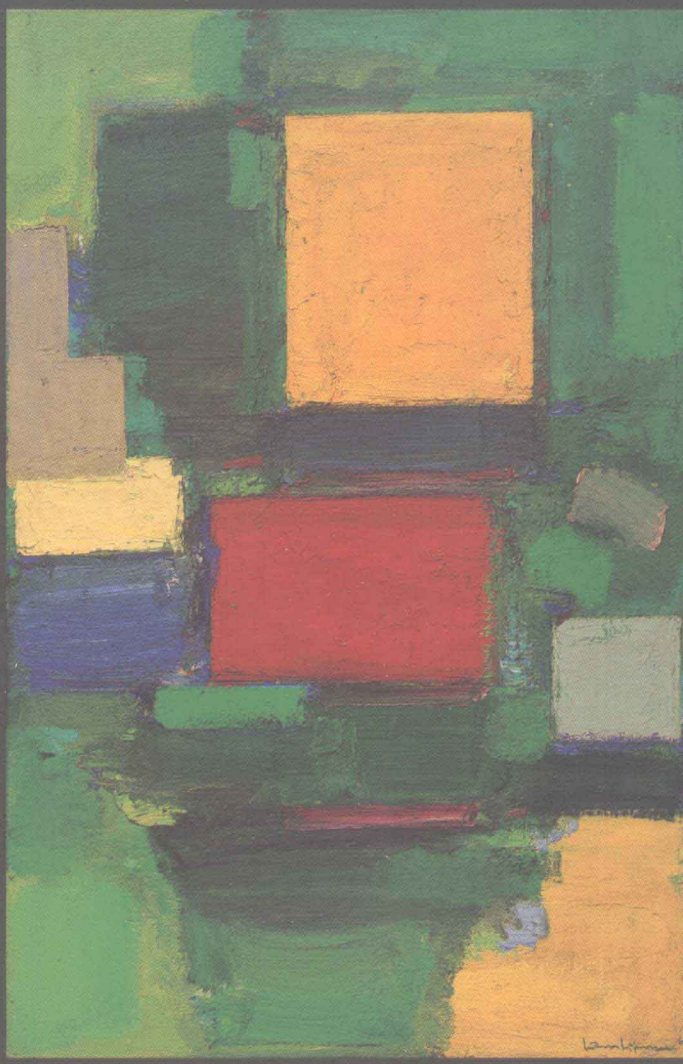
General Editor
L. Bensel-Meyers

Editors
Susan Giesemann North
Jeremy W. Webster



Literary Culture

Reading *and* Writing *Literary* Arguments

Literary Culture

Reading *and* Writing *Literary* Arguments

General Editor
L. Bensel-Meyers

Editors
Susan Giesemann North
Jeremy W. Webster

University of Tennessee
Knoxville

Contributing Editors
Tanya Bennett
Joan Burton
Allison E. Carey
Jo Angela Edwins
Kevin Eubanks
David A. Haines, Jr.
Steven Harthorn
Kristi Larkin Havens
Leslie Lachance
William B. Larsen
Mary Moss
Nathaniel Preston
Laura Rutland
Daniel Schierenbeck
Melissa Putman Sprenkle
David Sprenkle
Walter Squire
James C. Thompson
Stephanie Lewis Thompson
Patricia Waters
Robin Wright

SIMON & SCHUSTER
CUSTOM PUBLISHING

Cover art: "The Gate," by Hans Hofmann. Courtesy of
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, New York.
© Estate of Hans Hofmann/Licensed by Vaga, New York, NY

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Please visit our website at www.sscp.com

ISBN 0–536–01629–1

BA 98436

SIMON & SCHUSTER CUSTOM PUBLISHING
160 Gould Street/Needham Heights, MA 02494
Simon & Schuster Education Group

Copyright Acknowledgments

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the following sources for permission to reprint material copyrighted or controlled by them:

"Sonrisas," by Pat Mora, reprinted from *Borders*, 1988, with permission from the publisher of *Borders* (Houston: Arte Publico Press—University of Houston, 1986).

"Everyday Use," by Alice Walker, reprinted from *In Love and Trouble: Stories of Black Women*, 1973. Harcourt Brace & Company.

"No Name Woman," reprinted from *The Woman Warrior*, by Maxine Hong Kingston. Copyright © 1975, 1976 by Maxine Hong Kingston. Reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

"You Must Know that I Do Not Love You and I Love You," by Pablo Neruda, reprinted from *100 Love Sonnets (Cien Sonetos de Amore)*, translated by Stephen Tapscott, 1986. University of Texas Press.

"Twenty-One Love Poems," reprinted from *A Fact of a Doorframe: Poems, Selected and New, 1950–1984*, by Adrienne Rich, 1984. W.W. Norton & Company.

"Knoxville: Summer 1915," from *A Death in the Family*, by James Agee. Copyright © 1957 by The James Agee Trust, renewed © 1985 by Mia Agee. Used by permission of Grosset & Dunlap, Inc., a division of Penguin Putnam, Inc.

"A Raisin in the Sun," by Lorraine Hansberry, 1958. Random House.

Excerpt from "The Child's Need for Magic," from *The Uses of Enchantment,* by Bruno Bettelheim. Copyright © 1975, 1976 by Bruno Bettelheim. Reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Excerpt from *Curses! Broiled Again!* by Jan Harold Brunvand. Copyright © 1989 by Jan Harold Brunvand. Reprinted by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

"The Tiger's Bride," reprinted from *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories,* by Angela Carter, 1979. Penguin Books.

"Barbie Doll," from *Circles on the Water*, by Marge Piercy. Copyright © 1982 by Marge Piercy. Reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

"Zaabalawi," by Naguib Mahfouz, reprinted from *Modern Arabic Short Stories*, translated and edited by Denys Johnson-Davies, 1967. Oxford University Press, UK.

"Why I Write: Making No Become Yes," by Elie Wiesel, reprinted from *The New York Times Book Review,* April 14, 1985. Copyright © 1985 by Elie Wiesel. Reprinted by permission of Georges Borchardt, Inc.

"Long time ago/ In the beginning," by Leslie Marmon Silko, reprinted from *Storyteller*, 1988. Copyright © 1988 by Leslie Marmon Silko. Seaver Books/Arcade Publishing Company.

"Back to Love Canal: Recycled Homes, Rebuilt Dreams," by Verlyn Klinkenborg, reprinted from *Harper's Magazine*. Copyright © 1991 by *Harper's Magazine.* All rights reserved. Reproduced from the March 1991 issue by special permission.

"'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman," by Harlan Ellison. Copyright © 1965 by Harlan Ellison. Renewed, copyright © 1993 by Harlan Ellison. Reprinted by arrangement with, and permission of, the Author and the Author's agent, Richard Curtis Associates, Inc., New York. All rights reserved.

"Ozymandias," by Terry Carr, reprinted from *Again, Dangerous Visions*, edited by Harlan Ellison, 1972. Doubleday.

"The Art of Not Forgetting: An Interview with Judith Ortiz Cofer," by Marilyn Kallet, reprinted from *Prairie Schooner*, Vol. 68, No. 4, Winter 1994, by permission of the University of Nebraska Press. Copyright © 1994 by the University of Nebraska Press.

"The Latin Deli: An Ars Poetica," by Judith Ortiz Cofer, reprinted with permission from the publisher of *The Americas Review*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Houston: Arte Publico Press—University of Houston, 1991).

The following selections are reprinted from *The Latin Deli: Telling the Lives of Bario Women*, by Judith Ortiz Cofer, 1993: "The Myth of the Latin Woman: I Just Met a Girl Named Maria," "By Love Betrayed," "Dear Joaquin," and "Who Will Not Be Vanquished." University of Georgia Press.

"Casa," by Judith Ortiz Cofer, reprinted from *Prairie Schooner*, Vol. 63, No. 5, Fall 1989, by permission of the University of Nebraska Press. Copyright © 1989 by the University of Nebraska Press.

"Narrating Memory," by Terry Dehay, reprinted from *Memory, Narrative, and Identity: New Essays in Ethnic American Literature*, edited by Amrijit Singh, Joseph Skerritt, Jr., and Robert E. Hogan, 1994. Copyright © 1994 by Northeastern University Press. Reprinted with the permission of Northeastern University Press.

"Part B: An Alphabetized Glossary," by Patsy Callaghan and Ann Dobyns, reprinted from *Literary Conversation: Thinking, Talking, and Writing about Literature*, 1996, by permission of Allyn and Bacon.

Preface

Literary Culture is a custom-published textbook for English 102: "English Composition II" at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Specifically tailored to address the needs of both students and instructors of this second term of first-year composition, this book focuses on teaching students how to read and write about literature while developing their research skills. The literary anthologies we have used in the past, because they were attempting to reach both the first-year writing course and the sophomore "Introduction to Literature" course, were often bulky and expensive. Also, because they tended to focus on literature as an aesthetic form, they made it difficult for students to learn how to respond to literary works as cultural arguments, as a kind of writing authors use to respond to the very human concerns embedded in their time and culture. We hope this new book—our choice of selections, how we have chosen to organize them, and the specific, rhetorical questions that follow each work (including a casebook to demonstrate the many different rhetorical situations within which arguments about literature take place)—can make it easier for students and teachers to engage rhetorically with the cultural issues at the heart of literary works.

Each of the units has been developed by teachers in the composition program at UTK, and any proceeds from the sale of the book will go back into the composition program to further the training of new teachers. The Contributing Editors, drawing upon their experience of what most inspires students of English 102, were responsible for each unit, choosing the readings and formulating the questions that follow. The result clearly reveals how much these teachers care about helping students to enjoy reading and writing about literature. The units focus on developing students' communication skills by helping them become more sensitive to the variety of perspectives literary rhetoric exposes us to, using reading and writing about literature to help students experience and decide for themselves how they want to value the many worlds and peoples that surround their lives.

The book is the product of many hands, with the primary vision coming from the Editors, Susan North and Jeremy Webster, both experienced Assistant Directors of Composition at UTK. These two scholar-teachers shaped the overall structure and soul of the text. They tirelessly edited the individual units, gathered permissions for the readings, and developed the introductory chapters that prepare students with the skills and terminology they need to experience and respond to literature as written argument. Without the Editors' tireless dedication

and wisdom, we would not be able to provide you with this less expensive alternative to the several texts we used in the past to teach the highly-stylized, rhetorical discourse that both responds to and reshapes our cultural attitudes toward human behavior.

—L. Bensel-Meyers,
General Editor & Director of Composition, UTK

Contents

UNIT ONE

Reading and Writing Literary Arguments

Introduction

Every day we are confronted with many different kinds of texts. During the course of a single 24-hour period, we might read a textbook, an article in a news magazine, a newspaper editorial, a short story, or part of a novel. We do not, however, encounter only written texts. News broadcasts, soap operas, advertisements, movies, and sitcoms are also texts. What all these texts have in common is that they involve the use of language, either written or spoken, or visual elements to communicate something. What they communicate may be an informational message or an emotional one or, what is more likely, a combination of the two. Texts, however, do not give up their messages easily. Language is a code. Sometimes this code is difficult to understand. At other times it can be readily deciphered, but our senses can still misperceive its message. As a result, we must interpret the messages we receive through texts carefully, and that is not always as easy as it sounds.

How do we learn to interpret all these messages? Most of us have learned to interpret texts by doing it, much like we learned to talk or walk. There is certainly nothing wrong with that kind of life knowledge. Most of us depend on it to get through our daily lives. But if we want to develop our skills, we need to work harder and concentrate our attention. Professional basketball players, for example, do not rely on the skills they learned playing hoops at the neighborhood park. Instead, they sharpen their abilities by practicing hard and studying the fundamentals of the game. Gourmet cooks, too, progress beyond basic cooking by learning about ingredients, terminology, and techniques of the culinary arts. Interpreting texts, too, is a skill that can be improved by studying the techniques and fundamentals of literary theory and rhetorical analysis.

Why do we need to develop our skills at interpreting texts? In part, we need those skills because we are constantly confronted with texts in our daily lives. When we are faced with a high-pressure salesperson trying to sell us a car, we need to be able to distinguish truth from exaggeration. We need to interpret the loan documents that we sign when we buy that car or a house. We need to know how to listen to politicians, to religious leaders, to our bosses, our families, and our friends. Furthermore, we live in a world where more information is available than at any time before in human history. The traditional texts—books, magazines, and newspapers—are augmented by audio-visual media—television, radio, and movies. The growth of the internet and the worldwide web mean that we receive more and more messages every day.

Without sharpening our interpretive skills, we simply cannot deal with this vast amount of information. Unless we can distinguish between reliable and unreliable information, we run the risk, like Chicken Little, of appearing foolish when we mistake a falling acorn for the falling sky. In short, we need to improve our interpretive skills so that we can understand our world, so that we can communicate effectively with one another, and so that we can control our own lives.

As members of an academic community, we encounter many different kinds of texts. We read historical accounts, psychology textbooks, biology reference guides, to name just a few. In English classes, we read argumentative essays, poems, short stories, plays, and novels. Many of the kinds of texts we encounter in college are different from those we've encountered before. Not only do we have to read unfamiliar kinds of texts, we have to produce them as well. For instance, we must interpret the results of a chemistry experiment and write up those results in a form that is accepted by other chemists. Engineers must study and interpret problems and design appropriate solutions to fit those situations, and, at every step of this process, must produce written reports detailing their work and giving reasons to support their recommendations. These reports, too, must conform to the expectations of their discipline.

Why Study Literature?

In this book, you will learn an argumentative approach to reading and writing about literature. You might wonder why you should study literature if you intend to be an engineer or a chemist, a social worker or a doctor. One reason is simply that the interpretation of literature is a very complex task that sharpens your ability to decipher other kinds of texts as well. Remember that we said earlier that language is a code. We might say that literature is a code within a code. The messages in literary texts are not straight-forward; they are wrapped up in figurative language and things like setting, characterization, and plot. It takes a lot of work and skill to unravel their meaning. Another good reason for studying literature as a way to develop interpretive skills is that literary scholars have a vocabulary for talking about the way language is used to make meaning. We can, for instance, talk about figurative use of language and how the use of certain kinds of figures alter our perception of a situation. What we learn from our study of literature—the interpretive skills, the understanding of how language can alter our understanding of the world—can be transferred to other contexts. We might, for instance, be better able to make up our own minds about the effect of violent television and films on our culture. The close reading that we must do in order to interpret a poem may help us to pay closer attention to the results of a physics experiment. Determining the best critical approach to use in analyzing a novel is much the same as deciding what tests to use to determine the contents of an unknown sample in chemistry. Just as the information you learn in other classes—history,