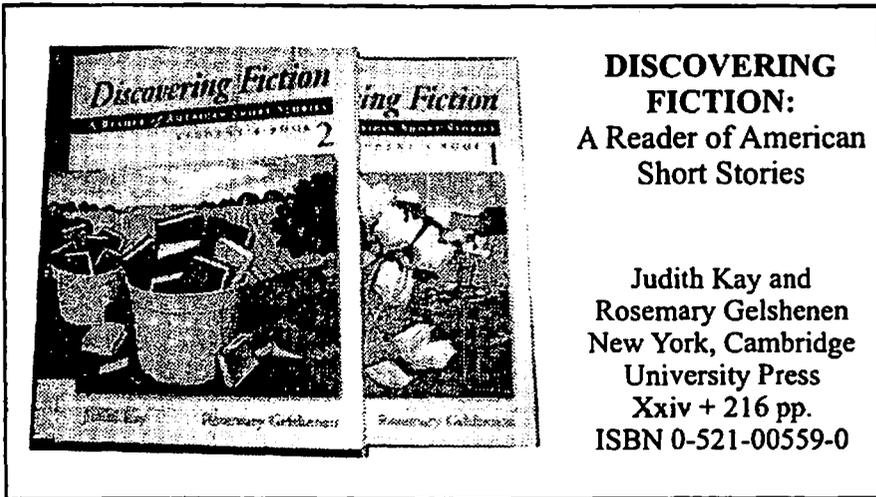


A Book Review

LITERARY WORKS IN ENGLISH LEARNING AS SHOWN IN *DISCOVERING FICTION*



Reviewed by Antonius Herujiyanto¹

Discovering Fiction is a two-level anthology of American short stories by classic and contemporary American authors, released on May 28, 2005. The authors, Judith Kay and Rosemary Gelshenen, have definitely worked hard in collecting the short stories and organized them into five thematic sections with two up to four units and a section review.

Reading the two books, Kay and Gelshenen may be praised as having brilliantly played the roles of two American diplomats, namely, two American educational and cultural Attachees providing or rather introducing

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people with American literature and culture. Any reader would agree with Paul Westrick ([http://www.lovereadings.co.uk/reviewsearch.php?book=Judith Kay, Rosemary Gelshenen Discovering FictionStudent'sBook202](http://www.lovereadings.co.uk/reviewsearch.php?book=Judith%20Kay,%20Rosemary%20Gelshenen%20Discovering%20Fiction)) who says that the books are excellent for English learners and teachers since they may enjoy a wonderful set of reading texts on American literature and culture.

Because reading difficulty does not increase throughout the texts, the teachers can, thus, choose or select any units in whatever order they wish to do. Not only do the books expose such enjoyable literary works where both students and teachers do not have to be literature majors-but they are meaningful to any one wishing to know the nature of human beings better and not only that of the American people.

In these two books, people can enjoy such genuine pieces of literature and great works of writing short stories produced by Ernest Hemingway, Langston Hughes, O'Henry, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ray Bradbury, and many more. The following is found in Chapter 14 of Book 1:

In the short story about *The Kiss* by Kate Chopin, the sections given consists of **Pre-Reading, The Story, After Reading, Thinking about The Story, and Summing Up**. In **Pre-Reading**, there are six sessions, namely, **Think before You Read, Picture Focus, Story Preview, Using the Vocabulary, Making Predictions and Literary Item: Irony**. There are only two paragraphs extracting the three original pages long of the story as presented at the Story Preview as follows:

Brantain is visiting Nathalie. He is rather **unattractive**; she is very beautiful. He is very honest about his feelings. From the **ardent** way he looks at her, it's very obvious that he is in love. He plans to ask her to marry him, and marriage is what Nathalie wants as well. But Nathalie is full of guile. She doesn't love Brantain, but he is rich and Nathalie wants the kind of life that money could give her.

Suddenly, the door opens, and a second young man, Harvy, comes in. Harvy is a friend of Nathalie's brother, and he is evidently on intimate terms with Nathalie. Not seeing Brantain, he walks over to Nathalie and plants an ardent kiss on her lips. Brantain jumps up and leaves, confused and upset. Nathalie is angry. Has her plan been ruined, or can she save it?

In the section of **Using the Vocabulary**, the students are asked to fill in the blanks with the **bold** words offered from the above Story Preview. The predictions such as “Nathalie will marry Brantain but keep seeing Harvy”; “She will marry Brantain and lose Harvy”; “She will try to marry Brantain but fail, losing both men”; “She will realize that Harvy is her true love and marry him”; and “She will try to marry Harvy but discover that he is no longer interested” and other predictions would certainly warm up and motivate the students to express their opinion and explain the reasons.

In order to see the students' understanding the story, in **After Reading**, the students can be put in pairs to answer the questions such as “What does Nathalie think of Brantain?”; “Why does she want to marry him?”; “Who is Harvy? How does he cause Nathalie embarrassment and almost ruin her plan?”; “How does Nathalie react to this incident?”; “How does Nathalie get Brantain to propose?”; “At the wedding, what reason does Harvy give for coming over to Nathalie?”; and “Why doesn't he kiss her?” This is followed by **Vocabulary Comprehension, Word Forms, Grammar: Uses of the Verb Do, and Application.**

In the **Application**, for example, the students are asked to identify the use of do such as “to form a question”, “to form a negative”; “to show emphasis”; or “to avoid repetition.”

The **Thinking about the Story** is made used by Kay and Gelshenen to deal with the so-called **Sharing Ideas** such as “What are some examples of Nathalie's cleverness?”. Meanwhile in **Reading between the Lines**, the students are asked to practice reading the lines by circling the letter of the answer that best completes such as the statement: “When Brantain leaves after the kiss, he is probably most upset because he now feels that Nathalie: a. is in love with Harvy and won't marry him (Brantain), b. is not the kind of person he would want to marry, or c. Is being treated badly by Harvy.

The section **Analyzing the Story**, Kay and Gelshenen invite the students to look back at the **Literary Term** part, to think about what the three characters in the story want or expect, and what actually happens to them. They are, then, asked to make a chart with three columns describing the scene, the characters' want or expectation, and the result of their expectation at the third column.

The assignments given which include “write a summary of the story in certain paragraphs”; “describe Nathalie's wedding”; “Could this story take

place today”; etc. Then, **The Summing Up** section, Kay and Gelshenen make use of two terms, namely, **Take a Closer Look** (Theme Comparison: marriage, and Freewriting, namely, to write the wor “marriage” and ten write any idas about marriage); and **Review** (Idiom and Form Review).

Now we can understand that the structure of the units in the books makes the texts quite manageable. As seen in Chapter 14, the unit has pre-reading, reading, post-reading activities. For pre-reading, each unit has warm-up questions, a new literary term, and idioms and expressions used in the story. It should be mentioned that the format for the unit reading sections is identical in both texts-information about the author followed by the story.

Post-reading activities include reading comprehension questions, discussion questions, and vocabulary, grammar, and writing exercises. In fact, there is a large selection of activities suitable to meet the classes' needs. Admittedly, the teachers are encouraged to provide the students with explanation in order to help students gain a better understanding. This is particularly when dealing with cultural issues and idioms.

I believe, the books would be more interesting if there are more short stories with different world. Cultural background especially that the so-called **melting pot** or the **salad bowl** America could really be represented. This would, therefore, be in line with the sincere impression mentioned at the beginning of this review that Kay and Gelshenen may be praised as having brilliantly played the roles of two American diplomats, namely, two American educational and cultural Attachees providing or rather introducing people with American literature and culture.

SUGGESTED READINGS

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