Alternatives to the Critical Paper: Teaching Against the Text in the Introductory Literature Class

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Teachers of literature courses offered for general education credit—intro to this genre or that, masterpieces of one country or another—often find that of the mostly non-English majors in these classes, few have the background, or interest, to produce a critical essay. Our gut feeling, if not our curriculum committee, tells us that students should write in introductory literature courses, and course anthologies often include topics and instruction in writing about literature. But if writing is to become a productive partner in these courses, then we should develop assignments that invite students to appropriate literature to examine matters relevant to their lives, assignments that promote literature not as the specialist's object of study but as part of the layperson's "equipment for living," to borrow Burke's phrase. In short, we should replace the critical paper with assignments that enable non-majors to use literature for developing their own voices and discovering those of others.

Recently I examined the writing assignments and instruction in thirty textbooks marketed for introductory literature courses (see Appendix A). Published from 1983 to 1992, ranging from bestsellers to highly touted new editions, these texts fall into

three groups. Six texts focus solely on writing about literature: they contain no or few readings and are likely intended to supplement course anthologies. Thirteen texts are anthologies that include assignments and instruction in writing but secondarily, usually as a final chapter or appendix. The final eleven are primarily anthologies but claim in their titles to provide writing instruction as well as course readings, though some of these contain less writing instruction than those texts billed solely as anthologies. Although this survey is not comprehensive, it provides a representative sample of writing instruction intended for introductory literature courses.

My examination yielded three types of writing assignments: the ever popular critical paper and two others, which, borrowing from Kinneavy's terminology for aims of discourse, I will call the expressive paper and the literary paper.

The Critical Paper

We all know this essay as an argumentative response exhaustively supporting a limited thesis with textual evidence and institutionally validated reading strategies, whether the strategies are formalist, psychoanalytic, deconstructive or some other critical method, though in the texts the approach is largely formalist. In Kinneavy's scheme, the critical paper combines a "referential" aim, focusing more on the literary work than on the writer/critic, with a "persuasive" aim in its attempt to lead the reader to accept the writer's thesis. We recognize the critical paper whether it is an undergraduate analysis of evil in "Young Goodman Brown" or an article in *PMLA*.

The Expressive Paper

When the writer's aim is expressive, Kinneavy argues, "it is the speaking self which dominates the discourse and it is by discourse that he expresses and partially achieves his own individuality" (398). This individuality, however, must remain aware of social constraints imposed by the audience. Topics for expressive papers use literature as a springboard to an essay based on personal experience. For instance, having read a maturation tale, students write a narrative essay recalling a maturation experience of their own evoked by the text. Or this paper can ask students to

compare personal experience to the experience of characters in a literary work.

The Literary Paper

Topics for literary papers can range from imitations or parodies to continuations or expansions of a literary text. For instance, the student writes a parody of a short poem or an additional chapter to *Lord of the Flies*, recounting the boys' experience when they return to England. Literary topics also include assignments asking students to write from the perspective of a character in literature, assuming, say, the role of the woman in Donne's "The Flea" responding to the speaker of the poem. Whatever the case, the literary aim, to paraphrase Kinneavy, emphasizes the signal (that which is written) rather than the encoder (writer) or decoder (audience), although neither is ignored.

Of the three types, the critical paper is by far the most popular in the thirty textbooks, featured in all but three (*Text Book* by Scholes, Comley, and Ulmer; and the two Biddle and Fulwiler texts) as the dominant mode of writing about literature and in fifteen as the only mode. The expressive paper appears in thirteen texts, but in ten of the thirteen is relegated to a prewriting exercise in preparation for a critical paper, mentioned briefly as an alternative to the critical paper, or given disproportionate space in relation to it. The literary paper appears in only eleven, and in seven of the eleven, comparatively scant coverage implies its marginal status.

The popularity of the critical essay is not surprising since it is a genre we all have been writing for years, beginning when we were freshmen with our first analysis of character or plot, continuing in the neophyte literary criticism written in courses required for the undergraduate major, evolving into the more sophisticated discourse of seminar papers in graduate school, and culminating in conference papers and published articles that signify membership in a discourse community of literary scholars.

Granted that this presentation of the critical essay is, to some degree, simplified, perhaps even monolithic. Granted further that the question of what constitutes a critical essay has been called into question. Jean Tompkins' "Me and My Shadow," for instance, openly expresses her weariness with allowing critical

conventions to close off her desire for personal expression. Celebrating Tompkins' "brave experiment in writing literary criticism in her own voice" (507), Olivia Frey condemns critical discourse as adversarily masculine, underlyingly vicious: "competition, not cooperation. . . . a sort of literary Darwinisn" (512). Frey points to signs of relief in a forthcoming collection of essays, *Wisdom in the Bones: Autobiographical Literary Criticism*. Predating and likely influencing Tompkins and Frey, Helene Cixous, in "Laugh of the Medusa," unapologetically dispenses with critical conventions as she calls for a feminist discourse.

Despite these efforts, notably all by feminist critics, the critical essay remains entrenched not only at the center of the discipline, as is evident in even a cursory glance at journals, but also, as the survey indicates, in introductory textbooks intended for courses primarily enrolling non-majors. A typical definition of the critical paper reads:

> A successful essay should be a brief but thorough examination, not an exhaustive treatment, of a particular subject. It might be a character study, an analysis of the point of view of a story or poem, or a comparison-contrast. Unity is achieved through the consistent reference to the central idea, and completeness is achieved through the demonstration of how a selected number of [textual] details relate to and support the idea. (Roberts and Jacobs, *Literature: An Introduction*, 16)

While an article in a literary journal differs immensely from its student-authored counterpart, as critical essays they share membership in a discourse community, though one lives on Park Place, the other in the slums. As readers, whether we are aware of it or not, we have been conditioned to expect many of the same discourse conventions whether we are reading the student essay on "Young Goodman Brown" or the latest deconstructive analysis of Wallace Stevens. For the English major, mastering these conventions is a means of apprenticeship; whether or not they eventually attempt to test and expand them, as Tompkins and Frey do, they must first learn them. English majors, then, have a personal stake in working to approximate the conventions of the critical paper. But for the non-majors,

who make up the majority of the population in introductory courses, such is not the case.

When we assign the critical paper in introductory literature courses, we solicit non-majors to aspire to our discourse community, to become "little literary critics," in Ed Corbett's words (196). We ask them to be like us to gain our favor, a colonial impulse. Most don't want to, or if they do, they neither know how nor have the time to in the span of one semester. For the few who can, the membership expires once outside the literature classroom because they will face a different set of conventions writing in their majors.

According to Janet Emig, "Successful learning is also engaged, committed, personal learning. Indeed, impersonal learning may be an anomalous concept" (125). To ask non-majors to aspire to our discourse community is to render their learning impersonal. Emig's stress on the personal nature of learning suggests that students in introductory courses would benefit most from writing expressive and literary responses rather than critical papers. By convention, the critical paper demonstrates objectivity and detachment (though both are feigned). These conventions are enabled by the critical vocabulary that inscribes the professional persona of the critic, even in the case of the undergraduate English major using such rudimentary terms as plot, character, point of view, and the like.

In introductory courses, students often chafe against learning the critical terminology and discourse conventions that enable the critical paper. The expressive paper requires neither, yet it engages the students in significant issues. For example, having read, say, Sherwood Anderson's "I Want to Know Why" or Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown," a student comparing a maturation experience of her own need not mention the pastoralism of Anderson's tale or the symbolism of Hawthorne's to gain insight into either the fictional story or the one she tells. She will, however, have to come to terms with what Wayne Booth calls "the making and remaking of people 'real' [herself] and imaginary [the characters in the story]" (65). The following student response illustrates my point:

> I feel for the boy in "I Want to Know Why" because I think I know what he is going through. When he finds out his idol, the trainer, is with prostitutes, his whole world

becomes dirty. He even says the race track does not smell the same. I had a similar experience when a friend had a car accident.

When I first got my license, I bought a 1982 Camero. It was very sporty and fast. I used to drive it to the local McDonald's on Friday nights and hang out with all the other guys who had hot cars. Sometimes we would go out and race, but mostly we would look at each other's cars and talk about them. These nights seemed perfect. It would be warm, all the cars would look real nice, and everybody would be in a good mood.

But one night a friend of mine had an accident because he was speeding. He had bet another guy he could drive downtown and back to our McDonald's under ten minutes. Fortunately, he wasn't killed, but he was severely injured. I almost cried when I saw him in the hospital with his head bandaged, cuts all over his face, and a half-body cast.

After that I still hung out at the McDonald's, but it didn't feel the same. It was still fun, and didn't feel dirty like the racetrack in the story, but I got nervous when guys went out to race or made speed bets. I think some other guys felt the same way, but nobody really talked about it. We just tried to act like nothing happened. I guess most everybody has to have things like this happen, but it really shakes you up and makes you wonder about what you do and what can happen.

This student, I would argue, has learned much more that is important from writing this paper than he could from, say, writing a paper on how the pastoral setting of "I Want to Know Why" contributes to the maturation theme (assuming he could write such a paper). It is likely he will see the value of Anderson's story, and by extension literature itself, as significant to his own experience and that of others, for through language he has discovered a voice and self to examine an unsettling memory. Though he may not articulate it as such, his presentation of the atmosphere at McDonald's prior to the accident creates a contemporary pastoral in which he is a dramatized naif, a self he remakes after the accident when he must confront the vulnerability of his world through the eyes of an adult.

Of course, not all students will relate as readily to every story as the student above did to "I Want to Know Why." Nevertheless, the free, exploratory nature of expressive writing will enable them to engage literature and raise questions pertinent to class discussion and their individual learning. Consider this young woman's response to Sammy, the protagonist of Updike's oft-anthologized "A&P."

> I did not like Sammy at all. I think Updike wants us to see him as a hero who sticks up for the girls, but to me he is self-centered, immature, and thinks with a part of his body other than his mind. First of all, he only sticks up for the girls because he likes the one he calls "Queenie," but he does not even know her. All he knows is that she is rich and has a nice body. How shallow can you get? I guess Updike likes him because he wants to be more than a store cashier, but even in this Sammy is mean. He makes fun of people who come in the store, calling them sheep, and he even compares his own parents badly to what he thinks the Queen's parents are. It is fine to want to move up in society, but you should not be mean about the people who aren't moving up, especially your parents.

Through an expressive response, this student has arrived at what I would dare to call a reasonably sophisticated Marxist-Feminist reading of the text. Reading against the grain of Updike's sympathetic rhetoric toward Sammy, she portrays him not as a hero who because of noble aspirations toward beauty defends the girls against the quotidian world of the A&P but as a shallow sexist who betrays his class as he aspires above it. Certainly her piece cannot be considered the nascent literary criticism we want to encourage in our majors, but as a text for discussion in an introductory class it can provoke the kind of discussion that enables non-majors to see how literature functions as a zone in which cultural values and attitudes contend.

Without the specialist's vocabulary or codified critical strategies, both students write meaningfully on a text because the expressive form allows them to draw upon their own vocabulary

and experience to connect with the story. Thus, the text is readily accessible to them and to other students like them. To draw again on Booth:

> Students all have some ready-made vocabulary for such makings [of self]: they see themselves as *selves*, personalities, characters, persons, individuals. They talk about images and reputations. Some of them have run across more sophisticated versions: mask, person, ethos, identity. They also come with a rich collection of opinions about who the "real" person is, how it is made or found, in contrast with what is phony or faked, insincere, hypocritical. So, they all, even the least literate, have a stake in notions of what sorts of self-presentation are legitimate . . . (65)

As the student writing above illustrates, topics for the expressive paper can evoke this notion of self and its attendant vocabulary to engage students with literature without recruiting them to become members of our discourse community. The literary text serves not as an object of analysis but as a prompt for making and remaking a self with language. At the same time, this self is not an idiosyncratic voice that ignores the text but a socially constructed self emerging out of the student's negotiation of text and experience, a self that defines a relationship with a world outside it to emerge as a legitimate voice.

Granted the expressive paper, like the critical paper, does not help much when students must write in the conventions of their own disciplines. But that is not its purpose. As students take courses in their majors, they will learn the discourse conventions needed to define their professional selves. The expressive paper, in contrast, encourages the student to discover his or her larger self, the human being who in sharing experiences and emotions with others holds membership in a larger community despite cultural differences.

To emphasize this selfhood and membership and to further illustrate the role of language and culture in defining them, the literary paper can prove equally effective. Nancy Comley and Robert Scholes suggest that "one of the ways we earn [selfhood] is by trying out different voices and learning the limits of what they can express" (103). To facilitate this learning, Comley and Scholes propose role-playing topics in which students write from the perspective of a literary character to integrate the self with

another. In the process, they must ask questions of the text which lead to an understanding of how its language and cultural values construct the selfhood of the character whose role is being assumed. For example, in one of the texts I surveyed, a topic for a literary paper asks students to read Joyce's "Eveline" and compose one of the letters the title character holds as she stands with Frank poised to leave Dublin, her father, and her brother. Thus, students must ask: Who is Eveline? What are the values that render her decision problematic? Why does she want to leave Dublin? What is her relationship to her father or brother? Such questions, as Scholes and Comley point out, are "the basic questions any literary critic would ask" (106). However, like the expressive paper, the letter does not require the technical vocabulary or discourse conventions characteristic of the critical paper. Rather the students are prompted to create a voice and self outside their own yet integrated with it. And this is the kind of thinking they must master in life if they are to respect and understand others in relation to themselves, as is evident in this student's defense of Goodman Brown:

> I have gotten a bad reputation because of Nate Hawthorne's story about me. He says I lived a gloomy life and was a desperate man who shrunk from my wife's bosom. I did have a tough life and found it hard to trust anybody after that night in the forest and maybe it did not happen, as Nate seems to suggest. But how would you feel if everything you trusted blew up in your face? Maybe I did over react, but believe me, and even Nate would agree, those Puritans weren't the angels I thought they were growing up as a kid. So my suspicions were not totally wrong, so when I stopped going to church it was because I couldn't believe that us Puritans were as holy as we thought, and I did not want to be a hypocrite. Also, the part about shrinking from Faith's bosom is bull. Even Nate says I had a "goodly procession" of children and grandchildren at my funeral, and you can believe me those kids weren't raised to believe in Puritan fairy tales. I didn't want them to get shocked all at once like me. So I didn't really lose my Faith. I just decided I would not have blind faith, but old Nate doesn't play up that part.

Despite the comic mix of the student's persona as a nineteen-year-old freshman with the events of Brown's life, this young man musters a defense of Hawthorne's protagonist that raises questions relevant to the story. If Brown became as dark and desperate as Hawthorne portrays him at the story's close, why did he sire a large number of children? In addition, the student is aware that though Brown has difficulty with his loss of innocence, a certain amount of suspicion is necessary to function in the adult world, a point which, as the student notes, even Nate would agree. Though this piece may not be the work of a strong student, the parodic form allows an entry point into the story that leads the writer to begin to see its complexities.

In a more serious vein, versions of the literary paper can also show students the difficulty of functioning at times in socially conscribed roles. Playing the role of Marlowe reporting back to the company in *Heart of Darkness*, one young woman simply wrote:

> Kurtz is dying. The situation here in relation to the natives has gone as far beyond company policies and procedures as was suspected. Restoring order in the area will be a time-consuming and delicate process. Should Kurtz recover, he should be removed from his position and returned home.

In a subsequent paragraph describing how she felt in Marlowe's role the student wrote:

> This was a hard assignment, not that writing the letter was hard. You know how it should sound official and not go into the gory details. But I can imagine how Marlowe would feel writing a dull little letter. It doesn't really tell what happened, but then I guess that's what the story is about, how no one can face what's really going on except Kurtz, and he has become so evil because of it. And all he can say is "the horror." The others just want to gloss over it all and not say much like the letter. This is one of those situations that words can't describe, or that we are afraid to really describe.

Although not writing in the discourse of a literary critic, this student certainly demonstrates an understanding of some of the

important issues at stake in Conrad's novel. Explicitly, she recognizes the inadequacy of the official discourse of the letter to represent the events reported; implicitly, she is discovering a post-structural position in which the relationship between signifier and signified is tenuous, always open to intepretation and contention. Most importantly, the assignment will contribute to helping her recognize situations she will encounter in life when language will be used to disguise and justify abhorrence.

At a time when many vocationally minded students view a literature course as at worst a needless requirement and at best a pleasant diversion, writing on expressive and literary topics can help students see the relevance of literature to their lives and the lives of others. When this happens, students, as Booth notes, no longer ask why they should study literature: "No student who had actually *done* something with it . . . could be bothered by that question" (Booth's emphasis, 68).

WORKS CITED

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Cixous, Helene. "The Laugh of the Medusa." Trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen. *Signs* 1 (1976): 875-94.

Comley, Nancy R., and Robert Scholes. "Literature, Composition, and the Structure of English." Horner, 96-109.

Corbett, Edward P.J. "Literature and Composition: Allies or Rivals in the Classroom?" Horner, 168-184.

Emig, Janice. "Writing as a Mode of Learning." *College Composition and Communication* 28 (1977): 122-28.

Frey, Olivia. "Beyond Literary Darwinism: Women's Voices and Critical Discourse." *College English* 52 (1990): 507-26.

Horner, Winifred, ed. *Composition and Literature: Bridging the Gap*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1983.

Kinneavy, James. *A Theory of Discourse*. New York: Norton, 1980.

Tompkins, Jean. "Me and My Shadow." *New Literary History* 19 (1987): 169-78.

APPENDIX A

Bibliography of Textbooks Surveyed

Abcarian, Richard and Marvin Klotz. *Literature: The Human Experience*. 5th ed. New York: St. Martin's, 1990.

Writing topics interspersed throughout elicit critical papers. An appendix on writing about literature discusses expressive writing as part of journal writing, but the bulk of instruction is geared toward critical papers.

Annas, Pamela J. and Robert C. Rosen. *Literature and Society: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama, Nonfiction*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1990.

Thirty-five pages on writing provide process-centered instruction focusing largely on the critical paper but including one example of a literary paper and examples of the expressive paper, though these are discussed as prewriting strategies leading to a critical paper.

Bain, Carl E., Jerome Beaty, and J. Paul Hunter. *The Norton Introduction to Literature*, 5th ed. New York: Norton, 1991.

Although the extensive section on writing foregrounds the critical paper, there is some discussion of expressive and literary responses.

Barnet, Sylvan, Morton Berman and William Burto. *Literature for Composition*. 2nd ed. Glenview: Scott Foresman/Little Brown, 1987.

Five chapters opening the text concentrate on the critical essay.

Beaty, Jerome and J. Paul Hunter. *New Worlds of Literature*. New York: Norton, 1989.

Beaty and Hunter offer topics for writing all three types of papers, but these are listed on a scant two pages with no instruction on any of them.

Bergman, David and Daniel Mark Epstein. *The Heath Guide to Literature*. 2nd ed. Lexington: D.C. Heath, 1987.

This text offers thirty pages of instruction on writing the critical paper, specifying three types: character analysis, comparison, and historical analysis. Standard material on thesis and topic sentences, body paragraphs and introductions.

Biddle, Arthur W. and Toby Fulwiler. *Angles of Vision: An Introduction to Literature*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992.

This introductory anthology presents perhaps the most thorough coverage of writing, beginning with assignments for journal responses and including a chapter each on critical, personal (expressive), and imaginative (literary) essays.

____. *Reading, Writing, and the Study of Literature*. New York: Random House, 1989.

This book contains virtually the same material, and more, as the above entry but is solely a writing text designed to supplement an anthology.

Charters, Ann. *The Story and Its Writer: An Introduction to Short Fiction*. 2nd ed. Boston: Bedford, 1991.

Charters includes only the critical paper, though offering it in various modes: explication, analysis, comparison-contrast, and the like.

Cole, SuzAnne and Jeff Lindemann. *Reading and Responding to Literature*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990.

The first three chapters of this book offer effective instruction and assignments in what I call expressive and literary papers. The remaining seven chapters focus on critical papers on conventional matters such as structure, theme, and point of view.

Costello, Jaqueline and Amy Tucker. *Forms of Literature: A Writer's Collection*. New York: Random House, 1989.

Following each section on a particular genre, a list of topics includes all three types of papers and more. However, an appendix on writing about literature treats only the critical paper.

Grassi, Roseann and Peter De Blois. *Composition and Literature: A Rhetoric for Critical Writing*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1984.

As its title indicates, this text focuses solely on critical papers. It appears to have been written as a more process-centered alternative to Roberts' long, popular *Writing Themes about Literature*.

Griffith, Kelley. *Writing Essays about Literature: A Guide and Style Sheet*. 3rd ed. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990.

Another competitor to Roberts' *Writing Themes*, this text focuses solely on the critical essay, with a full chapter dedicated to each type included.

Hall, Donald. *To Read Literature: Fiction, Poetry, Drama*. 3rd ed. New York; Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1992.

Thirty-five pages at the end of the book offer instruction for writing critical papers on the three genres covered.

Hunt, Douglas. *The Riverside Anthology of Literature*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991.

Hunt informs students that there is more than one way to write about literature and includes a freewriting that could be considered a personal essay, but the freewriting is discussed as a means of moving toward the critical essay, which is featured.

Kirzner, Laurie G. and Stephen R. Mandell, *Literature: Reading, Reacting, Writing*. Fort Worth: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1991.

Substantial chapters teaching the critical paper begin each section on genre. Journal writing is suggested but as a means of prewriting for the critical paper.

Klamkin, Lynn and Margot Livesay. *Writing About Literature: An Anthology for Reading and Writing*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and, Winston, 1986.

Despite its title, this book is more anthology than writing text. It includes a full chapter on the critical paper, and in a chapter entitled "Other Kinds of Writing" discusses writing parodies of literary works.

Lawn, Beverly. *Literature: 150 Masterpieces of Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*. New York: St. Martin's, 1991.

A five-page section on writing about literature briefly acknowledges expressive and literary papers, but quickly shifts to four pages of instruction on critical writing, with an essay on setting in "Young Goodman Brown" as the primary example.

MacAllister, Joyce. *Writing about Literature: Aims and Processes*. New York: Macmillan, 1987.

Acknowledging a debt to Kinneavy in her preface, MacAllister includes a chapter on expressive papers and in five other chapters covers critical papers, which, using Kinneavy's aims of discourse, she designates informative or persuasive.

McLaughlin, Thomas. *Literature: The Power of Language*. New York: Harcourt Brace, Jovanovich, 1989.

Twenty one pages on the critical paper, including two student samples, conclude the book.

MacMahan, Elizabeth, Susan Day, and Robert Funk. *Literature and the Writing Process*. 2nd ed. New York: Macmillan, 1989.

Writing instruction is integrated with an anthology. The first chapter contains an assignment that could lead to a literary paper, but this assignment is treated as a prewriting activity to help lead to ideas for the critical paper, which is featured throughout.

Meyer, Michael. *The Bedford Introduction to Literature*. 2nd ed. Boston: Bedford, 1990.

Two chapters closing the book cover three kinds of critical papers: analysis, explication, and the research paper.

Profitt, Edward. *Reading and Writing About Literature: Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and the Essay*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990.

An opening section and sections prefacing coverage of each genre provide instruction on the critical essay.

Roberts, Edgar. *Writing Themes about Literature*. Fifth Ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1983.

A longtime bestseller among writing about literature texts, this one focuses solely on the critical paper, with eighteen chapters covering themes on structure, plot, setting, and the like.

____. and Henry E. Jacobs. *Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing*. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1989.

An appendix offers instruction on three types of critical papers: evaluation, comparison-contrast, and the research essay. Most of the material duplicates that of Roberts' *Writing Themes*.

———. *Fiction: An Introduction to Reading and Writing*. 3rd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1992.

This text includes virtually the same material as the Roberts and Jacobs volume above.

Scholes, Robert, Nancy R. Comley, and Gregory L. Ulmer. *Text Book: An Introduction to Literary Language*. New York: St. Martin's, 1988.

Not an anthology but solely a writing text, this book differs radically from the pack, offering several assignments for papers I would classify as expressive, literary, and more, including a Derridean "signature" paper.

Seyler, Dorothy U. and Richard A. Wilan. *Introduction to Literature: Reading, Analyzing, and Writing*. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1990.

Despite its title, this book dedicates only one chapter to writing, focusing all instruction on the critical paper.

Stanford, Judith A. *Responding to Literature*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1992.

A large anthology prefaced by three chapters on writing about literature, this text balances coverage between expressive and critical papers, though the organization implies that the former is a means to the latter.

Waller, Gary, Kathleen McCormick, and Lois Josephs Fowler. *The Lexington Introduction to Literature: Reading and Responding to Texts*. Lexington: D.C. Heath, 1987.

Integrated throughout are topics for expressive essays (called response papers) and instruction on how to revise these into critical papers. An appendix covers the research essay.

APPENDIX B

Sample Topics for the Personal Paper

1. Students read Anderson's "I Want to Know Why," Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown," Joyce's "Araby," or any other maturation tale and write a paper relating a maturation experience of their own. This assignment can require purely a personal experience paper or can ask students to compare their own experience to that of the character in the story.
2. Students read Faulkner's "Barn Burning" and write an essay on their own struggles with parental authority.
3. Students read Chekov's "In Exile" and then contrast the philosophies of two people they know, or of themselves and a friend.
4. Students read Updike's "A&P" and write about their own experience with the authority of the workplace.
5. Students compare and contrast two friends who suggest the characters of Michel and Captain Stocker in Doris Lessing's "The Black Madonna."
6. Students use Dante's classification of sinners in *The Inferno* to classify other students.
7. Students read Frost's "Mending Wall" and then write a paper analyzing their relationship with a neighbor or roommate.
8. Students read *The Great Gatsby* and then compare/contrast Gatsby to a contemporary figure such as Donald Trump, Ted Turner, Malcolm Forbes, or another of their own choosing.

Same Topics for the Literary Paper

1. Students read Joyce's "Eveline" and write one of the letters (to her father or brother) that she had planned to send home before leaving Dublin (from Elizabeth McMahan et al, *Literature and the Writing Process*).
2. Students assume the role of the woman in Donne's "The Flea" or Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" and write a response to the speaker's overtures.
3. Students write a suicide note from Richard Corey to the people of Tilbury town (adapted from an assignment in Comley and Scholes, "Literature, Composition, and the Structure of English"). Or using Robinson's "The Miller's Wife," students write a suicide note from the miller to his wife.
4. Students assume the role of Sammy in Updike's "A&P" and write a letter to the company requesting Lendel (the manager) be fired for his treatment of the young girls.
5. Students assume the role of the Misfit in O'Connor's "A Good Man is Hard to Find" and write a confession to the police explaining why he murdered the grandmother.
6. Students assume the role of Marlowe in *Heart of Darkness* and write a letter to the company reporting on Kurtz's activities.
7. Students write an epilogue to *Lord of the Flies*, focusing on the life of either Ralph or Jack.
8. Students write a letter home from Robin Molineauz, explaining what has happened to his kinsman and why he will remain in the city.