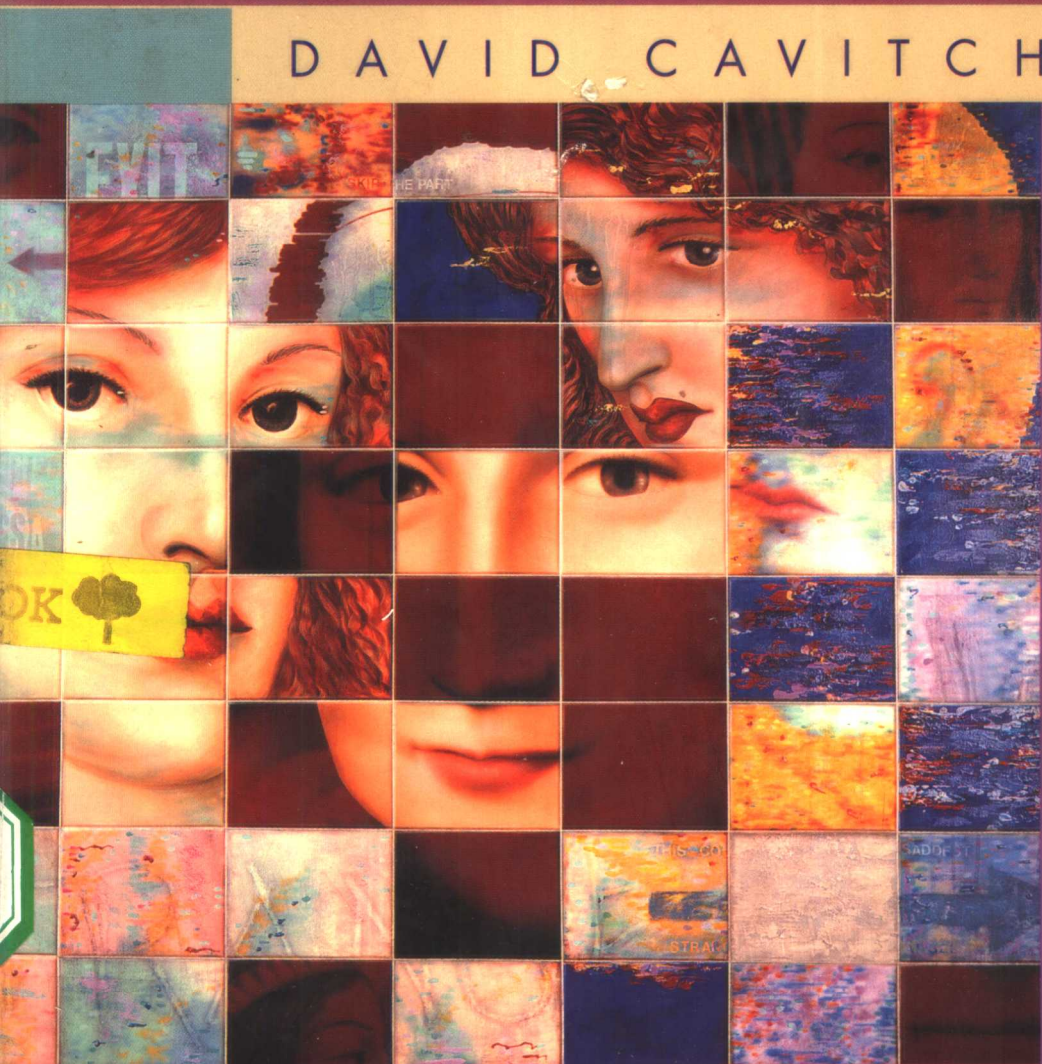


F I F T H   E D I T I O N

# LIFE STUDIES

AN ANALYTIC READER

DAVID CAVITCH



# *Life Studies*

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AN ANALYTIC READER

FIFTH EDITION

EDITED BY

**David Cavitch**

*Tufts University*

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# TO INSTRUCTORS



*Life Studies* has been a popular reader chiefly because students like the selections. Students using the book avidly "read around" on their own initiative. They enjoy the readings, are moved by them, and are stimulated into thinking. They then strive to attain in their writing the interesting effects of the essays. The fifth edition continues the book's distinctive emphasis on examining individual experience in its larger-than-personal dimensions. But it also recognizes that instructors want students to move beyond personal reactions, to formulate more complex, analytic responses to readings. New questions and writing assignments encourage students to make the transition from expressive immediate responses to equally empathic but more analytic considerations. This new emphasis of the fifth edition is reflected in the new subtitle: "An Analytic Reader."

Although the revisions are pervasive, this new edition of *Life Studies* reconfirms the original premise that students learn to write well when they try to understand matters that are truly significant to them. They will work hard at articulating their ideas and feelings only if they have something that they really want to say clearly and convincingly. The works included here offer students varied and challenging perspectives on topics they care about, encouraging them to read with heightened attention, to respond knowledgeably in class discussions, and to write with a strong purpose to learn about themselves and their world.

Two new part topics, "Lessons" and "Media Images," examine mixed messages received from education — both inside and outside the classroom — and from popular culture. In addition, "Group Pictures" has been substantially revised to explore the personal, political, and socioeconomic significance of being part of a religious, racial, or ethnic group. Other parts have been recast in major ways, with the addition of new selections and many new topics for writing. Of the fifty-eight selections, twenty-five are new to this edition, and nineteen of the new pieces have never before appeared in a composition reader.

The organization of the book into eight thematic parts treats a progression of experience from personal to general awareness. The topics address our self-images; our family relationships; our love for people outside the family; education that we get inside and outside the classroom; our identification with religious, ethnic, and racial groups; our connection to valued possessions; and our connection to those things in familiarity to us?

sions; our cultural images reflected by films, magazines, and pop music; and our dilemmas over moral issues that cannot be sidestepped. Each part opens with a number of Insights — succinct, often controversial statements by well-known writers whose colloquy of opinions offer a lively approach to the theme. Each group of Insights includes a poem expressing a highly personal viewpoint related to the theme. The longer works that follow include contemporary essays, memoirs, social criticism, and reportage. The authors provide diverse perspectives — including those of the journalist, sociologist, screenwriter, philosopher, and satirist, among others — and represent a broad range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. In addition to the essays, <sup>Be</sup> each part contains one short story that develops the theme imaginatively.

<sup>Steps</sup> Throughout *Life Studies*, the generous editorial apparatus places new emphasis on critical thinking and analysis, encouraging students to move beyond their personal experience and to examine, analyze, and take a stand on issues. To motivate and encourage students, the book opens with a new introduction that stresses the importance of attentive and critical reading in order to improve writing. “Finding a Trail: An Introduction to Reading and Writing Analytically” offers guidelines and specific practical advice for reading with better comprehension. The introduction is built around a new essay, Linda Hogan’s “Walking,” which is annotated to show how a student might respond to it during close reading. Following this essay, a clarification of the style and content shows students how to use margin annotations to increase their understanding of a reading and to develop viewpoints for writing. The introduction also includes composition advice that identifies and illustrates common writing problems.

Each part of *Life Studies* opens with Focusing by Writing, warm-up questions that can be used for in-class writing exercises or to generate class discussion. The Focusing topics are framed to show students that they — like the authors of the Insights — possess knowledge and opinions about the topics in the chapter. The questions raise students’ awareness of the issues and suggest the significance of their own experience. Instructors may wish to use some Focusing topics for longer writing assignments as well.

Preceding each selection is a biographical and introductory headnote. Each selection is then followed by three categories of questions that promote analytic reading and writing. First come *Analyzing This Selection* questions, which encourage students to consider the reading’s content and meaning as well as the writer’s methods and approaches. These are followed by *Analyzing Connections* questions, which ask students to connect, integrate, and analyze the reading with earlier material. (Because many instructors flexibly assign their own order of readings, other links are suggested in the instructor’s manual, *Resources for Teaching Life Studies*. But as a model for students, a pattern of progressive, expansive reflectiveness is built into the book itself.) Finally, *Analyzing by Writing* offers one or two writing topics that invite students to write papers that explain, analyze, or take a stand on issues raised by the selection.

A rhetorical index to the selections appears in the back of the book, and *Resources for Teaching Life Studies*, co-authored by Debra Spark, offers suggestions for dealing with each piece in class. The significantly expanded instructor's manual also offers further writing suggestions and comments on the photographs, suggesting ways to use them for class discussion and writing assignments.

Many instructors helped improve this book by responding to a questionnaire on the fourth edition. Several of the respondents and their colleagues also responded to ideas for the fifth edition by phone. I am grateful for the careful consideration given by Helen Aron, Union County College; Kathleen Aguero, Pine Manor College; Debra Boyd, Winthrop University; Jerry Bradley, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology; Mark Braley, U.S. Air Force Academy; Gayle Burkowski, Glenville State College; Sara King Brown, George Mason University; Margaret Cruikshank, City College of San Francisco; J. Arthur Faber, Wittenberg University; Regina R. Flynn, Salem State College; Michele Fry, Arizona State University; Paul deGategno, North Carolina Wesleyan College; Luc Gilleman, Indiana University; Susan Gorman, Tufts University; David Goslee, University of Tennessee at Knoxville; Andrea Green, Union County College; Margaret Grissom, Saint Mary's College; Elizabeth Grove, Ithaca College; Raouf J. Halaby, Ouachita Baptist University; Sarah Holben, State University of New York, Cortland; Dorothy W. Howell, University of North Carolina at Charlotte; Barbara Jensen, Modesto Junior College; Joanne Johnson, Jefferson Community College; Carole Keller, University of Akron; Rosemarie Lewandowski, Union County College; Gerald McCarthy of St. Thomas Aquinas College; Marie McCarthy, Union County College; Jerry Nelson, University of Nebraska at Lincoln; Elizabeth Otten, Northeast Missouri State University; Kathleen Patterson, California State University of Fullerton; Katherine Payant, Northern Michigan University; Richard Potter, Roger Williams University; Jon Quitslund, George Washington University; David Rivard, Tufts University; Beth Romano, Adrian College; Wayne de Rosset, Glenville State College; Connie Rothwell, University of North Carolina at Charlotte; and Edward Wiltse, Tufts University. In addition, special thanks go to David Goslee of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and Kathleen Aguero of Pine Manor College for their thoughtful reviews of the introduction.

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light and skillful touch. Jonathan Burns ably piloted the book through production, and Elizabeth Schaaf carefully managed the production process. Once again, Charles Christensen and Joan Feinberg gave their imaginative vision and high standards to the entire endeavor.

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# FINDING A TRAIL

## *An Introduction to Reading and Writing Analytically*

It takes good reading to learn good writing. And every attentive response to good reading stimulates new possibilities of improvement in our writing.

Reading is the most important, and the most pleasurable, training for writers. From essays, fiction, and poetry we acquire a vastly increased vocabulary of knowledge and an array of models for more expressive, analytical ways of thinking about our world and ourselves. From reading we take in special verbal tools and methods that we use in writing. But we can't just swallow words and digest the meanings and uses of them. We have to become active intellectually and imaginatively in order to read with clear perception and firm emotional response. This introduction offers some practical advice on how to read and write more *analytically*, an approach explained in the next paragraph. The particular suggestions will prove effective as you practice them again and again. Like playing the piano, reading and writing are acquired abilities that no one is born with. But as we become good at what we're doing, the pleasure of doing it grows deeper and richer.

The literary meaning of *analysis* is to examine the parts and details of a piece of writing in order to explain their function and effects when all the parts work together. The basic premise of analysis is that style and form work together with ideas and emotions. The analytic reader clarifies what an author says by taking note of matters such as particular words, figures of speech, sentence structures, and links between sentences, paragraph development, the order of paragraphs, the structure of the piece as a whole, and the author's explicit and implicit attitudes — called *tone* — toward the subject and toward the reader.

That's a lot of parts and details to analyze. To keep track of them, a reader has to be systematic, and the full analysis must accumulate step by step. For instance, an observation about a writer's use of the colloquial word *spiffy* may lead to another observation about her chummy tone toward the reader, and discovering that attitude may further illuminate how she controls the flow of ideas from one paragraph to the next. Good writers are always in control of their writing, even when they sound casual and spontaneous. They want readers to grasp their intended meaning. They lay out as clear a path as they can to define their exact meaning, which is often not simple or easy to arrive at. This introduction demonstrates ways to pick up and follow the trail of the author's intentions.