

CREATIVE WRITING BY MORRIS SCHREIBER

I: INTRODUCTION: SELF-EXPRESSION THROUGH WRITING

II: SOURCES OF IDEAS

III: METHODS OF DEVELOPING YOUR IDEAS

IV: FORMAT FOR WRITING: LITERARY TYPES AND MEDIA

V: THE ART OF WRITING: LANGUAGE, STYLE, TECHNIQUE

SCHOLASTIC RECORDS SL 9122



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CREATIVE WRITING BY MORRIS SCHREIBER

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by Morris Schreiber

- I. INTRODUCTION:
SELF-EXPRESSION THROUGH WRITING
- II. SOURCES OF IDEAS
- III. METHODS OF DEVELOPING YOUR IDEAS
- IV. FORMAT FOR WRITING: LITERARY TYPES
AND MEDIA
- V. THE ART OF WRITING: LANGUAGE, STYLE,
TECHNIQUE

CREATIVE WRITING

by Morris Schreiber

1st Narrator

... Part One... Introduction... Self-Expression
through writing...

2nd Narrator

--Ideas at Work!

(SOUND OF TYPEWRITER)

... Ideas: Incubated in the writer's experience...
Shaped in his consciousness... Refined and polished
by his imagination...

3rd Narrator

--That brilliance of the imagination... That lofti-
ness of the human mind that Mark Twain described
so uniquely in "The Mysterious Stranger":

VOICE (QUOTING)

"My mind creates... Creates anything it desires--
and in a moment... Creates without material...
Creates fluids, solids, colors--anything, every-
thing--out of the airy nothing which is called
Thought... A man imagines a silk thread, imagines
a machine to make it, imagines a picture, then
by weeks of labor embroiders it on canvas with
the thread... I think the whole thing, and in a
moment it is before you--created."

"I think a poem, music, the record of a game of
chess--anything... and it is there... This is the
immortal mind--nothing is beyond its reach."

2nd Narrator

Or this...

VOICE

"Dear Mary...

Thank you for the lovely time we had at your
beach party last week... It was so nice of you
to have us come..."

2nd Narrator

Gracious... appreciative... But formal--and cold-
ly functional... Contrast this with Fielding's
penetrating reflections on the same subject:

VOICE

"When I'm not thanked at all, I'm thanked enough.
I've done my duty, and I've done no more."

1st Narrator

Such views on gratitude... Man's thoughts on love.
duty... Nature... God... the onrushing events of
his daily existence... have been passed on from
generation to generation... some by word of
mouth--told, chanted, or sung by minstrels and
bards... many more in written form by scribes
who painstakingly took them down...

2nd Narrator

But those that have endured were the writings:
Scratched upon ancient scrolls of papyrus...
Engraved with a stylus in wax... Hammered into
stone in cryptic hieroglyphics... Copied onto
parchment by monks... Impressed in type on
the first crude printing plate... And now whirled
at fantastic speed off giant rotary presses.

1st Narrator

But beauty of expression is not limited to pro-
fessional practitioners of the art... Ordinary
man too, reacts to his universe in a hundred
different ways... Even the untrained, the un-
tutored, the little child just learning to talk
may be stirred to lyrical expression:

VOICE OF CHILD

Daddy!... Look!... The sun is smiling at me!

1st Narrator

Adolescence, too, brings forth new appraisals, fresh views of the familiar...

A twelve-year old girl stands on the beach and looks out at the pounding surf... Later, in the quiet of her room, she recollects her emotions and writes:

GIRL (WRITING)

"...The sea...is that footless realm...where only...dead men tread..."

1st Narrator

Or, after a chilling walk along an icy path, where trees droop limply in the snow, she returns home to write:

GIRL (WRITING)

"...Trees...in winter...remind me...of unheated houses..."

2nd Narrator

A business executive, dealing in masses of cold statistical data all day long, is inspired, on the occasion of a wedding anniversary, to write a tender tribute to his wife:

VOICE

"Grace and loveliness drape you
Like a mantle finely spun,
Your smile illuminates you
Like a splendid, glowing sun."

2nd Narrator

An elderly refugee woman, speculating on the world of the blind, attains the stature of a Milton with these remarkable insights:

WOMAN (WRITING)

"Their vast imagination
Keeps fields forever green
And shows to them more beauty
Than open eyes have seen."

3rd Narrator

Professional or non-professional, each one of us is a rich storehouse of impressions and experiences ready to be triggered into expression at the proper stimulus...

Sometimes, the outlet is a formal one--through planned expression, a story, an essay, a poem... Sometimes, it is a personal, intimate one--in a letter to a cherished friend, in a confidential entry in a diary meant for no other eyes... such as that searing human document of the Nazi terror, "The Diary of Anne Frank."

In a letter or in a diary a writer may be at his most natural and engaging.

But since there are emotions and experiences too deep and intimate for words, there is

much that probably remains unwritten--that cannot be recorded even in a private diary. Or as the refugee woman expressed it so aptly:

WOMAN

"I cheat you, diary mine
When the truth I cannot write,
When a thought I must suppress
Or a secret I must hide,
When some deed I shan't confess
--And in you I can't confide..."

(BAND)

1st Narrator

...Part Two...Sources of Ideas...

(SOUND OF ROCK BEING DROPPED INTO A POOL)

How deeply shall the writer probe--and how widely shall he range? Most important of all, where shall he seek for his material?

--He can tap the wellsprings of his own experience many times--it is practically a bottomless fount. But there are other rich sources of ideas available to him:

2nd Narrator

There is recorded literature itself--to stir his emotions, to set him thinking, to furnish inspiration. There is the world of myth and fable, legend and folk tale. There is history with its crowded, turbulent canvas thronged with figures from life and larger than life. There is the daily newspaper, with its moving, vivid chronicle of the current scene, its stories of human interest. There is fine art, to stir his imagination, thrilling music, to evoke image and emotion. And there is boundless Nature herself, with the power to stimulate the writer to reassess old values:

VOICE

"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and the music in its roar
I love not man the less, but Nature more."

2nd Narrator

How can the writer best utilize these rich and varied sources for his own creative work? Let us first consider personal experience:

WOMAN

...I am a painter... A stranger comes to my door one day selling household items... Suddenly I see in the face of this unknown a radiance and nobility of holy proportions... At that moment I know instinctively that he will make a perfect subject for a religious portrait I am painting...

...I invite him in...

2nd Narrator

Here is material for the writer direct from literature: Eugene O'Neill, in his monumental drama, "Mourning Becomes Electra," draws upon the ancient Greek dramatist Aeschylus, for his portrait of his Civil War general, Ezra Mannon, based upon the Greek military leader, Agamemnon. Clytemnestra, his wife, becomes Christine in the O'Neill play. Orestes, his son, becomes Orin; Electra, his daughter, Lavinia.

General Mannon, returned home from the wars, speaks to Lavinia:

GENERAL MANNON

"I've got leave for a few days. Then I must go back and disband my brigade. Peace ought to be signed soon. The President's assassination is a frightful calamity. But it can not change the course of events."

LAVINIA

"Poor man! It's dreadful he should die just at the moment of victory!"

MANNON

"Yes! (Then after a pause--soberly)... All victory ends in the defeat of death... That's sure... But does defeat end in the victory of death? That's what I wonder..."

2nd Narrator

Ironically, Mannon himself is shortly about to die--at the hands of his faithless wife, Christine... In this modern version of the ancient Greek play, O'Neill has drawn upon classical literature for his own creative drama...

The world of legend and fable also offers the writer profitable sources of material. Consider Aesop's tale of the old man and his sons. What significance does it have for a writer of our times? What themes can he find in it?

VOICE

"THE BUNDLE OF STICKS"

"An old man on the point of death summoned his sons around him to give them some parting advice. He ordered his servants to bring in a bundle of sticks and said to his eldest son: 'Break it.' The son strained and strained, but with all his efforts was unable to break the bundle. The other sons also tried, but none of them was successful.

"Untie the bundle," said the father, 'and each of you take a stick.' When they had done so, he called out to them: 'Now break,' and each stick was easily broken. 'You see my meaning,' said the father: 'Union gives strength.'"

2nd Narrator

This theme--the importance of physical and moral unity against divisiveness and subversion--also appears in the Bible in the tale of Joseph

and his brothers in Egypt... It has also been brilliantly retold by the modern German writer, Thomas Mann, in his novel on Joseph.

3rd Narrator

The writer can also draw upon history--as a source for both colorful pageantry and dramatic action. This is how Emile Zola, French 19th century naturalist, in his stirring short story, "The Attack on the Mill," saw the Franco-Prussian War of 1870--in terms of the individual human beings caught in its tide:

2nd Narrator

At the climax of the story the French girl, Françoise, trying to save both her father and lover from torture and death at the hands of the Germans, hears what she thinks is approaching salvation--the sound of fresh French troops on the march.

But war is brutally impersonal. Before joining battle with the oncoming French, the Prussian captain shoots her lover down. A stray bullet kills the father. The French troops win the skirmish, but when they enter the mill, they find that--

VOICE

"Françoise had not stirred from the shed where she remained hanging over Dominique's body. (Her father's body lay nearby)... Then the French captain, the Prussians being exterminated and the mill on fire, entered the courtyard at the head of his men. It was the first success he had gained since the breaking out of the war, so, all inflame with enthusiasm, drawing himself up to the full height of his lofty stature, he laughed pleasantly as a handsome cavalier like him might laugh. Then, perceiving poor idiotic Françoise, where she crouched between the corpses of her father and her intended, among the smoking ruins of the mill, he saluted her gallantly with his sword, and shouted:

"'Victory! Victory!'"

1st Narrator

Often a great work of art can stimulate a writer to creative expression. The sensitive British Romantic poet, John Keats, overwhelmed by the beauty of a magnificent Greek vase, describes its effect upon him in his stirring "Ode on a Grecian Urn":

VOICE

"Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

... Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,

Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,'--that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

1st Narrator

Or the writer can draw inspiration from music:

(MUSIC: Strains of Beethoven selection)

--As he listened to the swelling chords of this
Beethoven work, a poet, Edward Carpenter, was
inspired to write of the composer:

VOICE

"...For, as a lonely watcher of the night,
When all men sleep, sees the tumultuous stars
Move forward from the deep in squadrons bright,
And notes them, he through this life's prison bars
Heard all night long the spheric music clear
Beat on his heart--and lived that men might hear."

(MUSIC: Repeat Beethoven theme.. Music up--and
out)

(BAND)

2nd Narrator

Thus, in music...art...legend...literature...
history...personal experience a writer can find
ample sources for ideas...

But once having tapped one of these mines, how
does he dig out the ore, separate the gold from
the dross?

1st Narrator

Part Three... Methods of Developing Your Ideas!

3rd Narrator

In a Creative Writing class in a large city school
students are experimenting with varied approaches
to the problem, finding different ways of develop-
ing the rich ore of their imagination...

The first two writers have drawn their material
from the area of PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. As
a format, they have chosen the character sketch
or profile in a series called "Portraits from Life."

Each sketch is a vivid delineation of a personality
who left a lasting impression on the mind of the
writer.

2nd Narrator

Note carefully how each one begins: Note, too,
what one has in common with the other.

--The first we have already met. He is the
stranger who rang the bell of the woman artist.
Here is how she tells it in a sketch she calls
"Stranger At My Door":

WOMAN

"After concentrated self-discipline, I was at the
point where I was ready, if not willing, to
tackle a general house-cleaning.

"With grim determination, not unmixed with
desperation, I reached for mop and broom.

"The door bell rang...I hurried to answer it...

"On my doorstep stood a man dressed in black,
with a full dark beard and chiselled features,
in his early thirties. As he waited there, with
his head slightly bowed, meekness and humility
were reflected in every feature.

"Then he looked directly at me and I saw a
gentle beautiful face with extraordinarily ex-
pressive eyes. They were dark and limpid,
full of compassion and sorrow. He appeared
to have stepped right out of the pages of the
Bible.

Across his arm limply draped was a set of the
aprons he was selling from door to door. In
a low-pitched, almost mechanical voice he
offered them for my inspection. As I examin-
ed them, he shifted slightly from foot to foot
as if to ease the burning sensations of hours of
walking.

"Trying to draw him out a little, I asked, 'And
how is business?'

"'Not so good today,' he slowly answered. 'but
the Lord will provide,' He paused. 'It is so
kind of you to take time to examine my mer-
chandise, he continued. Not many people will
open the door to a stranger these days.'

"'You must be famished,' I cried, looking at
his worn and pinched face. 'Can I get you
something to eat--or drink?'

"'Only a glass of water, if you will,' he replied.
'It has been a long walk.'

"'Quickly I laid food and drink before him. 'It
is so good of you,' he murmured, and began to
eat with slow, quiet dignity.

"Radiance and nobility shone in that expressive
face. As I watched him, an inspiration suddenly
came to me: I would ask him to sit for a portrait.

"Somewhat hesitantly, I broached the question.
But he agreed quietly and courteously, showing
no surprise at my unusual request.

"With quick, vigorous strokes, I began to sketch
in the outlines of the portrait. As I worked, his
haunting, brooding eyes fixed themselves almost
hypnotically upon me. But he did not speak un-
less I spoke first. All I ever learned about him
was that he had been in a concentration camp,
was here on a student's visa, and had recently
been obliged to sell from door to door to earn
enough money to pay his rent.

"Today his portrait hangs on my wall. I shall
always be grateful that I captured the expres-
sion in those wonderful, luminous eyes--that
noble face.

"Yet all who look upon the painting of this ex-
traordinary man see him in a different light.
For each the portrait invariably dramatizes
the personality of a patriarch or a prophet of
his own religion."

1st Narrator

Did you notice how this appealing character sketch begins? As the woman painter goes about routine household chores, she is suddenly exhilarated by the appearance of this unusual personality on her doorstep. All her artistic sensitivities and emotions are immediately heightened.

Observe, too, her effective use of contrast: The simple passing stranger takes on saint-like qualities in her mind. Later each viewer of the portrait reads his own message into it, sees in it a symbol of his own religious faith.

2nd Narrator

In this second piece, entitled "Portrait of Jonathan," by another woman writer, contrast is also used to good advantage. Here is her sketch of a young man about whom she had some false, preconceived notions. As you listen to it, see if you can analyze the technique she employs in INTRODUCING and DEVELOPING it.

WOMAN (READING)

"Jonathan Lee was a handsome young man with clean-cut features and a warm appealing smile. He was intelligent, gifted with a fine sense of humor and the ability to make delightful conversation. He could sail a boat and handle an axe with great skill. He stood six feet two when he straightened to his full height. But Jonathan seldom stood straight; and when he did, it was an uncontrollable action, for Jonathan was a spastic.

"I met him a few years ago when his family and mine spent the summer in nearby cottages on an Adirondack lake. To my shame my reaction was one of embarrassed distaste and I spoke to him only when not to do so would have been even more embarrassing. Gradually, however, I began to see the human being behind the grimacing, jerking figure. And since he was not ill at ease, I was able to relax and eventually get to know the courage and warmth of a truly remarkable person.

"Courage--and skill--were especially needed when Jonathan tried his hand at sailing. Maneuvering a boat on a mountain lake can be a tricky business as the breeze can suddenly stiffen and become gusts of wind. The sailor needs not only knowledge but also quick physical reactions to prevent spills. So when Jonathan asked me one sunny day if I would like to come out for a sail, it was with strong misgivings that I went. But after that I had no qualms and spent several happy afternoons on the lake, even taking my small son along. If he felt that the hand holding the tiller was about to jerk, he anticipated the reaction and immediately held the tiller steady with his body against it. If his right arm started to pull on a rope that should be held firm, the rope would always be transferred to his left hand before any damage could be done. Only once did we spill, and that was in a sudden storm that left few boats upright.

"The first time I saw Jonathan with an axe in

his hand going toward the woodpile, I mentally ticked off pressure points and envisioned tourniquet tying, but I could have spared myself the worry. Each spasmodic motion was taken into account. If necessary, his hands would open and the axe he cast away. Then it would be picked up and the whole operation started over again. Eventually his tall body would straighten and the axe would be held high over his head. With the inevitable swift downward jerk the axe would bite through the log.

"It took longer for Jonathan to chop a pile of firewood than for the other men at the lake, but surely the fire in his house burned warmer and brighter with the will and determination and courage which fed the flames."

3rd Narrator

In this warm human portrait, its subject, Jonathan, emerges as an individual determined to live life as intensely and cheerfully as his physical handicaps will permit. He has risen above embitterment and self-pity to reach out toward his fellow man.

How has the writer achieved her success in this sketch? In two significant ways: First, in her introduction, by showing the conflict in her soul between the need to accept Jonathan for what he was and her physical reaction toward him. Secondly, in her skilful development of his real personality, by portraying his acts of courage, warmth, and good humor in the face of crippling physical disability.

1st Narrator

What do both sketches have in common? A framework of intense personal experience on which to build... Contrast... Sensitivity... Description blending subtly with narration...

How is this last achieved? Both the stranger and the spastic have unusual physical characteristics. Each writer has ably described these physical traits and shown their link to the spiritual features of the character.

(BAND)

2nd Narrator

Closely allied to the character sketch or profile in its use of personal experience is the autobiographical narrative. Sometimes, the two types are identical, with the writer of the autobiographical work holding a mirror up to himself and revealing his own character, conflicts, and actions.

3rd Narrator

One of the most probing tests of character is how an individual will react in moments of stress or difficulty, particularly when he is faced with a crucial decision. In the following short autobiographical narrative a young girl tells of the most critical moment in her life--when her father was confronted with a decision involving the salvation of his entire family:

The time is 1933--the place, Nazi Germany. Adolf Hitler, ruthless despot, has just come to power. The girl has just seen him sweep by in a motorcade and is overcome by revulsion and terror.

Here in a work called "Moment of Decision" is her personal account of that fearful moment and the crisis it precipitated in her life.

As you listen to her story, see if you can determine how she has recreated an experience which others, too, will find of deep personal meaning:

WOMAN (READING)

"Germany, 1938. Today I saw Adolf Hitler. Today I saw the monster as he passed in front of me at a distance of no more than 20 feet. Today I saw him, Death, standing upright and unsmiling in a limousine, his arm bent at the elbow, returning the Nazi salute. Slowly he was being driven through the main thoroughfare, lined on both sides by a multitude of spectators, right hands pointing toward heaven, screaming and raving and close to hysteria. Nobody noticed me, the little Jewish girl, standing there mutely, with my arms listlessly at my sides.

"Later that day. My own home, by contrast, was insufferably quiet. We were seated around the dinner table, my mother, father, brother, two sisters, and I. Though finished with our meal, having consumed our soup and bread without any enthusiasm, none of us made any attempt to get up. Even Mother, who at this point would habitually start dishwashing, just sat there as if paralyzed.

"Then Father cleared his throat. He pushed aside a soup plate, and ceremoniously laid it down on the table. 'Children,' he said, 'you ought to know about the contents of this envelope.' He extracted several sheets of paper with a strange writing on them. 'This document,' Father continued, 'is called an "affidavit." It was sent to me from America by my sister Fay, and it is in effect a possible way for one of us to emigrate to that country. ONE of us, do you understand, ONE of us will be able to leave this hell and go to the safety that is America. Now then, who should that one be?'

"My father paused in his speech, overcome with emotion, almost unable to go on. At last he spoke again: 'When your mother and I first found out that my sister Fay could afford to send for only one of us, we wanted to dismiss the entire plan. Nevertheless, after weighing all the possibilities, we have come to a conclusion which we hope will ultimately save all of us.

"I have to be the one to go to America. Yes, I, your father. I will go there, and I will seek out every relative and every acquaintance I may have there, and I will plead with them until I obtain affidavits for all of you.

"Father looked from face to face, expecting some kind of comment, but getting none. We just sat there, spellbound, waiting for the

next word. 'There will be those,' Father further explained, 'who will say that I deserted you, my wife and my children, when you most needed me. You must, therefore, always remember that what might seem like desertion now is only an act to ultimately tie us closer together.'

"America, 1962. The fact that my family and I are here today and able to relate this incident bears out my father's promise."

(BAND)

1st Narrator

How has this writer succeeded? By narrating with great emotional power a single, significant incident in her life--the events leading up to it, the climactic moment of decision, and the results of that decision. She has also involved the reader personally in the fortunes of her family by making him identify himself with the chief character, her father.

2nd Narrator

Although this is a tale of intense spiritual crisis, almost every person's life is charged with inner conflicts and moments of high emotion. But it is the sensitive creative writer who, by skilfully selecting the most significant events and arranging them in a colorful dramatic pattern, can infuse them with artistic power.

It is such careful selectivity and arrangement that distinguishes a work of literary art from a piece of bare factual reporting. Yet a well-written newspaper account can also be of great service to the writer.

(SOUND OF PRINTING PRESSES)

3rd Narrator

As you scan the columns of your favorite newspaper daily, many items of high dramatic potential for the creative writer leap out at you--stories of ambition, love, devotion...conflict and violence...dedication and sacrifice...and many other tales of human passion and emotion...

1st Narrator

If you are discerning enough, you can often glean from these stories of human interest material for your literary efforts--to furnish you with the nucleus for a current or future story, the model for a character, the spark and inspiration for your thinking...

In the story that follows, the writer has selected as a basis for his work a news story of deep human appeal--and challenge...

Let us see how each developed his choice:

2nd Narrator

In this work, entitled, "Marty," the news item on which the story is based is not divulged until the very end. As you listen to the story, see if you can tell why.

At the start two men are reminiscing about Marty, their mutual acquaintance. The story is told through their dialogue:

OLD MAN:

I hear where Old Marty's taken a turn for the worse. Jes' starvin' hisself to death. Won't eat nuthin'!... Known Marty for a long time now... Used to strut around like it was his world... like he owned it all... Darn near did... Yep, he put this old town on the map... Got to be real famous...

... In those days he was jes' about the best flyer around those parts... Any important mail needed deliverin' and you know old Marty'd be carryin' it... I remember once durin' the war the President hisself gave him a decoration... Medal of Honor, or somethin' like it--the highest one...

... Well, one day this notice about closin' down the run comes out, and old Marty finds hisself grounded... Spent his whole life up in the air and now he got nowhere to fly... He kinda started dyin' right then and there... Saw him a few weeks ago and could hardly recognize him...

YOUNG MAN

Didn't know anythin' else, did he?

OLD MAN

No, seems while he was up flyin' the mails, the whole world changed underneath him. Guess he feels lost now. Only thing he got left is memories of us older folks rememberin' who he was and what he done...

YOUNG MAN

I imagine that's what's killin' him...

OLD MAN

How do you mean?

YOUNG MAN

Well, old Marty just can't face the possibility that all his old admirers might be pityin' him... I imagine Marty's too proud to take that, and too wise... He knows what he was, and that memory is all the food and drink he needs to feed what's left of him...

OLD MAN

Gettin' late... Have to be leavin'... You goin'?

YOUNG MAN

Yep...

2nd Narrator

The two men extinguished the remains of the fire and started home.

The next morning the following news item was printed in the local newspaper:

"The world's last passenger pigeon passed away at 1 p.m. on October 31, 1914 in the Cincinnati Zoological Gardens. His name was Marty."

1st Narrator

The clever whimsy, the element of suspense, and the surprise ending revealing Marty's true identity -- all make this a most entertaining piece.

How has the writer achieved his effect? By working backwards -- taking the original news story, speculating about it, and drawing from it the idea for a humorous dialogue between two men discussing an ostensible acquaintance. As for the news item itself, it obviously had to be kept from the reader until the very end.

(SHORT BRIDGE)

2nd Narrator

Although based on fact, "Marty," the story we just heard, has all the elements of good short fiction.

The same holds true in the climax of the following short story -- based partly on events surrounding the capture of a desperate criminal. The writer has blended fact and his knowledge of technical police operations to create an exciting fictional piece.

3rd Narrator

The house where Billings, nationally hunted fugitive, has been hiding has been completely surrounded by the police. Escape seems possible. Yet as Joe Williams, the detective, watches incredulously, the fugitive makes the attempt. Here is the climax of the detective's short story, "The Vigil."

VOICE (READING)

"Suddenly the side door burst open and there was the fugitive, a .45 automatic in his right hand and something clutched in his left fist.

"Billings fired once toward Joe and then toward the front. Joe emptied his gun and the killer collapsed ten feet away.

"Joe started forward slowly, and then saw a grenade, its spring handle released, roll in a circle from Billings' lifeless hand. In five seconds it would explode.

"Joe paused, as he thought to dive back into the frame vestibule, but the explosive power of the missile would make that move futile. He roared, 'Grenade!' -- rushed ahead and scooped it up.

"Throw it to the front? To the back?

"Suddenly there were officers running toward him from both directions.

"Hurl it through the doorway window into the house? He might miss the glass and he'd get only one chance.

"Three seconds must have passed; not over two remained. A fleet runner could cover twenty yards in that time, or a baseball could be hurled ninety feet.

"Don't freeze, Joe," he thought to himself.

"Then he grasped the grenade to his chest and flattened himself on the ground. 'God have mercy...' he heard himself say.

"Suddenly Joe was spun over on to his back. A big sergeant seized the grenade and hurled it upward like a mortar projectile. It cleared the second floor eaves and landed on the flat roof just before a deafening explosion showered debris into the alleyway.

"Joe sobbed, and the sergeant's legs gave out and he knelt on the ground."

(BAND)

1st Narrator

Where else can the writer find inspiration besides personal experience, other people's lives, history, or current happenings?

In literature itself. In the thoughts of other men who have examined life analytically and philosophically. In collections of their short stories, essays, poems--or in books of quotations from these works.

Here are two short selections based on poetic quotations that have caught each author's fancy and fired her creative imagination. Each work is essentially a mood piece, a vignette, based largely on reflections and reminiscences. Each presents a point of view, as in an essay. And each is also a compressed human document describing in brief compass the story of one individual's destiny.

2nd Narrator

The first is "A Tear for Her," inspired by the following quotation:

"Carve not upon a stone when I am dead
The praises which remorseful mourners give
To women's graves--a tardy recompense--
But speak them while I live."

--Elizabeth Akers Allen

WOMAN (READING)

"I have just returned home from Hannah Burton's funeral. I really can't say why I went. Mrs. Burton did some occasional sewing for me. She was a good dressmaker and in spite of herself, I liked her. When I went into the chapel, I was very much surprised. I couldn't find a seat.

"Sam Burton, Hannah's husband, was crying almost hysterically. I couldn't help remembering that some one had once told me that people cry at funerals for themselves, not for the departed. To myself I said, 'You buffoon, cry, cry, you punchinello, whatever the reason be.'

"Everyone in town knew that Hannah and Sam were not happy together. It couldn't be old Sam's fault, people would say. Why, he was the most jovial, friendly man they ever met. He had a funny story for any situation. What a sweet man, a real honey. Nothing ever troubled him long. He would rid himself of trouble as he would a cinder in his eye. He would blink once, twice, and three times, and it was gone.

"It really did not matter that his wife was the butt of the joke most of the time. They laughed while he stripped her of her dignity. People were laughing at her all the time. He made her world a battleground.

"One day this week Sam Burton will purchase a tombstone for his wife. On it will be chiseled, 'Hannah Burton, Beloved Wife.' ... Sam, Sam, you fool, if only you had given her a tear when she was alive!"

2nd Narrator

The second is "The Coat," suggested by the following lines from a poem by Francis Bourdillon:

"So often in the course
Of a life's few fleeting years,
A single pleasure costs
The soul a thousand tears."

WOMAN (READING)

"After twenty years of self-denial and deprivation to her family she had her coat. It was like a living thing to her, the rich, luxurious fur, dark and shiny like the complexion of an ancient Nubian princess she had seen in a picture. Like a living thing it needed air and room to breathe in, and she pushed aside the few shabby things in her closet. There it hung, alone and majestically aloof. She stood mesmerized before it, her whole being flooded with joy and wonder at what she had achieved. There was no feeling of guilt nor remorse at what she had done to them as she secretly hoarded the dollars she stole, the dollars meant for their comfort and well being.

"She had never really let them go hungry, but not for them the thick juicy steaks, the ripe, rosy fruit or the rich warm smell of a spice-scented kitchen. She had fed them lean, limp meat, picked over vegetables, and yesterday's rolls and buns, bought cheaper still at the end of each day. None of them had ever known the delight of wearing something new or the pleasurable, toe-tingling relief in easing off a new pair of shoes. She discouraged friends, family, or any other social contacts. It cost money for such things; there would be time enough for all that later when she had her coat. There was never enough light, never enough warmth. There was no home, only a place to come to because there was no place else to go. They lived like beggars and looked like scarecrows. Her fierce obsession with the coat obliterated and pity she could have felt for them.

"And now it was over, the hard, ugly years were gone, and the coat was hers. Her heart

hammered against her ribs as she stared back at the old woman in the mirror. The tears welled up in her eyes and ran down between her hands, the salty tears burning her cracked fingers. She wept silently, wept for the old woman who had waited for today and had let all the yesterdays slip by.

"She hung the coat back on its hanger, covered it with a long sheet, and pushed it back into the closet. It was an enemy now. It had robbed her of her youth and of every human feeling. It would hang out of sight now and perhaps in time she would forget it."

3rd Narrator

What do these two poignant selections have in common? First, their genesis in a striking quotation from literature that stimulated the writer's thinking. Second, their development through reflection and reminiscence, combining elements of the short story, the essay, and the descriptive piece.

(BRIDGE)

1st Narrator

Another stimulus to the writer that often produces excellent results is to challenge him with a situation contrary to fact, the "If" situation: "If We Could Relive Our Lives," "If Time Stood Still," "If There Were No Death," "If There Were No Color."

Exhilarated by a brilliant sunset and dazzling bursts of color, a young high school girl tried to envision the last situation--a world bereft of color--in the following striking prose poem.

Here is how she saw the consequences to Man and Nature of living in such a universe:

GIRL (READING)

IF THERE WERE NO COLOR

"If there were no white, where would the snow be, the clouds. Man's hopes? If there were no white, what, then, the prospects of Peace?

"If there were no yellow, where would the sun be, the moon, the waving wheat on the meadows? If there were no yellow, would there be light?

"If there were no red, how would young cheeks glow, fire burst forth into flame? .

"If there were no blue, what sky would enclose us, what seas would beckon invitingly?

"If there were no green, what soft spring grass would there be to lie upon, what moss to enchant the forest?

"If there were no brown, would there be trees, leaves in the autumn, an earth to live upon? Would there be dry stubble for the desert or for the cowboy to sleep upon?

"If there were no black, would there be death? Shadows to cover the earth at night? Sleep,

oh, restful sleep?"

2nd Narrator

Here is delightful poetic fantasy, wide-ranging imagination, exploring the face of a colorless world.

What makes this such an appealing work? The writer's ability to evoke a mood, her fresh point of view, her striking poetic images, and her skill in developing highly imaginative concepts to full concrete terms...

(BAND)

3rd Narrator

Part Four...Format for Writing--Literary Types and Media...

--We have seen how the writer can find fertile sources of material and inspiration for his work in biography and autobiography, in art and music, in literature and legend, in history and the current scene.

Having found an appealing theme and been inspired to write--which medium and literary form shall he then use?

2nd Narrator

Shall he tell his story in poetry or in prose? Shall he couch his tale or message in the form of a short story...a dramatization...a biographical account...a news story...a vignette...a fantasy...or some other type?

The answer is that there is no single medium or literary form which is "best" for each writer. In determining which he shall choose, many factors must govern his final decision:

3rd Narrator

A vital factor in his choice of medium or literary type is the nature of his theme: The story of the stranger whose portrait was painted by the woman artist, is a single short incident, terse in its telling and compact in its structure. Expanding it would have extended it unduly and reduced its impact.

1st Narrator

Another key factor is the writer's purpose. In "The Vigil," the story of the capture of the criminal, the writer's purpose was simply to tell a short, exciting tale of adventure, the closing of the police dragnet. He did not plan to deal with the sordid career of crime culminating in Billings' death or with his motives.

3rd Narrator

Reflections on the life and death of the dress-maker, Hannah Burton, in "A Tear for Her"--written originally as a vignette--could have been expressed in different form. Had the writer been so minded and capable of doing so, she could have executed her ideas through the medium of poetry. As a mood piece, full of its author's righteous anger at Hannah's

mistreatment and her wasted life, "A Tear for Her" could have emerged as a lyric poem, an "Elegy for Hannah Burton." "Spoon River Anthology," by Edgar Lee Masters, has many such pieces.

1st Narrator

Thus, theme and purpose have much to do with the form or medium a writer will choose for expression.

But the writer's own temperament plays an important part, too. He may feel more at home in prose than in poetry. He may find the short fictional piece or essay a good outlet for his talents. Or he may try a longer work-involving the complex problem of organizing and plotting a novel, with its multitude of incidents, its necessary depth of characterization.

3rd Narrator

But no matter what his outlet, each writer must continually try to improve through experimentation and exploration...trial and error...constant self-appraisal...In short, no writer can afford to stand still or rest on past performance.

(BAND)

1st Narrator

Part Five... The Art of Writing... Literary Style and Technique...

(SOUND OF RUBBER STAMP--repeated several times)

...That was the sound of a signature stamp--turning out one exact replica of a person's handwriting after another, each deviating not a whit from the previous one.

2nd Narrator

But open any fine anthology and scan the signatures appended to each enduring literary work--Shakespeare, Swift, Addison, Moliere, Goethe, Mark Twain, Hemingway, and a host of other luminaries--and you will see the hand of an individualist, distinctive in style and literary power...in imagination...in conception and breadth of theme...

3rd Narrator

What is style? Can it be acquired? Of what value is it to the writer? To the reader?

1st Narrator

"Style": From the Latin "stilus," an instrument or manner of writing. Defined as "a distinctive mode of presentation, construction, or execution in any art, employment, or production."

2nd Narrator

Style in fashion has much in common with style in writing. Both designer and writer are concerned about the originality of their product,

the uniqueness of its cut, its fine lines, its appeal to the purchaser, and its ability to wear well.

But style in writing is a far more complex quality, and far more difficult to achieve. Literary style is an amalgam of many attributes of the writer: Among others, his capacity to handle language well and appealingly...to evoke a mood, an image, an emotion with accuracy and clarity...to write with pace and vigor...to see the humor as well as the grimness in a situation...and to, impart to his theme touches of his own unique personality.

...It is what Elizabeth Bowen has aptly called "the effect of language."

An attractive, readable style, therefore, can do much to smooth communication between the writer and the reader...

3rd Narrator

Each of the writers whose work we have considered has some of these distinctive qualities of style and literary power--to a greater or lesser degree.

An editor considering their work for publication would be impressed by the following attributes of their literary art:

1st Narrator

...Picturesqueness of language--in "The Coat":

WOMAN (READING)

"It was like a living thing to her, the rich, luxurious fur, dark and shiny like the complexion of an ancient Nubian princess she had seen in a picture."

2nd Narrator

...Accurate and natural dialogue--in "Marty":

VOICE

"Well, one day this notice about closin' down the run comes out and old Marty finds hisself grounded. Spent his whole life up in the air and now he got nowhere to fly. He kinda started dyin' right then and there."

3rd Narrator

...Vividness of imagery--in "Moment of Decision":

WOMAN

"Today I saw Adolf Hitler... Today I saw him, Death, standing upright and unsmiling in a limousine, his arm bent at the elbow, returning the Nazi salute...being driven through a multitude of spectators, right hands pointing towards heaven, screaming and raving and close to hysteria."

1st Narrator

... Imaginative handling of theme -- in "The Coat":

WOMAN

"She hung the coat back on its hanger, covered it with a long sheet and pushed it back into the closet. It was an enemy now. It had robbed her of her youth and of every human feeling. It would hang out of sight now and perhaps in time she would forget it."

2nd Narrator

... Narrative pace and vigor--in "The Vigil":

VOICE

"Suddenly Joe was spun over on to his back. A big sergeant seized the grenade and hurled it upward like a mortar projectile. It cleared the second floor and landed on the flat roof just before a deafening explosion showered debris into the alleyway. But its force was spent."

"Joe sobbed, and the sergeant's legs gave out and he knelt on the ground."

1st Narrator

... Keen insight into character--in two works:

First, in "Portrait of Jonathan":

WOMAN

"It took longer for Jonathan to chop a pile of firewood than for the other men at the lake, but surely the fire in his house burned warmer and brighter with the will and determination and courage which fed the flames."

3rd Narrator

Second, in "Stranger At My Door," vivid for its contrast of the real man as opposed to people's idealization of him:

WOMAN

"Yet all who look upon the painting of this extraordinary man see him in a different light. For each the portrait invariably dramatizes the personality of a patriarch or a prophet of his own religion."

2nd Narrator

... Rhythm and beauty of language--in "If There Were No Color":

GIRL

"If there were no yellow, where would the sun be, the moon, the waving wheat in the meadows? If there were no yellow, would there be light?"

(BRIDGE)

3rd Narrator

... Names of the authors of these creative pieces

appear in the printed booklet accompanying this recording... To them and to other aspiring writers we can only characterize their art as the loneliest in the world--but potentially the most spiritually rewarding... For, seen through the eyes of Hemingway, in a particularly apt crystallization, the task of the writer is to chronicle: "The good and the bad, the ecstasy, the remorse and sorrow, the people and the places and how the weather was, If you can get so that you can give that to people, then you are a writer."

THE END

CREDITS--

"World of the Blind" and "My Diary"

... Fannie Magasis

"Stranger At My Door"

... Ruth Weinstein

"Portrait of Jonathan"

... Ruth Kramer

"Marty"

... Leo Stone

"A Tear for Her"

... Adele J. Simon

"The Coat"

... Frances Ferenzo

"Moment of Decision"

... Beatrice Weintraub

"If There Were No Color"

... Anita Levy

(Bleeker Junior High School,
Queens, New York)

... All of the foregoing materials, with the exception of the last named, were developed in the author's "Creative Writing" classes at Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, New York.

* * * * *

PRODUCTION

CREDITS --

Script... Written by Morris Schreiber
Directed by Wallace House

Cast

THE UNIVERSITY PLAYERS:

Albert Ackel

Wallace House

Kenneth Buckridge

Lillian Leveroni

Patricia Gardner

Lillian Schreiber

Jennifer House

Morris Schreiber

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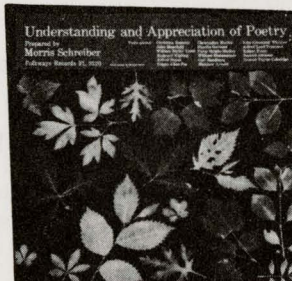
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