



# Literary Nonfiction: Theory, Criticism, and Pedagogy

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Recognizing nonfiction as something of intrinsic value, Chris Anderson calls on writing teachers who are also literature teachers and literary critics who also work in composition to study the styles and forms of literary nonfiction. Each essayist shares Anderson's views of nonfiction prose as crossing genre and discipline boundaries.

In Part I: Readings, contributors examine seven nonfiction authors from different critical methodologies. These include aesthetic analysis, linguistic, rhetorical, formalist, psychoanalytical, feminist, and deconstructionist approaches. Richard Selzer, Stephen Crane, and George Orwell are among the writers examined. These essays provide not only a grammar of critical approaches to nonfiction but also offer introductions to several of the major nonfiction writers of this century.

The genre and theory questions raised in Part I, particularly problems of definition and boundary of literary nonfiction, are reviewed in Part II: Generalizations and Definitions. Carl H. Klaus looks at how essayists themselves conceived and refined the essay form and what this tells us about the nature of this type of prose. Klaus points out that "essay" has been a very slippery term, both historically and theoretically. As Peter Elbow examines the prose of Gretel Ehrlich and Richard Selzer, he explores how we account for the literary quality of voice in nonfiction and what this says about the nature of voice.

In Part III: Implications for Pedagogy, five contributors, including Jim W. Corder and Chris Anderson, show how the theories expressed in the earlier essays can be applied to the classroom. All of the contributors argue that literary nonfiction, by its nature, reveals the complexity, power, and rhetorical possibilities of language—and that this ought to be the unifying concern of rhetoric and composition as a discipline.

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