverty around us, to the acute social needs so consistently ignored in this and other countries, we are implying our agreement with a view of politics which serves nothing but the personal petty interest of those officially engaged in it. If we fail to treat our students with the consideration due to fellow citizens (who happen to be younger and usually less intellectually sophisticated than we are), we are telling them, in silent but forcible terms, that we do not believe the basic tenet of any democratic society: that all
men and women are worthy of respect and have been born with a potential that should be given opportunity for growth and fulfillment. In short, we teachers, whether we think of it or not, are first of all educators, and we educate by what we are rather than by what we say (so we'd better reach for the highest standards our potential allows). With our students, we are now and always involved, both as agents and recipients, in a permanent process that will end only with our deaths. Education is a continuous, mutual engagement.

This general aspect of the question is too vast to tackle in a brief meeting or a short article. Only certain angles of the problem will be focused on here — and they are complex enough. We'd like to discuss certain dangers — and the corresponding attempts to circumvent them — that we, as language teachers, and specifically, as foreign language teachers, are more liable to meet, but also, perhaps, better equipped to cope with. I mean the dangers associated with our condition as citizens of a developing country and members of a culture traditionally disinclined to a critical evaluation of facts, especially of foreign imports, be they of a technological or cultural nature. I also mean another kind of danger, the mirror of the first type: uncritical hostility towards studies connected with foreign countries, notably those responsible for any forms of neocolonialism. These two antonymous dangers — ingenuous acceptance or radical rejection — can lead us to two equally undesirable evils: cultural subservience or cultural isolation.

There is a related, but more general kind of danger,
implicit in the mere use of language and the categorization of experience that it implies. Linguists will often call our attention to it. Robins, for instance, cites words like right and wrong, duty, crime, and many others subsumed under them: property, theft, punishment, reform. According to him the use of these and comparable words in other types of society "presupposes a social nexus of expected ways of behaviour enforced by precedent and the sanctions of disapproval and legal penalties". These and similar lexical items thus illustrate the ordering of experience and the particular world view which is part of every culture and which is embedded in the semantic structure of any language. They are the most obvious verbal carriers of ideology. We here take ideology in a general as in a narrower sense. That is, we refer to ideology as "a body of maxims and prejudices which constitute both a vision of the world and a system of values" and also as "a body of theoretical and pseudo-scientific precepts..." of "stratified principles meant to justify privileges which are made possible by oppression" within a given society.

The connection with ideology in the second, negative sense, comes out strongly in another linguist's comments on certain abstract words. "Because they are abstract," Langacker notes, "words like these are quite loosely tied to reality. In a sense, they are almost empty. If one is not careful, they can become emotionally charged labels functioning only to brand someone as a communist or to do something in the name of liberty, and it is very easy to be misled by the empty use of words." We are unfortunately all of us familiar with this phenomenon. Just as I began writing these lines, I had been
glancing at a newspaper with the headline FIGUEIREDO TEME ESQUERDIZAÇÃO COM TANCREDO NO PODER. Many of us will probably agree that Tancredo Neves, a conservative politician of the old school, skillful in the arts of compromise, is as little likely to lead the country leftwards as Figueiredo himself. The government, however, sensing the end, is using the emotionally charged label esquerdização to try and defeat their opponents. It is part of our job, as language teachers, to be and make our students constantly aware of these linguistic pitfalls.

Having considered the general ideological problem embedded in the very use of language, foreign or not, we may now go back to one of our specific difficulties, mentioned above, one often adduced as an argument by those who oppose any disciplines connected with foreign cultures. The question thus posed has to do with the usefulness of teaching foreign languages to students barely literate in their own. It is further related to the advisability of perhaps facilitating, with that of the foreign language, the introduction of neocolonial influences politically and economically disadvantageous to our country.

Before discussing these problems, a preliminary question poses itself: can we, speakers of a language not widely known internationally, really choose not to reach any other?

For purposes of international communication and of advanced study we have little more choice than had other past cultures: the raising of Greek and Latin to the status of international languages in the ancient and mediaeval worlds
was also connected with political and economical events beyond the control of those using such languages. English itself, long before it conquered the world, had become an unlikely amalgamation of Celtic, Germanic, Anglo-Saxon, Latin, Scandinavian and French elements, most of them taken to the British Isles by armed conquest.

For purposes of international communication we can scarcely expect Portuguese to do the job. We do have to teach foreign languages, though not everybody in Brazil will agree. At one of the meetings recently held at the Faculty of Letters of the UFMG, when the time given us by the national joint strike of teachers, doctors and civil servants was used to discuss educational problems, some of us were asked why we teach foreign languages at all. English, we were told, will do nothing for underprivileged children, the unfortunate majority in Brazil. They cannot even use the standard dialect of their mother tongue. A lot of these children come from the slums. They will never use the language we are trying to teach them. Why waste their time, and our own?

Those of us who have got into close touch with socially underprivileged children, at some point of our careers, can hardly fail to agree that the large majority of our students will never use a foreign language for its most immediate practical purposes, travel, or reading other subjects at the University. Still the crucial fact is that SOME of these children may, through social ascension, have access to such privileges one day. Can we tell which students will be in this position, and which will not?
As we certainly cannot, there are two important points to consider: teaching a foreign language to the children of the poor may contribute to their becoming less poor. Alternatively, the decision not to do so amounts to telling the socially deprived that they will always remain so, and that they are fit for nothing else. Such a decision would thus recall the creation, in the past, of technical schools that could not lead to the University. They had been created for those who were not MEANT to go to the University and by a legislation that closely linked the Brazilian educational system to the interests of the 5% of economically privileged people in the country. Such schools kept only the negative side of education, the one that reproduces the existing social model and completely contradicts the myth of schooling as an opportunity for social ascension. Though aware of the enormous difficulties, we would like to participate in the creation of schools which would "negate negation" and open a "window to a qualitative change in our society". In such a school there is room for change. Therefore there is room for English as one of the tools for self-advancement through study and for participation in an international cultural community.

We would like to sum up some arguments set forth by A. Carpentier, the Cuban writer, against cultural isolationism, which the opposition against foreign language teaching implies. Carpentier rejects what he calls "a vaguely apocalyptic South-Americanism" to support active, responsible participation in the international cultural life. A simple statistical
In an essay about the contemporary South-American novel, Carpentier adduces other arguments against isolationism. He starts by examining the peculiar conditions of the South-American countries. In the racial context, we are a mixture of whites, blacks and Indians, co-existing at different cultural levels, and, so to speak, living contemporarily in distinct cultural levels. Ancient practices, beliefs, forms of animism, unorthodox forms of knowledge survive among us. They bridge the gap between present realities and remote cultural essences (which keep us close to timeless universals). From this amalgam interesting forms of creativity often emerge.

There is the extraordinary example of Villa Lobos. The continuous movement of some musical pieces from the Brazilian folklore reminded him of Bach and led to the composition of his admirable Bachianas Brasileiras. In the political, social and economic context we are not so fortunate. There is the instability of our economy, often moved by alien interests. Our army, rather than protecting the country against foreign aggression, is often used as an instrument for internal repression. A small South-American business-man will occasionally get rich, owing to some stroke of luck in the international business game, or if he can pay the price in
useful contacts, political or military influence. Still some remote bankruptcy abroad may bring about his downfall.

Isolationism, however, is far from being the answer. Unlike Peguy, who once boasted he never read any but French books, we cannot remain enclosed in our cultural frontiers. Besides, Carpentier notes, to know and to assimilate foreign cultures, as we have done, does not mean to submit to a new kind of colonialism. No intellectual underdevelopment need correspond to economic dependency. To get information does not mean to submit. And, for this, we need foreign languages.

Besides, we may now talk of cultural interchange rather than dependency. In this respect, it is instructive to notice the large numbers of courses in American universities devoted to South-American cultures and languages. Attitudes have been changing. As an example, we may notice that the phenomenon of the foreigner who used to come to Brazil and live here for thirty years without learning the language has largely disappeared. Culturally, as well as economically, the world is becoming a global village. As a graphic example of international cultural cooperation Carpentier mentions the Mexican artist José Luiz Cuevas: he achieved a pictorial transposition of Kafka's works whose astonishing results can be seen in The World of Kafka, published in New York by Falcon Press. We need not feel guilty, then, because we teach a foreign language. Which does not mean that certain aspects of the question may be lost sight of. Considering them is indeed one of the contributions we may offer to education.
One of the points to bear in mind and attack is the exaggerated reverence in which we hold the written text and its author. This is of course the business of the mother tongue teacher as well as ours. Our case, however, is more severe than theirs. Passive uncritical reading will come about more easily in the foreign than in the native language. In L2 critical reading is made more difficult by insecurity in dealing with the surface forms and by ignorance of the cultural background. Reverence for the text is likewise duplicated by the ingenuous Brazilian awe of almost anything foreign. An example of this phenomenon may occasionally be observed among us teachers. The case of colleagues who try to imitate foreign manners, travel abroad rather than in Brazil (if they can afford it) and, in extreme cases, look down on their countries, is not unknown to us.

An excellent article by Else Ribeiro Pires Vieira, a Brazilian specialist in ESP, dramatically illustrates the greater prestige, for some readers, of anything written in English. She mentions an ironic comment in a Brazilian medical journal about a symptom of emphysema supposedly discovered by an American doctor, who had called it target sign. The Brazilian doctor who writes the article informs that the symptom had been discovered fifteen years earlier by a Brazilian, whose name for it was sinal de cotovelo. The writer of the article adds: "For the benefit of those who only believe in medical science written in English, I might use the name elbow sign (literal translation of sinal de cotovelo)." The quotation drives home the point I'm trying to make: excessive respect for the text, normal even in the
mother tongue, prevents the necessary critical attitude. The difficulty is enhanced when the reading is done in a language of international prestige.

A related problem occurs especially in the teaching of ESP. As Ms. Vieira's article repeatedly warns us, "not even scientific literature is free from indoctrination — not seldom it becomes the vehicle of an economic or political ideology." Even more pointedly she bids us beware of sensationalism in texts of scientific vulgarization and of subliminal propaganda in so-called scientific texts. She mentions the extreme cases cited in the article *Prescriptions for Death* published by Time Magazine (28.02.82). There the social irresponsibility of the international pharmacological industry is denounced. Products that have been banished from the developed countries are advertised and sold, without any advice on collateral effects, in the less controlled markets of the Third World. Ms. Vieira also reminds us of the recent Nestlé scandal. (Incidentally, Nestlé is a Swiss, not an English or American company). Advertising by Nestlé of supposedly bad effects of breast feeding aimed at selling their industrialized milk. Thousands of babies starved after their mother's milk dried up. The babies had been given industrialized milk in hospital — and then their mothers, after they left, were unable to buy it for them. Another dramatic instance is provided by ads of IUD's by other companies, in spite of cancerigenous effects and moral aspects. The ads reflect an attempt by international pharmacological industries to get back the market they had
lost as a consequence of the popularity of oral contraceptives. As foreign language teachers we have a role to play in the fight to counter such attacks against people. By playing it well, Ms. Vieira hopefully suggests, we may bridge the gap between the academic context and our own social and cultural reality.

For this purpose, which procedures should we adopt?

By way of a general orientation, I'd like to quote Christopher Brumfit's words in an article on the role of methodology for FLT. There he makes "a plea for an 'ideological' base for teacher education without making a statement for any particular interpretation of 'ideology'. The teacher must be aware that everything he does is an argument for or against a particular moral — and therefore political, economic, social, etc — view of the world. Only within this explanatory framework will he be able to evaluate the role that society demands from the teacher, and only through such a framework will the discipline that he teaches make consistent sense".13

In a talk entitled Power and Politics in ELT, delivered at the London University Institute of Education for the Colloquium on Aspects of English Teaching on June 23rd 1983, Dr. Brumfit clarified his position on a number of points implicit in the statement above and mentioned in this paper. To start with, he said there is "massive hypocrisy" in teaching English to people of the Third World who think they will improve their financial status by learning it and thus enter the world economy.
Like me, however, he sees no alternative. Any world language will have implications of cultural and economic influence. And one simply cannot do without international languages. To deprive a country of English, Dr. Brumfit continued, is like taking away its access to penicillin. An intermediate solution, he suggested, would be the one already in existence: English should be one among a number of international languages, thus establishing a kind of cultural balance of power.

The most important point of the lecture was the statement that every language has the potential to whatever use its speakers want to express: "you can use English to expropriate the expropriators". (This reminds us of the case of India. There English actually forwarded the cause of national independence. By becoming a *lingua franca* it brought together people divided by a number of mutually unintelligible languages.)

Towards the end of his provocative talk, and having thrown in the remark that some people teach English to identify with the middle class, Dr. Brumfit declared that the purpose of education is responsible disobedience. For me, this means taking a stand whenever anything in the social, political, educational or other system needs to be changed, in order to defend people's basic interest. I hope we University teachers have recently done just that: together with civil servants and doctors throughout the country, we went on strike for over two months. We risked our salaries and, some of us, our jobs, for better teaching conditions. English
may have helped us to take this stand. Teaching English has given us many rewarding experiences, among which listening to interesting people like Christopher Brumfit in London and many others here. Teaching English has also made us somehow share in the viewpoints of more than one culture. This in turn has given us a privileged, contrastive critical attitude to cultural values, and enabled us to criticize them in a balanced way.

After these comments on a general attitude to adopt in our teaching practice, we'd now like to sum up suggestions recently made to improve FLT in the lines sketched so far and thus make it more effective from an educational point of view. The suggestions can be summed up under the expressions "ideological", "responsive" or "discriminating" reading. These expressions, all synonymous with "critical" reading, have been used in an illuminating article by John Holmes, to which we would also like to refer.14

Critical reading has been greatly emphasized. In fact, it was the theme of the Third National Meeting on Reading, significantly entitled *Luta pela Democratização da Leitura no Brasil*. The meeting was held in Campinas, São Paulo, in 1981 and was sponsored by the local federal University (UNICAMP) and other educational institutions.

Trying to sum up suggestions of procedures for "ideological reading" we shall first take those concerning the teaching of foreign languages, and then of the respective literatures.

Most works on the subject start with considerations
on the basic fact that makes critical or ideological reading necessary. Ms. Vieira's article recalls the basic premise of the sociology of culture: there is no such thing as an impersonal, neutral text. Quoting Vigner, she emphasizes the difference between objective and "objectified" texts. Objective texts would ideally be neutral, impersonal, faithful records of facts. Indeed, no such texts exist in an absolutely pure state. John Holmes persuasively argues that even the prototype of objective texts — scientific ones — fail to be objective. He quotes studies demonstrating that more often than not scientific research fails to be completely rational. Scientists "choose" facts that confirm their hypotheses: they "protect" their theories. In the Sciences, especially in the Social Sciences, statistical generalizations are often disguised as scientific laws. As other examples of irrationality in the Sciences, Holmes mentions some typical facts: medical science concentrates its efforts on the mechanism of the heart rather than on the prevention of heart disease. Money that should more justifiably go to publicity campaigns goes into heart transplants. So also nuclear rather than solar energy has been used for the production of electricity. What we often have, then, even in scientific discourse, are objectified rather than objective texts: seemingly objective, neutral and impersonal practice disguises the author's ideology and underlying suggestions for action. As Aristotle told us long ago, and speech act theory now reminds us, language is a form of action.
To counteract all this, critical reading, and a number of strategies for its practice, are suggested. For an adequate grasp of their use, we'd like to refer teachers to Holmes and Vieira's papers. For an overall view, I'll try to sum up Beverley A. Lewins's article *Reading between the Lines*. The paper suggests a number of strategies to help students develop critical reading.

First, a pre-view of the text is recommended. Here material preceding and following the text, besides subheadings and the amount of text devoted to each subheading, are examined. The importance of each of these elements is emphasized. A provocative title, especially in the form of a question, often indicates an emotional argument rather than an objective text. Intertextual elements — quotes from authoritative sources like the Bible — mark an attempt to stamp the text with authenticity. The bibliography should also be scrutinized. Thus, texts from popular magazines cannot be given the same weight as professional journals, nor government statistical sources be put on a par with Ph.D. research. The amount of space devoted to 'pro' and 'con' arguments should also be examined: it may tell a lot about the author's impartiality. Examination of the author's biographic data is no less important: it may indicate whether he has or hasn't got any extra-academic interest in the subject. So also information about periodicals in which texts are published can reveal informative cultural dependencies. Date and place of publication can indicate historical circumstances preventing impartiality. This can
be seen, for instance, in books about Germany and Japan written in the Allied countries during World War II.

For the body of the article itself Lewin's paper suggests that the text should be dealt with at different levels of abstraction. Linguistic clues should be examined first. Words and phrases like of course, it is a fact that, modals like must, should, adjectives, intensifiers, convey emotional appeals and value judgements as against the more cautious modals might, could, adverbs like often, possibly or verbs like believe, assume.

At the next level of abstraction other factors should be considered. Have any facts been omitted from the text under consideration? (Authors may choose only those that confirm their standpoints:) Is the text ironic? (It is of course more difficult to detect irony in a foreign language than in one's own. The ingenuous student tends to take ironic statements at face value.)

As part of the suggested procedures for critical reading, the author of Reading Between the Lines recommends several exercises to develop the students' ability to read critically. The class may be asked to underline rhetorical questions, emotional or judgemental words. Comparison of different reportings of the same event by different newspapers with different ideological bents is another useful exercise. Still another, fit only for advanced students, is to ask them to re-write some polemical material from a different point of view. Some of these exercises may be difficult for certain classes. They may be done in the mother-tongue first, before proceeding in English. Educationally, what matters
is the development of the critical attitude. Established in L1, it will hopefully be transferred to L2.

Critical reading can be introduced at any level, even for absolute beginners. I hope to be excused to present, as an example, my own textbook, published under the title *A Tour of Brazil*. In this book, the conventional formula of having somebody visit the foreign country to introduce linguistic and cultural data has been inverted. Instead, a British anthropologist's visit to Brazil is described. A Brazilian reporter escorts the anthropologist in this visit, showing him Brazil's touristic attractions. A conventionally picturesque vision of the country consequently emerges. However, the anthropologist's notes in his diary, and his wife's letters home, present quite a different point of view. The splendours of Brasília's architecture, for instance, are contrasted with the misery of the migrant workers, the "candangos", who built the great capital and now starve in the satellite towns around it. The international centre of São Paulo is shown to exist at the expense of thousand of workers who are, if not poorer, as poor as others anywhere else in Brazil. Ect.etc.by contrasting such different view points, it is hoped that the texts will lead the students to an increasingly critical attitude. The method has the additional advantage of giving English a definite role in the curriculum: that of integrating the area of language study with that of the social sciences.

Ideological or critical readings can of course be applied to the study of literature as well. As a general
orientation we might adopt the approach recommended by Pedro Lyra. He calls this approach *polismo*, which could be rendered by integral or comprehensive criticism. Such criticism would not be content with the study of form. After all, even the Formalists in their best moments implied that whether a writer makes perception difficult, by different forms of estrangement, or whether he chooses to make his medium transparent, his aim is all the time to convey a certain way of looking at experience.

According to Lyra, the literary work of art should be analysed at three different levels. The first one, focused on the text itself, is that of literariness. Lyra calls this the essential level, for, without it, the work would not exist as literature. The second is the semantic level, where the writer's ideology is to be found. The aim here is persuasion. Finally, there is the factive level, focused on the reader and aiming at changing his or her behaviour.

This integral criticism can be used both for the foreign and for the national literature. It seems to me that, when the literature studied is a foreign one, the approach should also be contrastive. Whenever possible, reference should be made to the national literature, so that parallels and contrasts may facilitate the unknown by means of what is already known.

I will briefly illustrate this combination of integrative and comparative criticism by suggesting a possible reading of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*. The reading should include, besides the analysis of the formal structure of the novel, that of the ideology of the author.
The case is especially interesting: this ideology is at war with itself: character presentation clearly shows this. From one point of view, Becky Sharp, the central female character, is an unscrupulous, immoral creature. A poor dancing-master's daughter, she is brought up by charity at a boarding school. Her predictable fate is to become a governess. In order to evade it she uses her sexual appeal. In her matrimonial and amorous schemes, Becky manages to go virtually through all social classes. Starting out almost as a servant, she first seduces Joseph Sedley, the rich merchant's son. Next she rises to the officer and gentleman level, by marrying Captain Crawley (she could have married his father, Sir Pitt, the baronet, had she only waited a little longer). To betray her husband, she later chooses no other than Lord Steyne, the greater London aristocrat. Becky is described as "a woman without faith, or love of character". Yet, beside her, her friend Amelia, who is said to have "a kind, tender, smiling, gentle, generous heart", fades into insignificance.

A lot has been written to explain Becky's attraction, which contrasts with the moral disgust she might be expected to inspire. To me, what explains it is the extraordinary lucidity which allows her even as an adolescent to analyse the social system she lives in and to defeat it with the only weapons left her. The social origin of Becky's rebellion is explicit in the novel. We are told that her instructors had been "shift and self and poverty". Amelia's "last tutoress", by contrast, had been love.
Becky's lucidity allows her to be the best judge of character in the novel. She is the only one to see Dobbin's merits — and this is the key to the novel's happy end. Thus admiration for goodness somehow saves Becky morally and helps explain her attraction. The courage with which she defies the laws of 19th century society — represented by the great initial scene in which she throws the Johnson's Dictionary through the window — wins the reader's grudging admiration. Nonetheless, the implied author exercises his ambivalence towards the character by punishing her. Only poetic justice explains why Becky never gets the title she had so strongly desired. "She never was Lady Crawley", we are sententiously told. In spite of that, the way she is allowed to work on our imagination shows the author's ideological conflict. He both admires and reproaches Becky, for he judges her by a double standard. One is the nineteenth century law that poor women should remain virtuously poor. The other is his own private ideology, according to which a better social system should be created. Such a system would not force gifted young women to choose between poverty and some sort of prostitution, within or without marriage. Tackeray's ideological conflict thus explains the ambiguity of the character.

Examining *Vanity Fair* at this ideological level we are reminded of our own novel, *Macunaima*. In spite of the enormous formal and historical gap between the two, our hero without character strikingly resembles Thackeray's heroine. Like her, *Macunaima* goes through all social classes. He is, like her, a picaroon, who never changes behaviour, and
never learns his lesson. Perhaps because there is no lesson to learn, except that the contradictions of society seldom allow us to ally prosperity and innocence. In both novels ideology has a lot to say in order to explain the impact of the characters on the reader's imagination.

With this example, we feel it is time to finish this paper. We hope to have made clear the contribution that an ideological, critical orientation may give to our practice as foreign language teachers. After all, the ability to see critically is the first step towards a sense of justice. This sense, in turn, is the prerequisite to the building of a better world, which all education should aim at.
NOTES

1 The Universal Dictionary of the English Language, 1956 ed.


4 Pedro Lyra, Literatura e Ideologia (Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 1979), p. 41. Here as in the other notes all quotations from Portuguese texts have been translated by myself.


6 Estado de Minas (Belo Horizonte), 18 July 1984.


9 Carpentier, p. 9.
10 Carpentier, p. 94.

11 Else Ribeiro Pires Vieira, "Leitura Crítica de um Texto Científico," included in this number of Estudos Germânicos.


15 Vieira, "Leitura Crítica."


18 Lyra, pp. 157-83.